

## **Legal secondee**

I had a five month secondment to the legal team of the Pension Protection Fund, spending three days a week at the PPF and the remaining two days with my employer.

Given my impending qualification as a solicitor, it was felt that a secondment to the PPF would be beneficial to my development, due to the exposure that I would experience at the PPF to the variety of defined benefit pension arrangements and issues that may not typically arise in my work role. It was also recognised that a secondment to the PPF would allow me to gain important knowledge about the PPF's aims and processes, giving me opportunity to be more informed when advising my clients on PPF matters.

I have always been attracted to the prospect of completing a secondment at a client's offices because I believe the mutual benefits for the employer, client and individual can be vast. A change of scene and workload creates a new challenge to overcome and ultimately enhances your appreciation of the area to which you are seconded. I particularly enjoy meeting new people and secondments are an ideal way of achieving this and building relationships with your client, leading to a mutual respect and enhanced working relationship.

My secondment role at the PPF involved working directly with the legal team, assisting with levy reviews, scheme eligibility matters, contract reviews, member and trustee queries and legal research. By working with the legal team and alongside other departments day in and day out, I was able to appreciate what issues are important to the PPF. Ultimately this will influence the way I manage any future advice to clients, and correct misconceptions about the PPF which may have developed. This has obvious benefits for both BLG and the PPF. On a personal level, working alongside lawyers from different legal backgrounds helped me to develop my legal thinking and approach, which is of real importance at the start of any legal career.

Having completed my secondment, I am of the view that the PPF is an ideal environment in which to embark upon a secondment, primarily due to the strong culture of professionalism and teamwork across the organisation. Most notably, there is a distinct sense of individual accountability and pride in being part of an organisation that the public can place their trust in. There are regular all staff briefings delivered from the Chief Executive and this creates a transparent environment in which individual employees can recognise clearly their role in developing the organisation and carrying its reputation forward, which I found particularly impressive.