



Law Society
of Scotland

Traineeship Survey Analysis

Training manager and supervising solicitor survey

November 2022



Overview

In spring 2022 we launched two surveys to better understand the experience of those involved in traineeships – both trainee solicitors and those involved in training. The responses to both surveys provide telling insight. This overview relates to the training manager and supervising solicitor survey.

We are grateful to the 139 respondents who completed this survey. It is difficult to know how many training managers and supervising solicitors there are in the Scottish legal profession as: (a) Some individuals will hold both roles (e.g. those at smaller entities or where there is only one trainee). (b) There is a register of training managers but there is no register of supervising solicitors and it is common for supervising solicitors to change throughout a traineeship. The approach to supervising trainee solicitors is individual to each practice unit (and may differ even within practice units) and will depend on a number of factors such as the size of the practice unit or the type of work undertaken.

This is an overview report. We have aimed to ensure that any amendments we have made to responses (eg removing details of a specific issue that might identify a trainee or trainer including information which may lead to guessing as to who an individual may be) or redaction (where an individual was named or alluded to) do not obscure the intent of the response. We have been particularly sensitive with any matters where health or disability was mentioned.

The Society has, since the survey was undertaken, already taken some steps in response to the survey. These have included:

- Increasing the level of trainee remuneration by 5%.
- Organising a training session on how to train trainees with a specialist employment and discrimination lawyer. This was well attended and well received with over 40 training managers attending.
- Organising an event promoting psychological safety in the profession.
- Hosting a session at the Society's annual conference on best practice about training trainees.
- Publishing additional detailed advice and information on supporting trainees in the early stages of appearing in court.

The results of the surveys will continue to shape the Society's thinking – not just in Education & Training and Admissions but in policy, legal aid and beyond.

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Executive summary

- 139 respondents completed the survey.
- 85% of respondents worked in private practice.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents worked in either Lothian and Borders or Glasgow and Strathkelvin
- Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were the nominated training manager for their training unit.
- 70 out of 72 respondents who answered the question on delegated supervision of trainees said they were confident to at least some extent that they would be able to identify problematic behaviour by someone to whom they had delegated supervision
- 70 out of 75 respondents who answered the question on problematic behaviour said that they were confident to at least some extent that they would be able to deal with problematic behaviour or deal with an allegation by anyone of bullying or harassment
- 91% of respondents advised that they were involved in the day-to-day supervision of trainees.
- More than four out of five respondents who answered the question on trainee performance said that they have not had any concerns about a current trainee's performance or their ability to meet PEAT 2 (traineeship) outcomes
- 89% of respondents who answered the questions on workload, timescales, feedback etc. relating to trainees, agreed that they have allocated work and tasks at an appropriate level to their trainee(s), gradually increasing the level and complexity of work over time, 73% agreeing to a great extent
- 94% of respondents who answered the question on funding from the Scottish Government Legal Aid Traineeship Fund advised that none of the traineeships in their practice unit were funded by that Fund

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What sector did you work in?

138 respondents answered this question, while one respondent skipped it.

85% of respondents worked in private practice

Answer Options	Responses	
Sole practitioner	11.59%	16
Private practice (2-10 partners)	37.68%	52
Private practice (11-30 partners)	11.59%	16
Private practice (31+ partners)	23.91%	33
In-house public sector	12.32%	17
In-house private sector	2.90%	4
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

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In which sheriffdom do you mainly practise?

Respondents were asked in which sheriffdom they mainly practised. All 139 respondents answered this question. As expected, almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) worked in either Lothian and Borders or Glasgow and Strathkelvin.

The answers given to the 'other' answer option included UK wide and international practice; Scotland wide and several sheriffdoms.

Answer Options	Responses	
Lothian and Borders	38.85%	54
Glasgow and Strathkelvin	24.46%	34
Grampian, Highland and Islands	14.39%	20
North Strathclyde	2.16%	3
South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway	5.04%	7
Tayside, Central and Fife	7.19%	10
Prefer not to answer	2.88%	4
Other (please specify)	5.04%	7

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Which practice areas did trainees gain experience in during their traineeship?

Respondents were asked to provide information on the practice areas that their trainee(s) gained experience in during their traineeship. All 139 respondents answered this question. They were able to select all the answer options that applied.

