

Matthew Peto relates his experience as a Barlow Robbins LLP trainee

In the current legal market, where the lucrative training contract seems even more difficult to obtain, the importance of choosing the right type of firm for you becomes all the more important.

Barlow Robbins is a medium-sized regional firm, which offers a wide range of legal services. The firm is well-established in the South-East, whilst also able to attract high-quality work from the surrounding regions, including London. I felt sure that Barlow Robbins could provide me with excellent training and I have not been disappointed.

In my mind, there are two major differences that stand out when comparing medium-sized regional firms like Barlow Robbins and the larger city firms: responsibility afforded to trainees and quality of life.

I was very careful to ensure that I applied to a firm where responsibility is offered at an early stage. It is important to remember that after two years of training, responsibility and accountability for files is guaranteed, but without the benefit of being a trainee! In my opinion, a clear point at which you have responsibility is when clients start dealing specifically with you, rather than with your supervising partner. I have had this in abundance working for the firm. Indeed, this is seen as a necessary part of the training and development at Barlow Robbins; client management and building client relationships is just as important, if not more so, than merely advising on the law. This constant client interaction has benefited me greatly and will stand me in good stead for later career progression.



When choosing a career in law, it is fair to say that you have to be prepared to work hard, but I was not prepared to give my life away to the law firm that I worked for. Barlow Robbins is a firm that welcomes and respects a work-life balance. Staying late at work is a rarity rather than the norm, which means planning (and having!) time away from work is possible.

The willingness of Barlow Robbins to invest in its trainees was one of the most compelling reasons for my application to the firm. From the firm's kind offer to assist financially with the Legal Practice Course (extremely welcome given the level of debt accumulated by students these days!) to its emphasis on close supervising partner-trainee relationships and the re-assuring Mentor Scheme, trainees can be confident of receiving significant responsibility and attention from the firm, but in a supportive environment. Barlow Robbins is very careful and thorough when appointing trainees, only taking on between 3-4 each year.

So, a year on and having done seats in both Dispute Resolution and Residential Property, I am now halfway through my training contract. Looking back, it is hard to comprehend the progress I have made as a solicitor. Of course, the time I have invested into my career has paid dividends, but would I be in the same position without the investment made by Barlow Robbins...?