

**Institute of Legal Executives**

# Consultation Response: Fair Access to the Professions

March 2009



# Contents

1. Consultation Response: Fair Access to the Professions	3
<b>2. Annex A – ILEX member case studies</b>	
Jan Whitby (Legal Executive Lawyer)	14
Chris Linnit (Legal Executive Lawyer)	17
John Wells, Past President of ILEX 2005-2006	19
George Owens, Past President of ILEX 2003-2004	20
Andrew Weavers, Past President of ILEX 2001-2002	21
Rosie Cowley, Past President of ILEX 2000-2001	22
Derek William Larkin, Past President of ILEX 1999-2000	23
Paul Reed, Past President of ILEX 1998-1999	25
<b>3. Annex B – Press Cuttings</b>	
I'm right type to be a lawyer - The Sun 12 February 2009	28
Personal touch as experienced lawyer returns - Faversham News 5 February 2009	29

---

## FAIR ACCESS TO THE PROFESSIONS

---

### **The Institute of Legal Executives**

The Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) is the professional and leadership body representing Legal Executive lawyers and has a membership of 24,000 students and practitioners.

Legal Executives are qualified lawyers. Subject to ILEX regulatory requirements, Legal Executive lawyers may act as advocates in open court in the magistrates and County Court. They may act as independent Immigration Advisers and Claims Managers. Recent developments also mean that Legal Executive lawyers are eligible for prescribed judicial appointments, including eligibility as first tier judges of tribunals and as Deputy District Judges.

Fully qualified and experienced Legal Executives lawyers are able to undertake most of the legal activities that Solicitors do. They will have their own clients with full conduct of cases.

Legal Executive lawyers must adhere to a code of conduct and, like solicitors, are required to continue training throughout their careers in order to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in the law.

From September 2009 membership of ILEX will be more transparently open to a wide range of those employed in the legal sector who are not currently professionally qualified or regulated e.g. paralegals and other support staff.

ILEX provides policy response to Government consultations in order to represent its members and the public interest.

### **Consultation Response**

This response has been prepared by a working party of the ILEX Council and led by its President.

ILEX is a nationally recognised Awarding Body. The ILEX professional qualification is accredited onto the National Qualifications Framework. As such, ILEX is regulated by OFQUAL. ILEX has also recently modernised its professional qualification to reflect the requirements of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, on to which its units will soon be accredited.

Working with City and Guilds, ILEX also offers Legal Secretaries and Legal Studies qualifications, at levels 2 and 3. The Legal Studies programmes are now being offered in schools, and also offer a platform for those returning to education or considering a career change. The Legal Secretaries qualification is funded through Train to Gain and Modern Apprenticeship funding. From September 2009 those passing level 2 Legal Secretaries will gain an exemption from the Professional Qualification Unit "Introduction to Law and Practice", as currently does a pass at level 2 in Legal Studies.

All members of ILEX are subject to ILEX regulation and must comply with the ILEX Code of Practice.

From September 2009 a change in the membership structure of ILEX will make it clear that ILEX welcomes members who are engaged in legal or law related work but who may not see the Legal Executive Lawyer as their career goal.

Attached at Annex A is a selection of case studies of our members.

## **The Legal Executive Qualification**

There are no academic requirements to accessing the Legal Executive qualification, although passes in at least 4 GCSE subjects including English language at grade C or above is recommended. The qualification can be achieved by individuals studying at their own pace, and remaining in work, a true earn and learn route.

The object of the ILEX professional qualification is to produce a specialist lawyer on qualification. All Legal Executive Lawyers are specialist lawyers.

All prospective Legal Executives must pass 10 units set at Level 3 (equivalent to A level). The compulsory units include Introduction to Law and Practice; Contract Law; the Law of Tort; Criminal Law; Land Law; Client Care Skills and Legal Research Skills. Students may then choose 3 subjects from a further 10 units, although 2 of these must be practice papers linked to the law papers.

Students must then pass 6 units set at level 6 (equivalent to Honours Degree level). This must include one practice unit linked to a law unit (the specialist area of practice), plus two other units which may be law or practice units, plus the units in Client Care Skills and Legal Research Skills.

All Legal Executive Lawyers must have 5 years in qualifying employment before admission, 2 years of which must be after completion of their academic studies.

Qualifying employment means, in brief, employment of a legal nature under the supervision of a Legal Executive Lawyer, Solicitor or Barrister.

"Employment" includes pro bono /voluntary advice work, for example in law centres or for advice agencies such as Citizens Advice.

