



The City of London Law Society

New collaboration of 50 leading law firms to bring significant numbers of talented solicitor apprentices into the City of London

City Century, a CLLS-led collaboration between over 50 City law firms to significantly increase the number of solicitor apprentices entering the City of London, has officially launched on Social Mobility Day.

The programme identifies, attracts, recruits, educates, qualifies, and develops committed solicitor apprentices, offering City firms access to diverse emerging talent for the long-term. **Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education Robert Halfon** welcomed City Century, saying:

“Apprenticeships are an essential component of the Government’s skills agenda, extending the ladder of opportunity and helping to grow the economy by boosting the skills pipeline. It is fantastic news that these 50 City law firms have committed to increasing the number of London-based solicitor apprentices. Giving more people from all backgrounds the chance to enter this prestigious career without a student debt is a significant step forward in building a skills and apprenticeships nation and I commend their commitment to social mobility.”

City Century was instigated by Linklaters Managing Partner Paul Lewis alongside leaders from five other spearhead firms – Allen & Overy, Eversheds Sutherland, Hogan Lovells, Norton Rose Fulbright, and Osborne Clarke. The programme provides all bright and motivated students, no matter their background, access to an exciting legal career at a City firm, as well as enabling them to earn while they learn and bypass traditional university entry routes.

Shadow Attorney General Emily Thornberry praised the strong social mobility opportunity, saying:

“Apprenticeships are key to opening up access to careers for those who may otherwise be held back by financial barriers. Initiatives like these should be commonplace in all professions, but it’s great to see many of the major City Law firms finding new ways to support talented and aspiring young lawyers.”

For **UCAS Chief Executive Clare Marchant**, City Century is helping shape the future of the legal sector by supporting firms to access the best talent:

“The appeal of apprenticeships is growing rapidly, with almost half of all UCAS users - about 425,000 - now interested in apprenticeship roles. At UCAS, we work closely with employers and providers to help them seek out the best future talent, and we are committed to supporting initiatives such as City Century to help students discover this attractive route into a career in law.”

By Autumn 2024, the majority of City Century’s registered firms will have enrolled their first cohort of solicitor apprentices. The numbers starting on this qualification path will then double and increase significantly over the next few years. By 2040, City Century envisages that at least 100 new Partners will have been created by the solicitor apprentice route. Visit citycentury.co.uk for more information and regular updates.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The City of London Law Society (CLLS) is the professional representative body for the largest national and international law firms in the City of London. Its membership includes almost 60 firms practising in the City which employ 18,000 solicitors.

For further information please contact George Kyrke-Smith, Project Associates, on + 44 7834 658631.