Private client received the highest percentage of responses at just over 50%, with company and commercial, residential property and dispute resolution all receiving just less than 50% of the responses provided. Fewer than 10% of all responses were for social welfare and immigration and asylum. The results to this question correspond with the significant percentage of respondents who worked in private practice.

Answer Options	Responses	
Private client	51.08%	71
Residential property	48.20%	67
Company and commercial	48.20%	67
Dispute resolution	47.48%	66
Family law	43.88%	61
Employment and pensions	41.73%	58
Administrative and public	23.74%	33
Business premises	23.74%	33
Accident and injury	22.30%	31
Money and debt	20.86%	29
Energy, utilities and transport	18.71%	26
Regulation and compliance	18.71%	26
Media, IT and intellectual property	16.55%	23
Other (please specify)	15.11%	21
Consumer and civil rights	14.39%	20
Criminal law	11.51%	16
Immigration and asylum	9.35%	13
Social welfare	5.76%	8

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Are you the nominated training manager at your training unit (there is only one per training unit)?

Respondents were asked if they were the nominated training manager at their training unit. We advised respondents that each training unit only has one nominated training manager. 138 respondents answered this question, while one respondent skipped it¹.

Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were the nominated training manager for their training unit.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	63.77%	88
No	36.23%	50

If you delegate supervision to other solicitors, what steps do you take to ensure those solicitors are undertaking their supervisory role appropriately?

Respondents were asked what steps they take to ensure solicitors that they have delegated supervision of trainee solicitors to are undertaking their supervisory role appropriately.

70 respondents answered this question, while 69 respondents skipped it.

The most popular answer provided was regular meetings and discussions with the supervising solicitor, other partners, and/or the trainee solicitor (38 respondents).

20 respondents answered not applicable or that they do not, or tend not to, delegate supervision.

Four respondents highlighted that supervising solicitors are experienced, and four respondents highlighted that supervising solicitors have received training or have access to training materials.

¹ If answered, this question acted as a filter for the next questions in this report covering delegated supervision to other solicitors, identification of problematic behaviour and dealing with any such behaviour. If a respondent skipped this question, they would be asked the following questions as the routing in the survey could not take effect.

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How confident are you that you would be able to identify problematic behaviour by someone to whom you have delegated supervision?

72 respondents answered this question.

70 out of 72 respondents were confident to some extent that they would be able to identify problematic behaviour by someone to whom they had delegated supervision. Two respondents advised that they would not feel so confident in identifying this behaviour. Nobody selected the “not at all confident” answer option.

Answer Options	Responses	
Very confident	56.94%	41
Somewhat confident	40.28%	29
Not so confident	2.78%	2
Not at all confident	0.00%	0

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How confident would you feel about dealing with such behaviour or dealing with an allegation by a trainee (or indeed any member of staff) who alleged bullying or harassment?

75 respondents answered this question.

70 out of 75 respondents were confident to some extent that they would be able to deal with problematic behaviour or deal with an allegation by anyone of bullying or harassment. Five respondents advised that they would not feel so confident in dealing with this behaviour or an allegation of bullying or harassment. There were no responses to the answer option "Not at all confident".

Answer Options	Responses	
Very confident	53.33%	40
Somewhat confident	40.00%	30
Not so confident	6.67%	5
Not at all confident	0.00%	0

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Are you involved in the day-to-day supervision of trainees?

This question was asked of all respondents. 132 respondents answered this question, with seven respondents skipping it. ²

91% of respondents advised that they were involved in the day-to-day supervision of trainees.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	90.91%	120
No	9.09%	12

How experienced would you say you are in terms of supervising trainees?

121 respondents answered this question, while 18 respondents skipped it. 86% of respondents had some experience of supervising trainees and this was not their first trainee supervisory role.

The question provides context for respondents' answers to the other questions in this section. The experience of a respondent who was supervising a trainee for the first time may be different to a respondent who has considerable experience in supervising trainees.

Answer Options	Responses	
This is the first time I have supervised trainees	14.05%	17
I have some experience	38.84%	47
I have considerable experience	47.11%	57

² If answered, this question was a filter for the following questions in this report covering experience in supervising trainees, training or development focused on managing or supervising junior members of staff and concerns around a trainee's ability to meet PEAT2 (traineeship) Outcomes. Not all respondents were asked all of the questions as the opportunity to answer some questions were based on earlier answers (routing). If a respondent skipped this question, they would be asked the following questions as the routing in the survey could not take effect.

