



CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Legal Services



Legal Services are an award winning team; winning four awards at the prestigious Municipal Journal Awards in 2017, one of which was the coveted title "Local Authority of the Year". We also won the Junior Lawyer Award 2021, and the Community Impact Award 2023 at the Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) Awards.



"I am the Chief Operating Officer, Monitoring Officer and Solicitor to the Council. As such, I have overall management responsibility for Legal Services who do a fantastic job in enabling the Council as a whole, to achieve its aims. I am passionate about 'growing our own' and helping local people develop and flourish. With that in mind, I wholeheartedly support the work experience schemes on offer by Legal Services and their aim to provide training contracts to aspiring Solicitors. This is an exciting time for the city, the Council and for Legal Services."

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer



"I joined the council's legal team in 1999 as a solicitor undertaking children and adults social care, education and housing law. I progressed to principal solicitor, then head of children and adults and became head of Legal Services in 2015. I have thoroughly enjoyed my journey in local government, which has been exciting, varied and inspirational. Twenty-four years is a long time, but the Council has held my interest. My role is challenging but interesting and I have worked with some fantastic people and gained a vast amount of knowledge, which I hope to share with our next generation of lawyers."

Tracey Christie, Head of Legal Services

"I worked in private practice for almost 20 years, where I followed the traditional route of progression from assistant solicitor through to equity partner. In need of a new challenge, I joined Wolverhampton City Council as Legal Services Practice Manager in 2022. My only regret is that I didn't do it sooner. As a student, I was unaware of the invaluable work legal professionals in local government do and that is why I am passionate about getting this message across to today's aspiring lawyers. The work is challenging but it is also diverse, interesting and most of all rewarding."

Joanne Hartshorne, Legal Services Practice Manager





Commercial Property Team

Our Commercial Property Team deals with

- ◆ Regeneration & development work
- ◆ Commercial property & residential conveyancing
- ◆ Local land charges
- ◆ Planning & Highways
- ◆ Advice & support to external organisations
- ◆ Academy conversions
- ◆ Traffic regulation orders
- ◆ Right to buy matters
- ◆ Auctions

The Commercial Property Team deals with a range of legal matters including property, planning, land charges, highways and school conversions. This places them at the forefront of initiatives across the city.



"I joined Wolverhampton City Council in 2022 after working in private practice for over 10 years. The move to the Council has been a really positive step in my career and I thoroughly enjoy the type of work I deal with here. It is really rewarding being part of an organisation who are looking to better the City Centre."

Nicola Bates, Solicitor



Armed with a wealth of experience and breadth of capability, the commercial property team is involved in numerous projects, including large scale regeneration schemes at The Interchange, Canalside, and City Learning Quarter. We also work on housing developments at sites including Thompson Avenue, Tap Works, The Marches and Bilston Urban Village. We're involved in tree planting initiatives in conjunction with a statutory water undertaker; as well as transportation developments, the licensing of firework displays, garages, and funfairs; in addition to numerous projects supporting local arts and culture ventures.





Corporate Team

Our award-winning corporate team has worked on numerous exciting projects in Wolverhampton, including the Commonwealth Games, and the development of a new box space leisure park in the city centre. This will incorporate new shops, restaurants and an entertainment venue for live performances.

We are contributing to the rejuvenation of the city centre with the reopening of the Civic Halls, and we are facilitating the development of new offices, shops, hotels and transport links throughout the city.

Our team also works on environmental schemes, such as waste management; ensuring that waste is collected, recycled and disposed of efficiently. We aim to create a cleaner, greener city for everyone.

In recent years, Wolverhampton was chosen as one of the first areas in the UK to spearhead the £1.5 Billion 'Levelling Up' agenda, and the corporate team is heavily involved in this impressive opportunity for sustainable growth and new development.

Our Corporate Team deals with

- ◆ Commercial contracts
- ◆ Construction & Procurement
- ◆ Competition & subsidy control
- ◆ Employment law
- ◆ EU & central government funded work
- ◆ PFI
- ◆ Company law advice
- ◆ Pension Fund matters



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“I started at Wolverhampton Council in 2022 as an apprentice working towards my CILEX grade 3 qualification. It was a great opportunity to learn while working. The team were friendly, and encouraged me to seize new opportunities; I'm now working on a grade 7 apprenticeship training to be a solicitor.”

Lucy Barford, Legal Apprentice

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Litigation Team

Litigation is a fast-paced team that deals with a wide range of criminal and civil matters. As an in-house service, the litigation team works on a spectrum of cases that reflect the variety of work the council is involved in. We work at all levels of the court system, including the Supreme Court on matters such as the successful prosecution of rogue traders and a high-profile operation to tackle organised crime by closing down premises used to defraud thousands of unsuspecting customers.



