



**Battens**  
SOLICITORS

# Careers at Battens Solicitors

## Why choose Battens

- 7 offices all situated in the beautiful location of the South West, close to stunning beaches, countryside and an enviable lifestyle. These locations include Yeovil, Sherborne, Castle Cary, Dorchester, Wareham, Bridport and Bath
  - Superb work/life balance
  - Bonus and Incentives schemes
  - Life assurance from the first day of employment
  - A salary sacrifice scheme or a group pension where Battens pay in 4%
  - Income protection
  - Holiday - up to 26 days per year (excluding bank holidays) increasing to 30 days with length of service
  - A range of discounted legal services provided by Battens, including free conveyancing
  - Generous staff recruitment bonus scheme
  - Everyone has an extra day's holiday on their birthday
  - Access to mental health services, including therapy sessions
  - Employee assistance programme
  - Continuing professional development with access to a range of courses, law and non-law to reach your career potential
- And for senior staff positions:
- Critical illness cover

Battens have flexible and proactive ethos of personal development. Providing and sourcing any courses to help you reach you full potential, ranging from mental health through to anything career specific. As your employer, we work alongside you to ensure you get the training you want and need.

### Corporate responsibility

There are lots of opportunities to be involved with the community through the Battens Charitable Trust.

The Battens Charitable Trust was set up in 1985, since then over £500,000 has been donated for grants to charities and for charitable purposes in Somerset, Dorset and adjoining counties. Beneficiaries have been as diverse as local schools, youth organisations, hospitals and hospices, local foodbanks, wildlife organisations, disability groups and the arts.

Some of the ways our staff get involved with this are through fundraising and volunteering, including:

- Beach clean with Dorset Wildlife trust
- Fundraising at local events including the Yeovil Half Marathon
- Bake sales
- Quiz nights

## How do you get into a career in law?

**Trainee Solicitor** – Once your law degree and legal practice course have been completed, you can undertake a trainee solicitor program. This is a two year, on the job training course, where you will gain invaluable, practical work experience. At the end of the two years, you will become a qualified solicitor.

**Chartered Legal Executive** - This route is the ideal way to obtain a law qualification for those from school leavers to graduates, legal support staff, mature students and those who already have family commitments, via on-the-job training and attending classes. A chartered legal executive is a fully trained and qualified lawyer who specialises in a particular area of law.

**Solicitor Apprenticeships** - Apprenticeships are open to anyone aged 16 years or over. Entry requirements are 5 GCSE's or equivalent. The Apprenticeship Scheme takes between 3-6 years to complete, you can learn the ropes in different departments across our busy law firm and find your feet in an area you are interested in.

**Paralegal** - at Battens the role of a paralegal is to assist solicitors or legal executive in their role by undertaking research, preparing notes, assisting with administrative parts of files, preparing documentation, speaking to clients and can even involve going to court. To become a paralegal, you need to have high organisational and researching skills, and ideally have a legal education qualification.

**Apprenticeships** - at Battens we offer several apprenticeships in Business Administration, IT, and other areas. You will need 5 GCSE's or equivalent to enter an apprenticeship, the scheme takes 2-3 years to complete, you will work and as well as having study days in college.

**Legal Secretary** - this is a vital role in any legal firm as secretaries assist solicitors and legal executives with their clients and caseload. It involves general administration and office management, managing telephone calls, making appointments, typing up correspondence and other documentation. To become a Legal Secretary, you need excellent typing and administration skills.

These are just a few of the options available for careers within law. Other key roles at Battens include marketing, IT, office administration and finance.

## Requirements

	GCSE's or equivalent	A-levels or level 3 equivalent	Law degree	Degree or equivalent	LPC	SQE 1 & 2	Law experience	CILEX
Apprenticeship	✓							
Legal Secretary	✓							
Paralegal	✓	✓	OR	✓			✓	
Chartered Legal Executive	✓						✓	✓
<b>How to become a solicitor</b>								
Trainee Solicitor 2 years	✓		2:1		✓		✓	
SQE route	✓		✓	OR	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Solicitor apprenticeship</b>								
Solicitor apprenticeship 6 years	✓						✓	
Graduate apprenticeship 3 years	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Graduate apprenticeship 2 1/2 years	✓	✓	✓				✓	

## Roles

# Trainee Solicitors

## Exciting, challenging and rewarding

Finding a training contract which suits you is the first crucial step on the way to a fulfilling legal career. Our staff play a hugely important role in the ongoing success of our business, so this is why we invest so much in your career development and retention. Battens will provide an exceptional training for you in a stimulating workplace so you can deliver an outstanding service to our clients.

Battens is one of the largest multi- disciplinary firms in the South West, a Legal 500 firm with seven offices in Somerset and Dorset with a growing workforce of more than 150 staff.