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Prior to supervising your current trainee(s), when did you last train/supervise a trainee?

103 respondents answered this question, while 36 respondents skipped it.

The majority of respondents (56 respondents) answered that they train a trainee annually. Just over one in four respondents advised that it had been at least two years since they last trained or supervised a trainee.

Answer Options	Responses	
This is the first trainee I have supervised	2.91%	3
I train a trainee annually	54.37%	56
One to two years ago	16.50%	17
Two to five years ago	12.62%	13
Over five years ago	13.59%	14

Prior to supervising trainees, had you undertaken any training or development focusing on managing and supervising junior members of staff?

119 respondents answered this question, while 20 respondents skipped it.

Just over one half of respondents advised that prior to supervising trainees they had not undertaken any training or development focusing on managing or supervising junior members of staff.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	47.90%	57
No	52.10%	62

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When planning your annual CPD, do you routinely include training on how to manage and supervise junior members of staff?

119 respondents answered this question, while 20 respondents skipped it.

Almost seven in ten respondents answered that they do not routinely include training on how to manage and supervise junior members of staff in in their annual CPD.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	30.25%	36
No	69.75%	83

What additional support do you think the Society should provide to training managers and supervising solicitors?

Respondents were asked what additional support they thought the Society should provide to training managers and supervising solicitors. 67 respondents answered this free text question, while 72 respondents skipped it.

A majority of respondents (39 respondents) suggested specific training, seminars/webinars and CPD (with mentions of free online courses or videos, a course on setting objectives and carrying out quarterly reviews, sessions on supervision, free CPD etc.)

Several respondents suggested more detailed guidance and several respondents suggested support if issues do arise. Six respondents suggested nothing more is required.

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Have you had any concerns about a current trainee's performance or their ability to meeting PEAT2 (traineeship) outcomes?

119 respondents answered this question, while 20 respondents skipped it.

More than four out of five respondents answered that they have not had any concerns about a current trainee's performance or their ability to meet PEAT 2 (traineeship) outcomes.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	18.49%	22
No	81.51%	97

How did you address those concerns? In general terms, please can you outline what your concerns were?

20 respondents answered this question, while 119 respondents skipped it.

Respondents highlighted time management and performance issues. It appears that the majority of respondents who answered this question have had discussions with the trainee, provided feedback and guidance and, in some cases, put in place a development plan to support the trainee.

What steps do you think you would take to address any concerns about a trainee's performance that may arise in the future?

90 respondents answered this free text question. We have reviewed the responses by themes.

The majority of respondents (58) highlighted that they would have discussions and/or meetings with those involved and it would involve monitoring of the trainee going forward.

Nine respondents also made reference to creating a performance plan, using performance management, setting of goals and/or objectives to address any issues.

A small number of respondents (five) also made reference to providing additional training for the trainee.

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Approximately, how often between quarterly reviews do you discuss development with your trainee(s)?

115 respondents answered the question on approximately how often between quarterly reviews they discussed development with their trainee(s), while 24 respondents skipped it.

One half of respondents answered that they discussed development with their trainee(s) at least once a week.

Answer Options	Responses	
At least once a week	50.43%	58
Fortnightly	21.74%	25
Monthly	17.39%	20
We tend to wait until quarterly reviews	10.43%	12

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To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with seven statements. 124 respondents answered this question, while 15 respondents skipped it.

Overview of the responses

- 89% of respondents agreed that they have allocated work and tasks at an appropriate level to their trainee(s), gradually increasing the level and complexity of work over time, 73% agreeing to a great extent
- 87% of respondents agreed that they set realistic timescales for work to be completed and answer questions as they arise, within a supportive environment that does not deter trainees from asking questions in the future, with 73% agreeing to a great extent
- 88% of respondents agreed that they monitor their trainee's workload to ensure that they have a sufficient but not an excessive workload, with 65% agreeing to a great extent
- 87% of respondents agreed that they provide their trainee(s) with a balance of substantive and procedural tasks that, as a whole, demand the use of a broad range of skills, with 59% agreeing to a great extent
- 90% of respondents agreed that they provide an environment that encourages their trainee(s) to take responsibility for their own development, with 72% agreeing to a great extent
- 88% of respondents agreed that they provide clear instructions and ensure that they are understood, with 67% agreeing to a great extent
- 88% of respondents agreed that they give regular feedback regarding their trainee's performance, recognising achievements and improvements, and constructively raising areas that require further effort, with 65% of respondents agreeing to a great extent