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“Working for Legal Services at the City of Wolverhampton Council has been a substantial opportunity at shaping my future career; the department has provided me with an invaluable experience and the lessons I am taught each day on the team have enhanced my knowledge and skills vastly.”

Julia Myslak, Appeals Officer

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From multi million pound commercial disputes, advising on health and safety matters at inquests, to environmental health cases, licensing disputes, anti-social behaviour injunctions and housing disrepair claims; we aim to improve the lives of local people and make Wolverhampton a safer place to live and work

Our Litigation Team deals with

- ◆ Civil litigation
- ◆ Criminal litigation
- ◆ Consumer protection
- ◆ Inquests
- ◆ High profile prosecutions
- ◆ Taxi & premises licences
- ◆ Judicial reviews
- ◆ Health & safety prosecutions
- ◆ Housing matters, including repossession
- ◆ ASBO injunctions
- ◆ Debt recovery
- ◆ Food safety
- ◆ Contractual litigation
- ◆ Litter prosecutions
- ◆ Landlord & tenant rights
- ◆ Administrative law



Social Care and Education Team

Our team works hard to improve the provision and quality of education in our city. This includes dealing with requirements for special educational needs and prosecutions for school non-attendance. We work closely with schools and academies, offering advice to improve education standards at all levels. Almost 90% of schools in Wolverhampton were rated either Good or Outstanding during 2021 to 2022.

The Social Care and Education team deals with a diverse range of issues involving the protection of children and vulnerable people throughout the city. We advise social workers, and apply for care and supervision orders. We also deal with adoptions and the protection of young people at risk, as well as mental health care for both adults and children. Our aim is to create a better, safer city for the next generation.

Our Childcare Team deals with

- ◆ Care and supervision
- ◆ Child protection
- ◆ Forced marriages
- ◆ FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)
- ◆ Mental health & adult social care
- ◆ Education prosecution for non-school attendance
- ◆ Education advice
- ◆ Court of protection
- ◆ Youth offending
- ◆ Special educational needs
- ◆ Judicial Reviews

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“I believe being an apprentice has given me amazing opportunities to work with a talented and diverse legal team. It is a vibrant work environment that has given me the confidence to come out of my comfort zone and push myself to work harder and put myself forward for new and challenging tasks.”

Lola Fittes, Legal Apprentice

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Work Experience

In 2023 Legal Services launched its new work experience scheme. We offer work experience packages available to students, undergraduates and post graduates of all ages.

We aim to present a comprehensive introduction to our services, providing aspiring legal professionals with invaluable insights into the legal industry.

Work experience with our teams is designed to expose individuals to the real-world operation of a legal team, helping them develop essential skills and knowledge to excel in their future careers.

Students work across all four of our legal teams, working closely with our solicitors, attending court and learning from real professionals on real cases. Some of our work experience students have even gone on to have successful careers with us.



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“I had been very candid in my personal statement about my neurodivergent and chronic pain characteristics because they impact my daily life. My work experience was arranged over a two-week period to accommodate this without me requesting to do so. Inclusivity was taken seriously.”

Santosh Kumari, work experience student

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“The insight that my week of work experience provided allowed me to imagine myself working further with the Council. When the position of Licensing Appeals Officer was advertised, I applied and was successful. To gain practical experience before commencing my university studies was absolutely invaluable.”

Roan Siddhu, Appeals Officer

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Working for the City of Wolverhampton Council



The council offers a range of benefits to its employees, including a competitive salary with incremental progression, and generous leave entitlement with a minimum of 25 days holiday plus bank holidays which rises in-line with length of service. The council has an agile

and flexible working policy and there is also the opportunity to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Our department is Lexcel accredited and offers the opportunity to gain legal excellence both as individuals and as part of a team.



"Legal Services provides the opportunity to grow professionally. There are endless transferable skills to be acquired; legal research, analytical skills, attention to detail and interpersonal skills. The teams work together seamlessly, encourage each other to aim high and make this reality through training and open communication"

Farhana Begum, Paralegal

A career within Legal Services provides opportunities to gain new qualifications in apprenticeships and trainee positions. Beyond that, we continue to offer personal and professional development opportunities including obtaining higher rights of audience

and being mentored within the wider leadership scheme. Everyone in the team has regular supervision meetings with their direct managers to plan their further learning and reach their full potential.

"The Council's inhouse lawyers perform an essential role in shaping major transactions and projects to ensure not just legal compliance but achievement of best value. The lawyers are embedded in the management team and responsible for more than black letter law advice"

John Roseblade, Director of Resident Services