A waiver of the normal requirement for 2 years of the 5 to be served after completion of the academic studies may be granted in exceptional cases where an individual has worked in an unqualified capacity at a senior level for a significant period before commencing their studies with ILEX.

ILEX is at an early stage in exploring the possibility of developing a bursary scheme or its own student loan scheme.

### **Recognising Prior Learning and Qualifications**

Where ever possible, ILEX will give credit towards its professional qualification based on an individual's previous qualifications record. Students with previous qualifications are invited to seek exemptions against one or more units whether at level 3 or level 6. For example, LPC and BVC graduates will be exempt automatically from all of the academic study, but will have to complete qualifying employment before admission as a Legal Executive Lawyer. Those with a qualifying law degree not more than seven years old are likely to be exempt from all law papers but will need to complete the practice and skills units at levels 3 and 6. Those holding the City and Guilds/ILEX Level 2 Certificate in Legal Studies will be exempt from the ILEX Level 3 Unit 1 "Introduction to Law and Practice".

ILEX is developing the ability to accredit prior learning and skills that may not form a whole and distinct qualification.

### **Recruitment to the Legal Executive Profession**

ILEX expends considerable resources to provide information to potential students and members. ILEX presents at an average of 50 career fairs each year, of varying sizes, some for school leavers, and some for graduates. In addressing schools careers services, we advertise through "B-Live" whose role is to interact with schools careers advisers and with students through the internet. Our Regional Liaison Officers (based in Wales, London, the West Midlands and the East Midlands) undertake a small number of schools visits each year. Some of members will also do so on an ad hoc basis. We work jointly with the Law Society and the Bar council to present annually "So you want to be a lawyer", a day for school students from areas from which lawyers do not frequently come, to find out what it takes to study and qualify, and to find out more about the range of work that lawyers do and where they do it. ILEX also is represented on the legal profession task force of the Association of Graduate Careers Advice Service.

ILEX places advertisements in a variety of respected newspapers, magazines and supplements in order to raise awareness of the ILEX route to becoming a lawyer, ILEX places adverts in a variety of respected national careers guides and endeavours to get greater prominence within their editorial text.

When the occasion has arisen, ILEX has supported mock trial competitions for school students; and facilitated the development of the National Justice Centre in Nottingham.

Recent membership research confirmed that the most significant factor influencing ILEX enrolment is encouragement from an employer or work colleague. FE Colleges also have a key role.



## **Where Legal Executives Work**

Recent membership research demonstrates that 64% of members work for solicitor private practice firms with 13 or fewer partners and up to 250 staff. 8% work in local government, but only 2.5 % in a government department. This latter figure causes us concern, as it appears that the government legal service neither positively recruits Legal Executives or trainee legal executives, nor encourages staff development through the ILEX qualification. Employment in a commercial company or other non legal business accounts for 12%, with 2% self employed. 35% have managerial responsibilities.

Legal Executive Lawyer specialisms are very varied, from domestic conveyancing to niche clinical negligence, criminal defence to aircraft leasing. The largest sectors are litigation practice including personal injury, housing and debt recovery; family work and crime; conveyancing (domestic and commercial); and probate and wills.

## **Facilitating Career Opportunities**

ILEX's work in collaboration with City and Guilds to offer Legal Studies and Legal Secretaries' qualifications at level 2 and 3 means that ILEX provides a variety of access routes to a legal career, and into the legal profession.

ILEX works closely with the Law Society/SRA to ensure that a pathway is maintained to enable Legal Executives to transfer to the solicitors' profession. Legal Executives must complete further studies to broaden their academic knowledge to meet the generalist nature of the solicitor qualification, and this can be done through attaining further Level 6 units. They must complete the LPC and Professional Skills Course, but are exempted from the requirements to undertake a training contract.

There is no similar route through to qualification as a barrister, not least because that is a graduate only profession. Whilst ILEX does encourage entry from graduates, statistics suggest that this is small part of our member base at present (we believe around 6%).

Legal Executives with the correct combination of subject papers passed at level 3 and Level 6 will be exempted from the majority of the Council of Licensed Conveyancers examinations. There is no reciprocal exemption offered to Licensed Conveyancers.

The Legal Services Act 2007 enables firms of solicitors to take other legal professionals (and non legal individuals) in to partnership. ILEX and the Law Society had worked together prior to the Act to explore how this could be achieved.