From day one you will be an integral part of the team working alongside a wide range of partners and senior associates who will supervise your career every step of the way. At Battens we offer the two-year training contract. We are a full-service law firm which means our trainees are given wide ranging training, in areas such as Family Law, Private Client, Employment, Dispute Resolution etc. Trainees are fully supervised and benefit from practical experience of case work and liaising with clients.

## What we offer

- 4 Seat rotation across a wide spectrum of work, from Dispute Resolution, Private Client, Family, Employment, Company Commercial, Residential and Commercial property, Agriculture to Media & Entertainment, IP
- Friendly, collaborative, inclusive working environment
- Ongoing support and professional skills development
- Strong record of offering jobs to trainees on qualification

"All our staff have a passion for law combined with a sincere desire to make a real difference to the lives and businesses of the clients they advise."

**Peter Livingstone, Chairman of Battens Solicitors and  
Head of Trainee scheme**

## The Process

### Step 1 apply:

Please apply via our vacancies page on our website where you will be asked to fill out an application form and upload a CV and covering letter.

### Step 2:

Your application will be reviewed and should you be successful you will be invited to a trainee assessment day.

### Step 3 assessment day:

This consists of:

- Interview by a panel made up of HR, senior management and Directors
- A one-on-one interview
- Time to prepare and deliver a presentation on a selected aspect of law
- Meet and network with our current trainees

"Battens itself is a unique firm where every individual, no matter who they are, is always overwhelmingly supportive and helpful. The firm itself has a great way of making staff feel appreciated and valued. I couldn't ask for a better place to do my training."

**Stephanie Watkiss, Trainee Solicitor**

## Meet our Trainees

### Amber Slade

"I have been given the opportunity to progress my skills in multiple ways from drafting legal documents to attending conferences with Counsel. The firm gives you a high level of responsibility early on, whilst also working at a comfortable training pace and valuing its employee's well-being highly. I have really enjoyed working with such a friendly, approachable, and supportive team."

### Stephanie Watkiss

"As a trainee at Battens no day is ever the same. My first seat in private client gave me great experience and allowed me to be involved daily with client meetings. I am currently in the family team and have already gained valuable experience in different areas such as shadowing our team at Court."

### Labiba Raza

"Currently in my second seat in Private Client the support from the team has been brilliant especially as I started my second seat in the swing of Ramadan where I was fasting. My team showed cultural awareness and patience to support me during that time. The variety of work I have been undertaking in Private Client has been vast and engaging, I have always been given the opportunity to attend client meetings and develop in all areas."



Amber Slade

Stephanie Watkiss

Labiba Raza

To find out more on the day to day life of a trainee solicitor at Battens, head to 'my legal life' section on our website.

## CILEx

The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) is the professional association and governing body for Chartered Legal Executive lawyers, other legal practitioners and paralegals.

CILEx offers a unique route to a legal career and becoming a qualified lawyer without the requirement of a law degree, although law graduates and graduates with non-law degrees can qualify as a lawyer through CILEx. The CILEx route is the ideal way to obtain a law qualification for those holding a variety of qualifications from school leavers to graduates, legal support staff, mature students and those who already have family commitments.

Those studying through CILEx receive on the job training whilst also attending classes in law and practice either at accredited sites or through distance learning.

At Battens we have many staff who have trained or are training through the CILEx route, some join at the start of their training, while others join mid program.

To help support staff through this chosen career path we enable paid study leave helping ensure participants can focus on their studies as required.

We have CILEx lawyers practicing in the following areas here at Battens, but CILEx is open to all areas of law.

- Residential Property
- Private Client
- Personal Injury
- Dispute Resolution
- Property Dispute

For more information about CILEx please visit their website at [www.cilex.org.uk](http://www.cilex.org.uk).

"I was fortunate enough to obtain an apprenticeship in business admin with Battens, and from there moved on to become a legal assistant. I was then encouraged to look at CILEx. Working and studying full time has not been easy but it was the best decision for me. I am now a qualified legal executive, already having gained years of experience within the area of law I practice has been invaluable."

**Chartered Legal Executive Jen Haynor**



## You were right, Grandad, I will be a Lawyer. Rachael's journey through law

"She will be a Lawyer" was the sentence my Grandfather used to say whenever he heard me arguing my point as a child. Of course, perhaps in an act of defiance, I did not listen to him and decided to read English Language and Linguistics at university.



After finishing university, I went back to life working in restaurants with no clear path ahead of me. Soon after, I got my job at Battens working on the reception of the Weymouth office. My partner told me it was a foot in the door. I found myself hoping that one day I would have learnt enough to take up a role as a legal secretary. But Battens saw potential in me. I remember the day the head of HR and our CEO turned up in Weymouth and asked to speak to me. "What have I done wrong" I thought. They asked me if I wanted to be a lawyer. I do not think I even paused before saying yes.