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	Disagree - not at all		Disagree to some extent		Neither agree or disagree		Agree to some extent		Agree to a great extent		Training manager and not involved in day to day supervision which is delegated to other solicitors	
I have allocated work and tasks at an appropriate level to my trainee(s), gradually increasing the level and complexity of work over time	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.81%	1	15.32%	19	73.39%	91	10.48%	13
I set realistic timescales for work to be completed and answer questions as they arise, within a supportive environment that does not deter trainees from asking questions in the future	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.61%	2	14.52%	18	72.58%	90	11.29%	14
I monitor my trainee's workload to ensure that they have sufficient but not an excessive workload	0.00%	0	0.81%	1	0.81%	1	22.58%	28	65.32%	81	10.48%	13
I provide my trainee(s) with a balance of substantive and procedural tasks that, as a whole, demand the use of a broad range of skills	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.61%	2	28.23%	35	58.87%	73	11.29%	14
I provide an environment that encourages my trainee(s) to take responsibility for their own development	0.00%	0	0.81%	1	0.81%	1	18.55%	23	71.77%	89	8.06%	10
I provide clear instructions and ensure that they are understood	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.81%	1	20.97%	26	66.94%	83	11.29%	14
I give regular feedback regarding my trainee's performance, recognising achievements and improvements, and constructively raising areas that require further effort	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.81%	1	22.58%	28	65.32%	81	11.29%	14

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TRAINEESHIPS FUNDED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TRAINEESHIP FUND

Were any of the traineeships in your practice unit funded by the SGLATF?

All respondents were asked if any of the traineeships in their practice unit were funded by the Scottish Government Legal Aid Traineeship Fund. 123 respondents answered this question, while 16 respondents skipped it.³

94% of respondents advised that none of the traineeships in their practice unit were funded by the Scottish Government Legal Aid Traineeship Fund.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	5.69%	7
No	94.31%	116

Do you have any thoughts on the application process for the traineeships?

Five respondents answered this question. The comments received included the following:

- One respondent advised the process was 'confusing'
- Another respondent suggested that 'more publicity' was needed
- One respondent said the 'application process was easy to follow'

³ If answered, this question was a filter for the following questions relating to traineeships funded by the Scottish Government Legal Aid Traineeship Fund. If a respondent skipped this question, they would be asked the following questions as the routing in the survey could not take effect.

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If the traineeship were to be repeated, is there anything that the Society and the Scottish Government could do to improve the process?

Four respondents answered this question.

The respondents suggested the following improvements:

- greater sharing of information in the application process
- allocate funding based on merit rather than a first come first served basis
- clarity on the process relating to funding if the trainee does not complete the traineeship
- improved communication with practice units on the back up list relating to the allocating of funding

Is your Scottish Government Legal Aid Traineeship Fund trainee getting exposure to legal aid work?

Eight respondents answered this question, while 131 respondents skipped it. Respondents were able to select all answer options that applied.

88% of responses (seven) were for civil legal aid, with 50% (four) for criminal legal aid and 25% (two) for children's legal aid. All respondents advised that their Scottish Government Legal Aid Traineeship Fund trainee was getting exposure to legal aid work.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes - criminal legal aid	50.00%	4
Yes - civil legal aid	87.50%	7
Yes - children's legal aid	25.00%	2
No	0.00%	0

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Approximately, what percentage of work overall is legally aided?

Respondents were asked what percentage of their work overall is legally aided.

Seven respondents answered this question. 86% of respondents (six) advised that 80% to 100% of their work overall was legally aided and all respondents (seven) advised that at least 60% of their work overall was legally aided.

Answer Options	Responses	
80% to 100%	85.71%	6
60% to 80%	14.29%	1
40% to 60%	0.00%	0
20% to 40%	0.00%	0
Lower than 20%	0.00%	0

As all respondents answered that their trainee was getting some exposure to legal aid, the question on whether there is a plan in place for that trainee to gain exposure to legal aid work in the near future was not answered by any respondents.

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Which other areas of law is your Scottish Government Legal Aid Fund Traineeship trainee getting exposure to (if any)?

