



Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund (SWSQF)

Cohort 1 – started SQE1 course April 2022, anticipated qualification date early 2024

How is SWSQF funding and the SQE course working for members in our first cohort?

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David Kenny, case worker, Merseyside Law Centre



My name is David and I work for Merseyside Law Centre in housing, asylum support and on our new immigration service.

I started the course in April 2022. Managing studying alongside full-time employment has been somewhat of a learning experience. After a few different approaches I am now putting time aside each morning to do an hour's study before work as well as on weekends. Before this I was trying to study after work but found this difficult after a busy day. I have learned to be more realistic in what I expect from myself.

As the SQE covers a broad range of practice areas, I have been both consolidating existing knowledge and learning about new areas I've never studied before. I have particularly enjoyed the dispute resolution and constitutional law modules as they relate most closely to the social welfare work I practice in. While I was studying Dispute Resolution, I was running a live judicial review case and it was incredibly useful to apply and see the learning in the context of an actual case.

The opportunity from SWSQF funding means I have a fuller understanding of some of the legal frameworks I am working in and applying them in practice to ultimately deliver a better service to my clients. I am aware of best practice techniques and have more confidence in the way I am running my caseload.

When I qualify, I am looking forward to taking on more complex cases with more autonomy and further court and JR work as our small law centre continues to develop.

Julie Baker, Discrimination Legal Adviser, Suffolk Law Centre



I began my SQE1 online BARBRI course in April 2022, after successfully gaining funding to become a qualified solicitor in the first cohort of SWSQF. I work full time on the discrimination team, specialising in complaints against the police. I work flexible hours, working 37 hours per week, and study in the evening. However, most of my studying is done at the weekend. I am learning so much, my law degree is being refreshed, and I am filling in all the gaps. I also have 11 months of qualifying work experience signed off by The Director of Legal Services at the Law Centre.

I have gained confidence in my legal knowledge, and I am now able to answer clients' queries in full. Dispute resolution is clearer, and as we expand our discrimination legal aid contract, I can now advise on bringing county court claims involving goods and services that have breached the Equality Act. Next month I am doing my first preliminary hearing at an Employment Tribunal on a disability discrimination claim.

SWSQF has given me this amazing opportunity to become a qualified solicitor which I otherwise could not achieve. I have a passion for social welfare law – helping the least fortunate who cannot afford quality legal advice. The Law Centre enables me to help these people, and with SWSQF funding I can continue my work.

When I qualify, I will be so proud. I will stand under the Law Society archway with a huge grin on my face, knowing I've done it! This is what gets me through the difficult days. Knowing one day soon I will be qualified and will not have to have supervision or get my letters proofread by the Senior Solicitor anymore. Thank you SWSQF.