The Tribunal Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 widened eligibility for judicial appointment to Legal Executives at Tribunal Judge and Deputy District Judge level. ILEX is working closely with the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) to encourage eligible members to apply. JAC recognises the value of

# **Annex A**

## **ILEX member case studies**



**ILEX member case studies**  
**Jan Whitby (Legal Executive Lawyer)**

Jan Whitby is proud of her roots and the first to admit that lawyers did not exactly grow on trees where she came from. Born in the North East she was brought up on a tough estate in the eastend of North Shields, on the edge of Newcastle. In that part of the world 'career' wasn't the first thing people thought of when you mentioned the law.

"My parents were hard working people and instilled in me and my four brothers and sisters the virtues of hard work, honesty and the value of education", said Jan, "which was not always the case for other families". But staying on in school was not an option for Jan and any thought of further education was certainly not on the cards. "The ethic was get out there get working and bring in money to support the family."

Jan left school a few weeks before her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and started working life in a local garage, as an Office Junior. She was made redundant from her next job and rather than "be on the dole" she completed a government training scheme in hotel work. As a result of the course she was approached by an agency, who specialised in recruiting people from areas with high unemployment, to fill jobs in London. As she had done typing at school, they encouraged her to seek work as a secretary, rather than in the hotel trade.

"The agency put me in touch with another girl who was travelling down from Newcastle by train and arranged for accommodation at a hostel. I was 18. They guaranteed to find me a job within 2 weeks, or pay for my fare home. I got a job in a solicitors where I worked along with other young girls from the Northeast. The firm were impressed with the skills and work ethic of their North East contingent and for me the experience was invaluable."

She soon moved on to work for a barristers chambers in The Temple. As she says "Everyone seemed 'a bit posh' and it could have been quite intimidating, but I was determined it was not going to be". It became apparent that there was a real shortage of typists within the Temple itself, as Jan and her colleague were often called upon to do work for other sets of Chambers, and were paid extra for doing so. They therefore set up their own typing agency, within the Temple, after being provided with an office within one set of Chambers, in exchange for doing their typing free of charge.

However, when they lost the use of the office, at a time when she was about to get married, she felt that the long hours and financial insecurity of working for herself were not for her and it was time to move on. She left the legal profession, going to work for a chartered surveyors. Her immediate boss and his associate were both England Rugby Internationals and this made the job more interesting. Her family came along during this time and Jan continued to work part-time, although throughout her second pregnancy she also worked as Census Officer in her local area, which involved interviewing people in her own home in the evenings, and recruiting and training 50 enumerators.

my success, but it also gave me an opportunity to say sorry to everyone for the disruption and time I had taken up in study.”

And her trials and tribulations continued! Sadly, in December 2005, her husband died suddenly aged 46. While on holiday in Turkey in 2007 she slipped and severely dislocated and broke her foot resulting in a short hospital stay and 3 extra days in Turkey after the rest of the party had left. However, at that year’s annual ILEX Newcastle Branch Ball she was to be seen being danced around in a wheelchair determined not to miss out of any of the fun.

# Yes I can

For four years after a major accident, **Chris Linnit** suffered great pain from a leg injury. He then made the tough decision to have it amputated. He has since become an ILEX Fellow, set up a specialist limb loss practice and begun training for the 2012 Paralympics. This is his story





In 2001, I was employed by Paignton, Devon firm Eastleys as a personal injury claims advisor. They kindly offered to cover the cost of the ILEX course. I found this extremely challenging and, because I was getting married on 29 April 2002, I decided to postpone my exams until the November of that year.

At about 8.15am on 14 August 2002, my life changed forever. I was travelling to work on a scooter, when I was hit by a Cherokee Jeep that crossed my path. I suffered serious head injuries and a very badly broken leg. I was operated on several times and an external-fixator was fixed to my leg. I was lucky to be alive.

I spent about four weeks in hospital. Two days after being released from hospital, I insisted that my wife take me out in the car for a drive. Whilst waiting at traffic lights, we were hit by car from behind. My wife suffered serious whiplash, which meant that she was unable to care for me. She too was studying through ILEX to become a solicitor, having already qualified as a Fellow.

### Supportive environment

I suffered from serious post-traumatic stress disorder for a long time, but with the support and encouragement of my family and colleagues I decided to pick up my ILEX law materials and began reading. My wife was at work; I was at home, bored and still seriously injured.

Whilst at home I decided to aim towards sitting my exams in May 2003. During this period I had numerous further operations on my leg and face, and I was told that I had lost the peripheral vision of my left eye. I found this very difficult to come to terms with at the age of just 23 and newly married.

Everyone, from my family, friends and work colleagues supported me to continue with my ILEX studies. I sat my exams and passed, despite my ongoing operations and the external fixator on my leg. I then studied for the part 1, year 2 qualifiers and passed those. Then I was told that I needed a bone graft on my leg as there was still a serious fracture that had not healed and I would need to lengthen my leg. If left, then the leg would need to be amputated. This was difficult. However, after serious consideration I decided to pursue my ILEX qualification.

