



Solicitor – London

Construction – Non-Contentious – 4 yr PQE +

The Firm

Devonshires has been based in the City of London for more than 150 years. From our offices in London, Leeds, Birmingham, and Colchester we provide legal services to clients throughout the UK.

We are recognised by Legal 500 and Chambers UK as a medium-sized niche firm specialising in banking, construction, commercial litigation, corporate, employment, projects, and property. Our main client base is Registered Providers of social housing, and the Firm is ranked Tier 1 for its work in this area. We also act for a number of private developers and investment funds. Over the past few years, we have grown significantly and now have over 300 employees and partners and a growing international reach.

Niche Specialist Skill Sets: Building and Fire Safety

Introduced in response to London's Grenfell Tower tragedy and Dame Judith Hackitt's reports, a wave of new legislation that was passed in the years that followed the disaster and is referred to broadly as the Fire Safety Act 2021 (FSA) and the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) represents the most fundamental reform of regulation across the construction and property sectors in living memory. The new framework will have an impact on the work of everyone in the construction sector. As the new regime is implemented, it will transform the law relating to the planning, design and construction of all buildings and the operation of higher risk residential property.

We are a leading firm in this rapidly developing area of law.

The Team

Our Construction, Engineering and Procurement team is comprised of 30 fee-earners (seven partners, sixteen solicitors, four paralegals and two trainee solicitors), is divided into two sub-teams (contentious and non-contentious) and is supported by a dedicated Construction Professional Support Lawyer (PSL).

Our clients include developers, funders, contractors, sub-contractors, construction consultants, local authorities, RPs and PFI consortia.

The specialist services we offer our RP clients led to us being instructed on some of the largest construction developments in the social housing sector, which are often in the spotlight of the national media.

We are established as leading legal experts in the field of building and fire safety claims in residential construction. We provide cutting-edge legal advice to our clients who are operating at the coalface of unprecedented legislative change and regulatory developments in England that include the BSA, the FSA, changes to the planning regime, building control, the Building Regulations as well as new rights of redress designed to enhance the ability of building owners, landlords, homeowners, and leaseholders to seek compensation for defective work.

The Opportunity

Our team has tripled in size in the last eight years and an opportunity has arisen for an individual with a passion for construction law to join our dynamic non-contentious construction practice.

The Role

We are looking for an ambitious non-contentious construction solicitor, who is self-motivated, driven, prepared to work hard and to “hit the ground running” (we are a busy team!), to make their mark within a thriving construction department.

You will have the confidence to advise on and negotiate construction contracts at face-to-face meetings, a drive to develop your industry, sector and commercial awareness and an enthusiasm for business development and networking.

Whilst we support agile working across the Firm, we recognise the value of in person attendance as face-to-face contact is a great way to develop strong collegiate relationships, build teams and foster a dynamic workplace.

The Main Responsibilities

1. Responsible for the day-to-day independent running of files, including scoping matters in full, billing, and proper document management and file administration in accordance with our Document Management System (DMS) policy and best practice.
2. The ability to manage complex transactions, using your own initiative, free drafting of contracts and offer balanced and commercially astute advice.
3. Client relationship management: learning how best to communicate with clients, engage them and interact with them; managing client expectations, meeting client deadlines, delivering on every promise and raising the profile of the firm.
4. Advising on matters pertaining to construction procurement – the forms to be used (industry and bespoke), the contractual matrices to be put in place and the competitive tendering procedures commonly used, time scales, inter-relationship with planning, property, insurance, tax, banking, and other related areas of law.
5. Advising on matters concerning construction law (including key provisions, implied terms, certification, payment, variations, completion and delay, liquidated damages, extensions of time, loss and expense, standard insurance requirements and defects).
6. Advising on and drafting/reviewing construction contracts, project agreements and security documents (such as building contracts, development agreements, consultants' appointments, collateral warranties, assignments and novations, bonds and guarantees)
7. Considering and developing a comprehensive understanding of the main UK construction industry form of contracts, particularly the agreements that are of most relevance and use to the social housing sector and to RPs: top of the list is the JCT (a new suite is expected in 2023/24), the RIBA, CIC appointments and NEC.

