

Life as a property dispute resolution trainee



What type of work do you gain exposure to?

Our [property dispute resolution team](#) (PDR) is one of the largest property litigation teams in the UK, with tier 1 rankings in legal leading directories [Legal 500](#) and [Chambers](#). As a trainee, I have had the opportunity to gain experience in high quality work in a variety of areas concerning property disputes.

Since starting my seat in PDR two months ago, I have assisted on matters relating to lease renewals, lease breaks, service charges, boundary disputes, restrictive covenants and rights of leaseholders to extend their lease – to name only a few.

A key skill developed during your training contract is effective and tailored client communication, particularly at Cripps where you are directly involved in matters from day one of your legal career. Our PDR team assists a wide range of clients, including major developers, institutional investors, small businesses and individuals, so experience gained during this seat is wide-ranging and invaluable for improving this skill.

Weekly team catch-up calls between our London and Tunbridge Wells offices allow everyone to know what the current workload is, what the team is working on and discuss recent legal developments. I have a weekly meeting with my supervisor to discuss my workload, review my training record and run through feedback on recent pieces of work.

What are your top tips for approaching a seat in PDR?

I am often asked to undertake legal research tasks, review leases for operative clauses, assist in preparing first



drafts of statements of case and correspondence prior to issuing proceedings.

My top tips are:

1. Keep organised – it is important to keep your diary up to date with all important deadlines, particularly if you are working on matters which involve court proceedings. Forming good matter management habits early on will set you up well for the rest of your training contract and is useful to team members you are assisting.
2. Context is key – a lesson learned during my first seat is the importance of appreciating the background to a matter, so you don't miss any important details when approaching a task. This is particularly important with property transactions, which can be complex and involve several parties. Once familiar with the reason you are carrying out the task at hand, you can focus on the assignment with the client's desired outcome in mind. This can be a huge time saver, particularly at the beginning of your seat when you are keen to impress and dive head first into the task.
3. Take control of your training contract – actively seek out the type of work you are interested in. At Cripps, we are given a 'trainee checklist' which lists the types of tasks and subject areas you can expect to get involved in. By flagging areas of particular interest to your supervisor, it can help ensure your workload is varied and gives you a real insight into your possible legal career path post-qualification.



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