Six respondents answered this question, while 133 respondents skipped it.

The following answers were given:

- private client
- children's hearings
- immigration, asylum and trafficking
- judicial review and public law
- family and child law
- mental health tribunal representation
- none

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EARLY ADMISSION

Has/have (any of) the trainee(s) you supervise been admitted and now hold(s) a restricted practising certificate?

117 respondents answered this question, while 22 respondents skipped it.

Respondents were able to provide details on up to five trainees. We anticipated that few, if any, supervising solicitors would be responsible for more than five trainees at the one time. We know that some nominated training managers may be responsible for more than five trainees and provided them the opportunity to tell us that they delegate day to day supervision to others.

More than 50% of respondents who answered this question for each of the five trainees below indicated that the trainee had not been admitted and therefore does not hold a restricted practising certificate (answer options of no, but they are eligible to be admitted; and no, but they are not yet eligible to be admitted).

	Yes		No, but they are eligible to be admitted		No, but they are not yet eligible to be admitted		I am the nominated training manager and delegate day to day supervision to other solicitors		Total
Trainee A	32.48%	38	23.93%	28	36.75%	43	6.84%	8	117
Trainee B	22.45%	11	18.37%	9	38.78%	19	20.41%	10	49
Trainee C	9.68%	3	29.03%	9	29.03%	9	32.26%	10	31
Trainee D	8.00%	2	32.00%	8	28.00%	7	32.00%	8	25
Trainee E	0.00%	0	21.05%	4	36.84%	7	42.11%	8	19

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When was/were the trainee(s) admitted and held a restricted practising certificate, if applicable?

100 respondents answered this question, while 39 respondents skipped it.

The majority of respondents who answered this question selected the answer option of 'N/A'. The next most popular answer was 'after 12 months or later'.

	After 3 months		After 4 months		After 5 months		After 6 months		After 7 months		After 8 months		After 9 months		After 10 months		After 11 months		After 12 months or later		N/A	
Trainee A	6.00%	6	1.00%	1	1.00%	1	3.00%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	2.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	26.00%	26	61.00%	61
Trainee B	7.32%	3	0.00%	0	2.44%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	19.51%	8	70.73%	29
Trainee C	8.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12.00%	3	80.00%	20
Trainee D	5.26%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10.53%	2	84.21%	16
Trainee E	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17.65%	3	82.35%	14

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Has/have any of your trainee(s) appeared in court where he/she was/were required to hold a restricted practising certificate, if applicable?

110 respondents answered this question, while 29 respondents skipped it.

The majority of respondents who answered this question selected not applicable.

	Yes		No		N/A		Total
Trainee A	27.27%	30	14.55%	16	58.18%	64	110
Trainee B	18.18%	8	13.64%	6	68.18%	30	44
Trainee C	15.38%	4	7.69%	2	76.92%	20	26
Trainee D	15.00%	3	5.00%	1	80.00%	16	20
Trainee E	17.65%	3	5.88%	1	76.47%	13	17

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When during the traineeship did the trainee first appear in court where he/she was required to hold a restricted practising certificate?

100 respondents answered this question, while 39 respondents skipped it.

The vast majority of respondents who answered this question selected the answer option of 'N/A'. The next most popular answer was 'after 12 months or later'.

	After 3 months		After 4 months		After 5 months		After 6 months		After 7 months		After 8 months		After 9 months		After 10 months		After 11 months		After 12 months or later		N/A	
Trainee A	4.00%	4	2.00%	2	2.00%	2	3.00%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	18.00%	18	71.00%	71
Trainee B	2.38%	1	4.76%	2	2.38%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	9.52%	4	80.95%	34
Trainee C	3.85%	1	3.85%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	7.69%	2	84.62%	22
Trainee D	5.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10.00%	2	85.00%	17
Trainee E	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17.65%	3	82.35%	14

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The training manager guidance states that it is of fundamental importance that trainees, particularly those admitted early, are only allocated work that they are ready and competent to undertake. What sort of appearances did you allocate to your trainee(s), if applicable?

53 respondents answered this question, while 86 respondents skipped it.

The answers that respondents provided included:

- procedural hearings
- 'straightforward' hearings
- simple procedure cases
- joint motions
- recovery of possession
- intermediate diets
- 'N/A' or that they are not involved in court work

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Reflecting on early court appearances by your trainee(s), which of the following steps did you take to support the trainee(s), if applicable?

