

Not just a job; but a career, and a vocation: a guide to a lawyers' life at Wilsons:

*'Wilson Solicitors is a wonderful, extremely professional firm'.
Chambers 2022*

*'The staff are all amazing and very friendly, which really makes the firm unique.'
Legal 500 2021*

Our staff are our greatest asset. Often said, but so true.

Our solicitors and caseworkers are at the heart of our legal practice.

As our greatest asset we look after you and support your growth.

When you join Wilsons you join a community. One hundred people based in Tottenham, with a small central London office near Chancery Lane, and believing in justice for all.

Founded 32 years ago by the late Andrew Wilson, we have grown from a small practice to one of the UK's leading small to medium sized firms.

We have a national reputation for excellence in our three areas of expertise: immigration law, family law and public law (including civil liberties, human rights, and community care).

So what can you expect if you join us?

In this guide, we hope to give you an insight into a lawyer's life at Wilsons. Not just a job; but a career, and a vocation.

The Firm

We are a Limited Liability Partnership. The business is owned by the seven members who are all solicitors and partners in the firm.

All of the seven joined the firm as a trainee solicitor or junior solicitor. They all actively work in the business. They joined the firm, they believed in it, they stayed and they grew it.

Our strong management ethos means that we are a financially stable business with a mixed legal aid and privately funded income

We have the [Specialist Quality Mark](#) with all the procedures and policies that the mark guarantees. We are audited every three years and are proud to always pass with excellent feedback.

The lawyer career

We encourage solicitors, caseworkers, and legal executives to have a long term career at Wilsons and see it as their legal home.

Our entry level roles are usually as a caseworker or a biller. Billers usually become caseworkers after 12 months and caseworkers usually become trainee solicitors after 12 months in the role. For law

graduates or those who have passed the GDL we have opportunities for funded SQE training through our partnership with the [University of Law](#) under their graduate apprentice scheme.

We also offer a 6 year solicitor apprentice route for school leavers.

Many of our trainee solicitors are kept on as solicitors on qualification.

In the early stages of your solicitor career, from newly qualified to 3 year qualified, we encourage you to find your niche of interest and expertise and develop your skills as a lawyer.

For those with an interest and aptitude for supervision we encourage you to become an accredited supervisor and we partner with [LAPG](#) to deliver supervision training.

We will encourage you to apply for membership of [Law Society](#) panels and accreditation schemes and provide you with all the support and training you need.

The more senior you become the more we will encourage you to contribute and share your legal expertise within the firm and outside.

Once you have completed 4 years as a solicitor we will give you the title of Associate Solicitor to distinguish you from your more junior colleagues.

For those with an interest and aptitude for people management and leadership we will develop you with a view to becoming a partner. 15 of our solicitors are partners.

We encourage solicitors to network and broaden their horizons outside of the firm. Many of our solicitors deliver training, write articles, sit on management committees of charities and NGOs, mentor young professionals and students, represent the firm at user groups, and speak at events and conferences.

We are also supportive of senior solicitors who wish to become part-time members of the Judiciary. We currently have three Judges amongst the team.

Pay

We have a pay scale for solicitors in their first three years of qualification - £32,000 - £38,000. Thereafter pay is performance related taking into account the meeting of targets and contribution to the firm.

Associate Solicitors can expect to be paid £40,000 plus.

Caseworkers and trainees are paid in a range from £21,000 - £28,000

There is an annual pay review each July and discretionary bonuses are paid for meeting targets and other contributions.

You will be enrolled in our pension scheme and we make a 3% employer's contribution towards it.

We are proud to be a [London Living Wage](#) employer.

Targets

All lawyers are set a billing target and a chargeable hours target.

The billing target is 1.5 times your salary in the first full financial year, 2 times your salary in the second full financial year, and 2.7 times your salary in the third (unless you do purely private client work in which case the target is 2.7 times salary from the start).

Once upon a time it was 3 times salary but we reduced it when the legal aid rates were cut by 10% and we thought it wasn't fair to make solicitors work 10% harder for no additional reward.

The chargeable hours target is 6 chargeable hours a day based on a 42 week year – an annual target of 1,260.

We do not have a long hours culture. Once you have done your 6 hours, switch off, go home, and enjoy the evening.

From time to time you may have to work in the evening or on weekends, for example if you need an injunction, or have a hearing in the morning to prepare for, or have an urgent deadline. But that should be rare. We encourage all our staff to have a good work-life balance.

Both billing and hours targets are discounted for solicitors with supervisor roles (5%-10% discount for each supervisee depending on their experience). We do not expect supervisors to have to supervise and meet the same targets as everyone else. This ensures that sufficient time is set aside for quality supervision.

Flexible working

So long as a solicitor meets their chargeable hours and billing targets, is able to discharge their professional duties to their clients, and carry out any supervisory role effectively, we are happy to agree to flexible working requests. These include working from home on a regular basis and flexible start and finish times. We will consider requests to work part-time. A number of our solicitors work 3 or 4 days a week.

Annual Leave

Caseworkers have 20 days annual leave, rising by one day a year to 25. All solicitors have 30 days annual leave. In addition, all staff have 2 extra discretionary days at Christmas. We encourage you to take your leave. Resting and re-charging the batteries is important.

