

# Legal Services Apprenticeship Roles and Career Pathways

This short guide has been developed by the Local Government Association in association with Spark & Associates, using the knowledge and experiences of Local Authorities (LAs) across England. It aims to help councils and their staff understand the career opportunities available through apprenticeships.

## Building a Career in Legal Services Supported by Apprenticeships

### What this Career Pathway Guide Shows

This pathway shows how a career in Legal Services within a council can be developed through apprenticeships, from entry-level support roles through to professional and leadership positions. This guide provides a broad Legal Services career pathway, illustrating how careers can develop across a range of legal, governance, compliance, information governance and related professional roles that may span multiple council functions.

Legal Services play a vital role in how councils operate, supporting governance, decision-making, commercial activity, regulatory functions, risk management, litigation, contracts, safeguarding, property, planning and public law. Apprenticeships provide structured routes to build skills, progress careers and, in some cases, achieve professional legal qualifications, including as a Chartered Legal Executive, Solicitor or Barrister.

### Why this matters (for councils and learners)

Local authorities operate in a competitive market for legal and governance skills. Apprenticeships provide a practical way to attract new talent, develop existing staff and support long-term workforce planning, including “grow your own” approaches to legal capability.

Clear and well-communicated progression routes:

- support succession planning and help councils build sustainable in-house legal capability
- create opportunities for career development and progression.

## How to use this Guide

This guide outlines typical entry points, progression routes and relevant apprenticeships across legal and related professional roles. Entry into legal careers may also include routes such as A Levels, T Levels, higher education, career change, or internal progression from business support, governance, data protection, information governance, compliance or operational roles

Development pathways and legal careers are not always linear. Individuals may:

- may progress through specialist practice areas such as planning, property, commercial and contracts, procurement, governance, litigation, adult social care or children's services depending on council structure and local need.
- progress into professional qualification or leadership routes
- take sideways steps to build broader organisational skills and experience.

Job titles and roles may vary between councils, so it is important to review apprenticeship content and assess suitability based on role requirements and individual prior experience. Training providers and employers can support this through initial assessment and guidance.

Details of apprenticeship standards and career progression routes can be found on the [Skills England website](#), including their [Occupational Maps](#).

### Understanding progression

The pathway diagram on page 3 illustrates how careers can develop across Legal Services roles, from entry-level to senior and specialist positions. It highlights:

- typical entry routes into legal careers
- progression between levels and professional pathways
- relevant apprenticeships that support technical, operational and professional development.

Progression may involve changes in role, responsibilities or specialist area, or in some cases individuals may remain in similar roles while taking on increased responsibility as their skills and professional expertise develop.

## Typical Career Progression Routes

This table shows typical job roles by level within Legal Services and related governance functions in a council, alongside examples of relevant apprenticeships. It provides an overview of how individuals can enter legal and related careers, develop specialist knowledge, and progress into professional, management or leadership roles.

### Guide to typical progression in legal careers linked to apprenticeship / qualification levels:

- **Entry (L2–3):** Build core legal, governance, compliance or business support skills
- **L4:** Develop technical or specialist expertise in areas such as governance, investigations, compliance, data protection or casework
- **L5–6:** Progress into professional legal, specialist, management or service improvement roles
- **L7:** Progress into senior professional, strategic or leadership roles (subject to policy / funding availability).