90 respondents answered this question, while 49 respondents skipped it. Respondents were able to select all of the answer options that applied.

Over 60% of answers provided were for the answer option of 'N/A'. This suggests that the trainees being supported and supervised by respondents have not yet undertaken early court appearances.

Just over a third of answers provided were for the following steps:

- ensured that the trainee had the necessary paperwork timeously
- ensured that the trainee was briefed properly
- checked that the trainee understood the briefing

Answer Options	Responses	
Ensured they had the necessary paperwork timeously	34.44%	31
Ensured you briefed them properly	34.44%	31
Checked that they understood the briefing	35.56%	32
Attended court with them	7.78%	7
If you attended court, gave them feedback on their performance	6.67%	6
N/A	62.22%	56
Other (please specify)	14.44%	13

The responses to the 'Other (please specify)' answer option included:

- observing court hearings
- assisting with preparation
- undertaking mock court scenarios

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Looking back, is there anything you would do differently in terms of preparing trainees for early stage court appearances?

38 respondents answered this free text question, while 101 respondents skipped it.

The most popular answer was 'N/A' or 'no' with 34 respondents providing this comment.

Other answers included:

- providing training to all solicitors (including trainees) on conducting hearings remotely
- formal advocacy training
- mock court appearances in the office

Are there any hearings or types of appearances that you think are inappropriate for those who have been recently admitted?

79 respondents answered this question, while 60 respondents skipped it.

Almost one-half of respondents answered 'yes', while one-third answered 'unsure'.

Answer Options	Responses	
Yes	46.84%	37
No	18.99%	15
Unsure	34.18%	27

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Please provide details on the types of hearings or appearances that you think are inappropriate for those who have been recently admitted

37 respondents answered this free text question, while 102 respondents skipped it.

The answers provided by respondents included:

- proofs
- debates
- complex hearings, such as opposed motions
- appeals
- solemn (sheriff and jury) matters

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Please use this final free text box to outline any other thoughts, comments or concerns you have or anything that the Society could do to improve the overall training experience

29 respondents answered this question while 110 respondents skipped it.

The responses are themed as follows with some free text examples which have been redacted where appropriate in order to ensure respondents' anonymity (or the anonymity of other individuals). Where possible we have used the same groupings as the trainee survey.

Criticism of the DPLP

- *My feeling is that there continues to be a gap in knowledge/skills/experience of students between the finishing of the Diploma and starting their Traineeship – or perhaps the expectations of supervising solicitors is too high for a Day 1 trainee. More work could perhaps be done in this area.*
- *Get more information from the Unis. They had to be assessed before being accepted as providers of the Diploma if they were not already recognised Diploma providers.*

Commentary on Society processes

PQPRs

- *The PQPR process limits the scope for Supervisor comments at reviews.*

TCPD

- *Provide clearer information to trainees, supervisors and firms in general regarding the CPD requirements which trainees need to meet and explain the options available in that regard, and the timescales which apply, as clearly as possible, please.*

Admission processes

- *It would be appreciated if the process for early admission...was expedited. The process of obtaining early admission is unduly prolonged.*
- *Greater transparency of communications with training firm/supervisors around admission and restricted practising certificate when those applications are being made. The delays in obtaining restricted practising certificates until advanced stages of year 2 are limiting their learning opportunities and their prospects of being retained and repeated similar experience despite the new Rules is making it difficult to encourage broader trainee recruitment in future.*
- *Communications seem to have gone missing...!*

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Difficulties undertaking a traineeship during the pandemic and/or remote/hybrid working

- *One of the main disadvantages which arose with working from home over the pandemic was the inability for trainees and mentors / other colleagues to work in close proximity to each other. I have found that trainees are more likely to ask questions if they can physically see that a colleague is available, notwithstanding that they are otherwise only a call away. Further, whilst it shouldn't be the primary method of teaching, listening to and witnessing colleagues as they manage their work and handle clients is invaluable (ie 'teaching by osmosis').*
- *I think that something trainees have suffered from over the pandemic (particularly during the period where everyone was fully working at home) is the reduced number of fee earners being in the office with them. I think that it's crucial for their learning that there are a number of qualified solicitors working with them in the office.*
- *I do have concerns that training has been more difficult during the pandemic although we have tried to address this.*