So, then it started, that same day I was enrolled on the course and started studying through the CILEx route. I quickly moved from Reception to being an assistant in our debt recovery department. I then transferred to the Yeovil office where I started to work in Dispute Resolution and Property Dispute Resolution. I knew straight away that this was the area for me. I now work in the department running my own cases.

Studying was hard. I worked full-time and then fitted the studying in around that. Mornings, evenings and weekends – whenever I had a spare moment I would be studying.

Over the years I have completed many legal exams and progressed in my career. I now have much more confidence in myself and my ability. I have now finished my CILEx exams having passed them all.

Usually, the next step would be to produce a portfolio of work and to qualify as a Chartered Legal Executive. However, I have decided that I would like to now qualify as a Solicitor. Battens have agreed to me taking this route and I will soon begin the new SQE course which has replaced the traditional LPC. I am so proud of where I am today, which I could not have done without the support of Battens. They have believed in me from day one and I hope I continue to make them proud going forward.

You were right, Grandad, I will be a Lawyer.

## Solicitor Apprenticeships

A new route to the role of solicitor which does not need a law degree or completion of the Legal Practice Course.

Our new apprenticeship programme offers a cost-effective way of qualifying as a solicitor where you can earn while you learn, receiving excellent on the job training from our team of experienced legal experts. You will be mentored every step of the way to help you progress in your legal career. All of the tuition and exam fees are covered by the scheme. You will work 4 days a week in the office, with 1 day a week studying.

We are offering 3 new routes into the legal profession for aspiring solicitors, depending on the level of academic achievement you have reached so far:

### **Solicitor apprenticeship - 6 years**

For those who have completed their A levels or achieved level 3 Cilex, then the apprenticeship provides an amazing career opportunity, cutting out the need to go away to university and removing any involvement in paying tuition fees and taking on student loans. The scheme takes 6 years to complete, during which apprentices will obtain a degree-level qualification in law and will also be supported through their Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) to qualify as a solicitor.

### **Graduate non-law - 3 years**

If you have a non-law degree, or a law degree which is more than 3 years old, or have achieved Cilex level 6, you can join Battens without having to complete the Legal Practice Course (LPC). The scheme takes 3 years to complete, during which apprentices will be supported through their Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) to qualify as a solicitor.

### **Graduate law - 2 1/2 years**

If you have a law degree which is less than 3 years old, you can join Battens without having to complete the Legal Practice Course (LPC). The scheme takes 2 and a half years to complete, during which apprentices will be supported through their Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) to qualify as a solicitor.

## Paralegal

Paralegals have a varied role where you'll dip your toes into all aspects of the legal industry. This position is an important one within a legal team and is sometimes used as preparation for qualifying as a solicitor, as the work often mirrors that of a trainee or recently qualified solicitor.

### To be a paralegal you need:

A good standard of general education, a good understanding of the law and legal system, and good administration skills.

To complete the study stage of your journey to becoming a paralegal, you could take one of the following paths to gain paralegal qualifications:

- Experience within a legal role
- A-level or equivalent in law
- A Law Degree
- Legal secretary certificate or diploma
- National Association of Licensed Paralegals (NALP) paralegal practice award, certificate, diploma

## Legal Secretary

Legal secretaries undertake a range of tasks supporting the legal work of a firm, department or individual. Typical tasks include:

- Typing and preparing contracts and agreements, according to a lawyer's instructions
- Typing letters and correspondence
- Managing diaries and appointments
- Preparing forms and other documents
- Liaising with clients
- Maintaining and managing filing and record systems

You do not need a legal qualification or degree to become a legal secretary. Some law graduates will take up legal secretarial roles to gain insight and experience of working in a law firm.

## Apprenticeships

You don't always need a law degree to work for us but you can gain more qualifications while you work. Apprenticeships are always a win: win, it is a job with training meaning you can earn while you learn and gain the necessary skills and competencies in your chosen career.

### How do they work?

Apprenticeships are open to anyone aged 16 yrs or over. Entry levels range from 5 GCSE's or the equivalent up to Degree level which is Bachelor's / Master's Degree or equivalent. The Apprenticeship Scheme takes between 2 - 3 years to complete. If you do an apprenticeship with Battens you can learn the ropes in different departments across our busy law firm and find your feet in an area you are interested in.

Apprentices work in all areas of the business including; administration, HR, IT, marketing and facilities. As you are working in a busy law firm you will also get to experience many of the different legal areas of the business.

To find out more about apprenticeships, visit the government website - <https://www.gov.uk/become-apprentice>

## Vacancies

To see our current vacancies, head to our website [www.battens.co.uk/careers/current-vacancies](http://www.battens.co.uk/careers/current-vacancies) or scan the qr code below.

To apply for a job, please use the 'apply' link which will take you through to our online application form. You will be asked to fill in some details about yourself, with the option to upload your CV.