8. Developing your knowledge of various construction procurement methods that extend to construction management, management contracting, prime cost contracting, early contractor involvement and two stage tendering.
9. An understanding of procuring developments through JV structures is advantageous.
10. An understanding of facilities management and asset management contracts is advantageous.
11. Developing article-writing and presentation skills and contributing to the firm's and team's programmes of internal and client training (seminars and webinars) and the writing of internal know how and client-facing publications.
12. Mentoring, "buddying" and providing on-the-job technical training and commercial current awareness for juniors in the team.
13. Following our firm's policies and your departmental procedures (as detailed in the Staff Manual), including LEXCEL and the Solicitors' accounts rules.

The above is not an exhaustive list and from time to time these responsibilities will need to be reviewed and the requirements varied to meet department and business needs.

Key Requirements

The ideal candidate will:

1. have a minimum of four years' PQE non-contentious construction experience in private practice.
2. Have gained a 2:1 (or equivalent) at degree level (a postgraduate qualification in construction law and/or previous work experience in the construction industry or social housing sector will be advantageous).
3. Be a self-starter who is proactive in approach and is prepared to put forward new ideas and suggestions for improving processes and procedures, adopting a 'can-do' attitude.
4. Have excellent interpersonal skills and enjoy working in a collaborative environment, as part of a team, and supporting and mentoring juniors.
5. Enjoy networking, developing relationships with industry and sector stakeholders and client engagement.
6. Welcome the opportunity to develop Marketing and Business Development skills – which include public speaking, client training, seminars, webinars, writing articles and briefings.
7. Have excellent communication skills, both written and oral, and experience of drafting agreements, preparing letters of advice, and writing clearly and concisely avoiding legalese.
8. Have a meticulous eye for detail and consistently produce work of the highest standard.
9. Be able to grapple with complex matters and distil from them the key legal and factual issues in the context of the relevant background and commercial of the business parameters – and explain them in advice to clients.
10. Be both adept at and proactive in dealing with information, as between clients and external organisations, always in such a manner as not to compromise the practice, the firm or any of our clients.

11. Appreciate and value the importance of always keeping our clients informed of relevant developments and the progress of their matters and the importance to the firm of prompt time-recording and billing: you understand the importance of adopting a flexible work approach to working hours to ensure deadlines are met, billing is never delayed, and clients are always kept updated.
12. Have a fairly thorough knowledge of the main methods of construction procurement used in the UK – with a focus on traditional procurement, design and build, construction management and management contracting, single and two stage tendering, prime cost contracting, measured term contracts and maintenance agreements: an understanding of the current public procurement regime that applies in the UK will be helpful.
13. Have a detailed working knowledge of the main contracts within the JCT suite of agreements – particularly the traditional forms (standard building contracts), design and build, intermediate forms, minor works agreements and measured term contracts.
14. A Working knowledge of the NEC suite of contracts is advantageous.
15. A working knowledge of PFI contracts is advantageous.
16. Have a good understanding of how building contracts, professional appointments and collateral warranty agreements fit in with development agreements, development agreements for lease and funding arrangements.

If you wish to apply for the above position or would like any further information or clarification, please email any queries/ your CV and covering letter (as the case may be) to legal.recruit@devonshires.co.uk and complete the diversity monitoring questionnaire which can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

All recruiters must submit their candidates' CV via our HR team or using the recruitment inbox listed above. Only HR can agree terms of business with third parties, provide the appropriate privacy notice to be shared with candidates and ensure that the firm maintains its commitments to LEXCEL, ISO27001 and Equality Diversity & Inclusion.

Devonshires Solicitors LLP is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to providing a workplace free from discrimination and harassment: all job applicants, employees, partners and third parties who come into contact with us will receive equal treatment, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, trade union activities, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We welcome applications from groups where we are currently under-represented. For this reason, we ask that all candidates complete the [recruitment monitoring survey](#), in complete confidence, purely for statistical purposes in order that we can effectively monitor how well our Diversity procedures are working. To review our policies on Diversity & Inclusion and Dignity at Work please visit our recruitment pages at www.devonshires.com.