



YOUNG  
LEGAL  
AID  
LAWYERS

# How to: Be a YLAL Mentor

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## You've matched with a mentee... now what?

The aim of YLAL's Mentoring Scheme is to provide aspiring legal aid lawyers with an opportunity to develop their understanding of life in practice. The scheme is informal, so there's no set rules or way of doing things.

When your mentee first contacts you, they should send their CV, and a bit about what they want to get from the scheme. If they're currently applying for paralegal jobs / training contacts / pupillage / etc, it may be helpful to ask them to send you a couple of their most recent applications. You can then look over these and their CV to give general guidance and pointers. It's a good idea to look for any gaping holes or problems (eg no work experience / leaving out A Level results - a sure fire way to tell that their results aren't great, but losing any opportunity to explain why! / typos / not making the CV relevant to the type of work and jobs they're applying for / etc).

Some mentoring is all by email, some phone, and some mentees meet with the mentors. We try to match you in similar locations, but that doesn't mean you have to meet in person; the scheme is flexible, and it's up to the two of you to decide how to make it work. You're definitely not under any obligation to offer work experience - so feel free to say a hard 'no' to that!

Feel free to set the parameters of the mentoring relationship; if you can't commit to looking at multiple applications, say that. If you want a week to look over an application, tell them - so they don't send it to you for proofing an hour before the deadline! Often mentees just really want an insight into the work we do, why we do it, and what it's like day-to-day. They also want reassurance that they're on the right track, and that it'll all be worth it in the end!

It's helpful to encourage them to find resources to understand the areas of law in which they're interested. YLAL has plenty of resource pages including about relevant [Blogs, Practitioner Groups](#); our [Jobs page](#); our [Wellbeing page](#); guidance on [Pupillage Applications](#); on [Work Experience and Volunteering](#); and on [Scholarships and Bursaries](#). We also have a very active [Twitter](#).

If a mentee is asking something that you don't know, is outside your expertise, or is just something you're not comfortable in guiding them with, then do feel free to tell them that; it can be helpful for mentees to realise that us lawyers are human beings, and don't become all-knowing as soon as we qualify! We don't give our mentees any guarantees or expectations of anything but an informal mentor who works in / knows legal aid - so there's no pressure to be able to answer anything they ever ask.

**Contact:** If you have any questions, please email [ylalmentoring@gmail.com](mailto:ylalmentoring@gmail.com)

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