

LEADING MINDS

Human sustainability in the legal sector

Recruitment

- Partnering with schools and outreach programmes are a great opportunity to gain exposure to early talent. If social mobility is of importance, ensure you have the right target audience by choosing partnerships accordingly
- Be aware that parents/guardians are a key part of the decision making process. Put a focus on demystifying apprenticeships with candidates and parents, highlighting that they are a debt free entry into a profession, not simply a low pay option for those who did not do well at school
- Create buy-in from your leaders. There are commercial advantages to taking on apprentices, research shows for every £1 invested, on average, firms reap a £28 return. Your firm will also attract a more diverse socially mobile talent stream, and create leadership opportunities for those supporting these individuals
- Work closely with a training provider to identify what marks a great apprentice, as what you are looking for from a school leaver is radically different to a graduate
- Assessment centre criteria should be tailored to fit the different level of experience this group has - ensure strength based interviews and group activities reflect this level of experience. Assessors should fully understand the group and anticipate different responses than when dealing with a graduate group

Trainee-Apprentice Parity

- Aim to create equality of opportunity between your trainees and apprentices, whilst respecting that they will need radically different training to reflect the challenges they face in their role. At the four year mark consider putting solicitor apprentices on to the same career pathway as trainees, utilise seat rotations and ensure appropriate learning opportunities pre-qualification. Equality in salaries could also be a key consideration at this stage

General

- Have role models within the firm that apprentices can relate to - these individuals may have been socially mobile or successfully completed their apprenticeship
- Consider putting in place an apprentice training principal for pastoral care, this individual can support and provide guidance to both the apprentice and apprentice supervisor

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Supervision

- Apprentice supervisors can make or break an apprenticeship. Choose supervisors who are patient and enthusiastic, and have capacity to meet the demands of the role
- Ensure supervisors have management training, to enable them to create psychological safety for a school leaver and are leading individuals in a structured way
- Work closely with your training provider to understand the full training journey, and enhance this with complimentary training focused on EQ, legal skills and other key competencies

Allocation

- Ensure the supervisor is aware of division between study / office time and allocates workload appropriately
- Protecting study time should not be left to apprentices, supervisors should be aware of upcoming exams dates to ensure they can effectively manage workload
- Choose a team who will champion the apprentice and offer them real responsibility. Ensure the team at large are aware of the competencies the apprentice is working on that term and look for opportunities to help them develop those competencies during their seat rotation

Debriefing / Feedback

- Prioritise a three-way relationship between supervisor, apprentice and the training provider. Despite their busy schedules, encourage supervisors to be present at review meetings, engaging in the apprentices learning experience and being aware of upcoming milestones
- Provide regular feedback that is geared to the apprentices' experience level, focus on learning opportunities and ensure it is delivered in a constructive manner
- Celebrate successes to maintain engagement. Ensure teams are aware of milestones, acknowledge contributions and put apprentices forward for awards