Remote working: training and court appearances and the adverse impact on trainee development

- *Ensuring that trainees have exposure to court appearances for the purposes of refining advocacy skills has been difficult over the past few years. I have been able to arrange for my trainee to be an observer remotely in routine motion rolls which has been helpful. My trainee has also attended personally at an advocacy training course - very helpful - covering hypothetical court appearances. Given the general move towards remote court appearances, trainees lose out on much of the knowledge which was previously gained by just sitting in the back of a court and observing different advocacy styles/ court etiquette etc. Might be an idea for the Society to explore firstly how that experience could be replicated in training form but perhaps also how online/remote courts could be 'opened' up more effectively to trainees who would benefit from observing?*
- *Consider broadening scope of what can properly be counted as "sitting in", huge amounts can be learned from observing Counsel in Court of Session cases which would be directly applicable in Sheriff Court appearances yet those do not seem to be allowed presently. Similarly, it is not clear whether the total time spent waiting for case to call and listening to other cases calling which supervisor can also observe and explain to trainee can properly be counted. Having access to all case papers and materials is not always essential to developing a better understanding of the Rules, Court practices, approaches taken by Sheriffs etc so the current parameters are unnecessarily restrictive and ultimately may be operating against trainee development, retention etc.*
- *Get back to doing TCPD in person as much as possible. The benefit of just chatting to others about their experience is valuable and as far as I am told is rather inhibited or doesn't happen at all at virtual sessions. Provide better guidance for smaller practice units on how best to structure a traineeship where the trainee is working in one practice area*

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Concerns about early admission

- *I have always had reservations about allowing trainees to appear in court before the end of their first year... although this provides a good grounding, it in no way prepares trainees to be thrown in the deep end and to deal with anything other than procedural matters. I think trainees need more experience of day to day case handling before they are ready to appear in court. To place trainees in a position where they are out of their depth and where their lack of experience could result in a significant adverse impact on the client is not appropriate. In some circumstances, the trainee's experience could have the unfortunate effect of putting them off litigation work. While I understand why the opportunity to apply for a restricted practicing certificate was introduced, unfortunately this is open to abuse by employers who simply need a body in court and have given no thought to the ability or confidence of the trainee.*
- *Early admission has previously been available to those with 12 months training under their belt and I feel this is an appropriate time frame and not prior to completion of 12 months.*

Greater support for training manager or greater regulation of training manager

- *More of a network of training managers and trainees. A forum perhaps to connect them? Or a networking event run by the Law Society as opposed to SYLA, TANQ and other organisations*
- *Introductory training re supervising trainees. Training, support or more guidance on how to complete PQPR. The lengthy pro-forma is detailed but I struggle to complete some parts that are of no relevance to my practice area.*
- *As regards the role of Training Manager, I have found this more onerous than I had anticipated... Many of those supervising trainees have done so for many years with little oversight, so don't necessarily welcome input from the Training Manager. It can also be a challenge to fulfil the role as thoroughly as I would like... The role was introduced without a great deal of forewarning and although the guidance and resources that are available via the LSS website are very helpful, it would be helpful to have some interaction with the LSS regarding expectations and also with others undertaking the role. This would allow for exchange of ideas and thoughts on best practice.*
- *Regular meetings could be offered between supervisors in order to talk about issues they have with trainees and how these have been resolved, as each trainee is different.*
- *Perhaps there should be a compulsory training course/seminar for all firms wishing to take a trainee?*
- *I would like some more guidance on in-house traineeships. I think it would be helpful for my in-house trainee to have a network of other in-house trainees... to speak to and share experiences with. It would be good if the Society could facilitate this.*

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Increased trainee support

- *LSS ought to provide better support to trainees in a society which is openly encouraged to complain and where little to no external support is offered to Trainees and also Solicitors.*
- *Trainees are the future of the profession. They need looked after, supervised and nurtured... any trainee should have (i) a partner responsible for training (ii) a partner responsible for day-to-day training and (iii) in my opinion the trainees should be in the same work area as either the partner or a suitably qualified solicitor to mentor them and listen to them and to answer questions. The trainee, in such an environment, also learns from listening to the partner on the phone, watching how the partner conducts themselves with both clients and other firms - and they learn from that hands-on experience.*

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