Other Leave

Once you have been with us for 12 months maternity leave entitlement is on full pay for 20 weeks, and statutory maternity pay for 19 weeks. Thereafter you are entitled to a further 13 weeks of unpaid maternity leave.

Paternity leave is paid for 3 weeks after you have been with us for 6 months. We encourage parents to take their statutory parental leave entitlement. We offer a shared parental leave option. We apply the same maternity leave policy to adoption leave.

We offer up to 5 days dependency leave for staff with children or other dependent relatives.

Compassionate leave is available on a discretionary basis.

Solicitors who need time out to re-charge their batteries or do something different can request a discretionary unpaid sabbatical after 2 years of employment. In the past we have agreed sabbaticals for people who wish to do placements with charities, travel, or do academic work. Sabbaticals are discretionary and are usually for 3 months.

We offer up to 10 days paid study leave for certain law related graduate courses with a discretionary further 10 days unpaid leave.

Supervision and support

You will have a named supervisor. We have a low supervisor to team member ratio.

You will also be part of a small team and have regular team meetings.

Every quarter you will have a formal supervision meeting to discuss your progress, support you, and encourage you.

We will document your highlights from the quarter – all your successes.

We will review your Training and Development Plan.

We will ask you about any mental blocks you need help with.

We will ask you about your well-being.

You will have sample files reviewed by your supervisor and constructive feedback given.

Once a year you will have an appraisal. Prior to the appraisal you will be invited to complete a feedback form inviting you to suggest improvements that we could make in the way we run the firm.

At the end of the appraisal we will agree objectives for you to achieve over the next year – progressing your career forward.

Training and Development

You will have a Training and Development Plan which will be reviewed with you four times a year.

We arrange regular in-house training delivered by friendly barristers or our experienced solicitors.

All departments have a weekly meeting where recent legal developments are discussed and shared.

We are members of numerous practitioner associations and encourage solicitors to attend conferences and training courses where required.

We have in the past paid for solicitors to attend international conferences where they have been invited to take part. We have also sent solicitors on behalf of the firm to attend international conferences as delegates.

If you apply for a Law Society accreditation scheme or panel we will support you including paying for any training courses or exams you are required to take.

Many solicitors have served as committee members of practitioner groups and charities connected with our work and we encourage this activity by allocating a zero rated chargeable hour code to record that time as chargeable for target purposes.

Administrative support for solicitors

We offer secretarial support to our solicitors.

We have a great team of secretaries who have been with us many years. They can type documents for you, make phone calls for you, copy, print and scan for you. If you wish to dictate rather than type your own documents we use Diktaman.

We have an excellent billing team led by a Costs Lawyer. They will do all your legal aid billing for you.

Our accounts team will ensure that you pay your disbursements in time and will pay the invoices for you. They will deal with any queries you have regarding pay and expenses with a friendly smile.

Our wonderful practice secretary will deal with all your human resources questions and administration.

Our brilliant IT team will be on hand to help with all IT issues. We make use of a wide range of software. Our case management and integrated accounts system is provided by [Tikit](#), an Advanced product.

And we have the best front of house team you could wish for – switchboard and receptionists.

Always happy to help you and your clients.

Promoting you

We want you to flourish in your career. We will encourage you to write articles for our [website](#) or for publication. We will promote your success through our website and our social media channels on [Twitter](#) [LinkedIN](#) and [Facebook](#).

We will promote you to [Chambers](#) and [Legal 500](#). Our departments are all ranked in both - with numerous ranked individual lawyers. All our solicitors have an individual profile on the Legal 500 website.

Where a solicitor has made a particularly notable contribution in their area of law we may ask if we can nominate you for a [Law Society Excellence](#) or [Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Award](#). We usually nominate at least one solicitor for one or both awards each year and we have had some winners amongst us over the years.

We have a weekly newsletter called the End of Week in which we celebrate the work done during the week and the five star [Google reviews](#) that our team regularly receive.

Supporting minority groups

We understand the difficulties that solicitors from minority groups face. We actively seek to promote and support our BAME and LGBTI lawyers together with our colleagues working with a disability. We have an ethnic minority committee and arrange anti-racism training for all staff. We have an LGBTI network. We are a diverse firm and proud of it, and always trying to do better.

Well being

We take your well being seriously. We have a well-being partner who organizes the provision of support and access to helpful resources. We have teamed up with a psychologist who facilitates monthly peer support group sessions and is available for one to one sessions where needed.

We have parent friendly policies, pregnancy friendly policies and a menopause policy.

Social

And we like to have fun.....we have socials, parties, and know the pubs and restaurants of Tottenham well.

We have running groups, cycling groups, gardening groups, quiz nights, summer balls, book clubs, and a football team (all genders welcome and coaching for new players).

We walk the [London Legal Walk](#) every year to raise money for a chosen charity.

We host the annual [Kay Everett Memorial Lecture](#) and sponsor the human rights prize.

And most importantly.....we have values.

We believe in justice for all.

And we pursue justice with courage and conviction.

So come and join us.

You won't regret it.