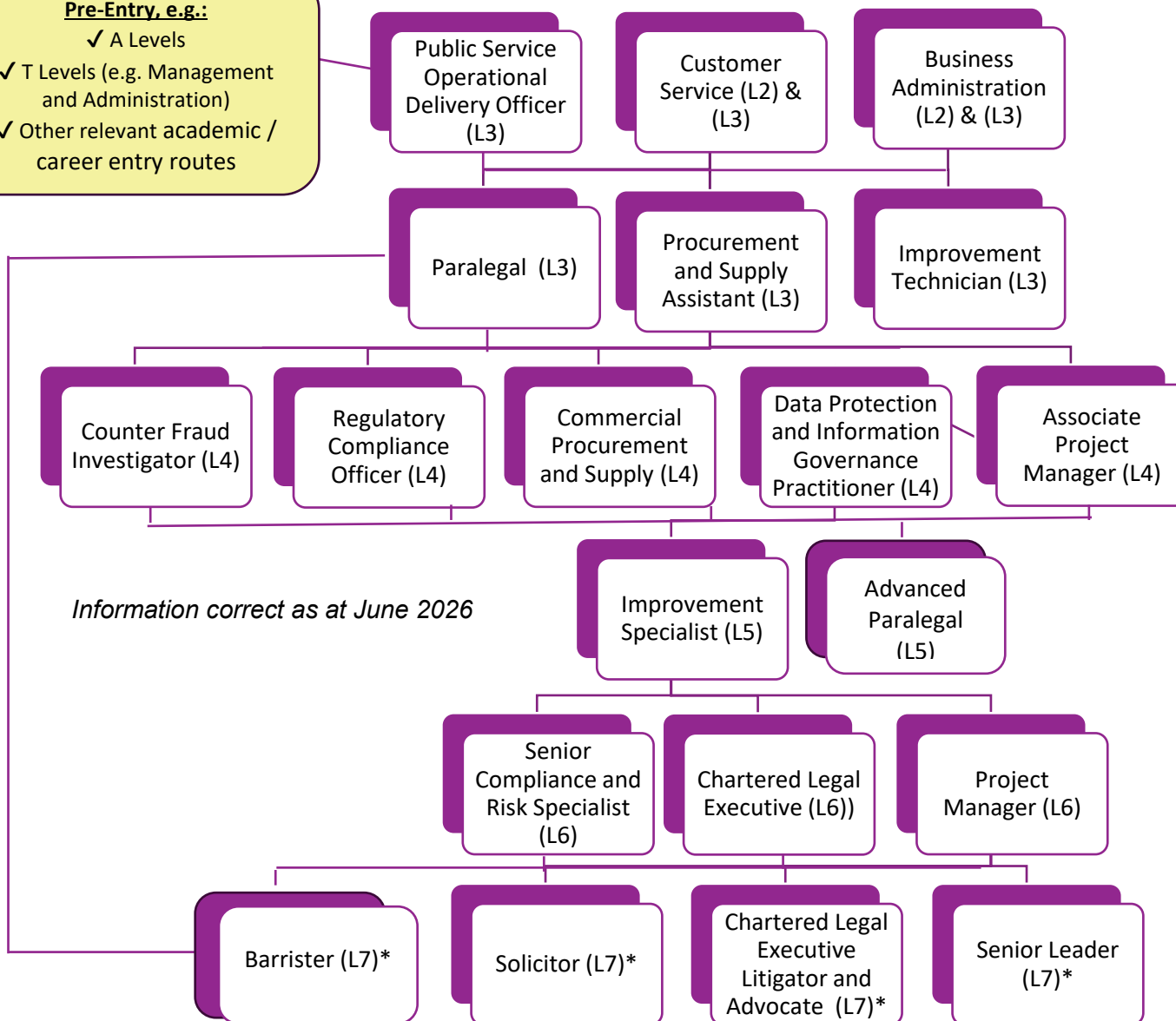
| Career Stage                                         | Typical Roles+                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Example Relevant Apprenticeships                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Entry and Early Careers (Level 2/3)</b>           | Legal Assistant / Legal Support Officer<br>Business Support Officer/ Casework Support Assistant<br>Governance Support Officer / Democratic Services Support Officer<br>Administrative roles with legal or governance responsibilities                                  | Customer Service Practitioner / Specialist (L2 / 3)<br>Business Administrator (L2 / L3)<br>Paralegal (L3)<br>Public Service Operational Delivery Officer (L3)                    |
| <b>Technical and Developing Roles (Level 3/4)</b>    | Paralegal / Legal Caseworker<br>Governance Officer / Information Governance Officer<br>Compliance Officer / Regulatory Officer<br>Investigation Officer / Counter Fraud Officer<br>Education Appeals Officer                                                           | Paralegal (L3)<br>Regulatory Compliance Officer (L4)<br>Counter Fraud Investigator (L4)<br>Data Protection and Information Governance Practitioner (L4)<br>Business Analyst (L4) |
| <b>Professional and Specialist Roles (Level 5/6)</b> | Legal Executive / Senior Legal Officer<br>Practice / Legal Operations Manager / Service Improvement Manager<br>Property / Planning / Commercial Lawyer<br>Adult Social Care / Children's Services Lawyer<br>Senior Governance Officer / Information Governance Manager | Chartered Legal Executive (L6)<br>Project Manager (L6)<br>Improvement Specialist (L5)<br>Senior Compliance and Risk Specialist                                                   |
| <b>Strategic and Leadership Roles (Level 6/7)</b>    | Senior Solicitor / Barrister / Principal Solicitor / Principal Lawyer<br>Deputy Head / Head of Legal Service<br>Monitoring Officer / senior governance leadership roles<br>Strategic legal / compliance leadership roles                                               | Solicitor (L7)*<br>Barrister (L7)*<br>Chartered Legal Executive Litigator and Advocate (L7)*<br>Senior Leader (L7)* / leadership development (subject to availability)           |

+ Job titles are illustrative examples and may differ by council

## Legal Services Progression Pathway

### Pre-Entry, e.g.:

- ✓ A Levels
- ✓ T Levels (e.g. Management and Administration)
- ✓ Other relevant academic / career entry routes



Paralegal (L3)

Advanced Paralegal (L5)

Chartered Legal Executive (L6)

Solicitor (L7)\*

Barrister (L7)\*

Chartered Legal Executive Litigator & Advocate (L7)\*

## Professional Legal Pathway

### Opportunities Across Departments

Legal and governance-related roles may be found beyond the core Legal Services team, including Democratic Services, Governance, Information Governance, Procurement and Commercial, Planning and Property, Contracts, Safeguarding, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Regulatory Services and other operational areas. This can support career progression, specialist legal practice and apprenticeship workforce planning across the council.

\*Apprenticeship availability, particularly at higher levels, is subject to policy changes. Funding for Level 7 apprenticeships is subject to current government policy and eligibility criteria. Also check **Skills England's Revisions Status Report** detailing the apprenticeships undergoing revision, showing the stage they have reached and an overview of why they are being reviewed.