The bone graft was extremely painful, but still I continued with my studies. My wife was also studying and was very supportive. As I had great difficulty getting out and about, ILEX arranged for an invigilator to come to my house. This enabled me to sit my exams at home. I managed to complete my exams, but had decided that I needed to investigate the

possibility of having my leg amputated as I was living on a diet of pills to kill the pain, working part-time, and my wife was pregnant with our first son.

### Difficult decision

I began to make enquiries, and after our son was born, I looked in the mirror and saw what seemed to be a young man, but had the shape of a 90-year-old man. I was 25, but in serious pain. My leg was deformed and I felt I was restricting everyone around me. Thankfully, my employers allowed me to work part-time, my wife did everything and ILEX continued to arrange for the invigilator to come to my house for exams.

I decided to contact Exeter Mobility Centre for information concerning amputation. I was treated like a human being and was told that I was not 'crazy' for wanting to have my leg amputated. I met the lead prosthetist, David House, and lead prosthetic therapist, Marnie Punched. We talked in depth, and my wife and I then talked about this very difficult decision. I spoke to amputees who had had their limbs removed as a result of injuries and they seemed to have a much better quality of life than me.

My decision was made. I sat my last ILEX exam in June 2006. I received my results on 22 August 2006 and I passed. I had my left leg amputated above the knee the following day.

### Big opportunity

I gained Fellow status in January 2007 and am now employed by Benyons Solicitors, a specialist personal injury practice based in Tavistock, Devon.

My principal, Nick Benyon, has given me the opportunity of a lifetime by allowing me to set up a specialist limb loss and catastrophic injury department within the firm. I believe that we can offer a service that is unique to a client: the experience I have been through coupled with legal expertise in this area. Unfortunately, I know only too well the problems that patients who have suffered injuries can go through. I believe that there is so much more to offer a client in the legal field by way of support, professional advice and most importantly empathy.

Currently, there are very few legal firms specialising in amputee or catastrophic claims and as I am an amputee, the client will already have somebody who can relate to their circumstance be it a minor injury to the most severe.

We believe that clients should have support from their carers, their family, and the medical profession – and, of course, from solicitors who understand their

needs and concerns, and do not just view them as another client number.

I can show clients that their life is just beginning by identifying their needs early and therefore leaving the client with confidence that their claim is being managed proactively and thus concluding to a successful outcome, enabling them to concentrate on their rehabilitation.

Benyons has now produced a poster, which depicts myself, and a good friend of mine, who lost his legs in Iraq. He has no legs yet he goes skiing. It just shows that if you put your mind to it, you can do anything.

### True understanding

None of the above would have been possible if it were not for the fantastic people that I have met. My wife has supported me through everything, my friends and colleagues too. I recently attended the Paralympics talent day in London and have been selected to train in archery for the 2012 Paralympics, subject to being successful in various tournaments.

Every day to me is unique and extremely challenging. Although I do not require special adaptations such as a wheelchair, I always have the difficulty each morning of actually fitting the leg on my residual limb. This takes time and should I get it wrong in the morning, then I find walking difficult throughout the day, as this may eventually lead to a sore on my stump, which can be extremely painful. I face the burden of people not realising that I have one leg and frequently I am often bumped into by people at a supermarket or in the street, causing me to lose my balance and fall, or I may simply slip.

However, I work full-time and should I ever need any help, all I have to do is ask. I live a normal life but sometimes, my prosthetic leg breaks and requires repair. I am always somewhat surprised when people see me without my leg as they simply do not know where to look or what to say. I feel this is why I can offer potential clients a unique service, because I truly understand the everyday hurdles they have to overcome.

ILEX helped me by allowing me to separate my personal problems from my career and seeing that it is possible to be a disabled lawyer. It has provided me with the support when needed, and nothing was ever a problem.

Being a legal executive is extremely challenging and rewarding, and there is not a moment when I regret studying during my difficulties. I feel a strong sense of achievement and am very proud of my ILEX qualification. My career is a promising one and I now look forward to each day.

**Statement of John Wells F.Inst.L.Ex.  
President of ILEX In 2005 to 2006**

I come from a working class background where my mother was a factory worker and my father a builder's labourer. I was educated at Lutterworth Grammar School, but left school at 16 and went to work with the law firm Messrs Owston & Co in Leicester.

Subsequent career moves took me to a number of firms in the Leicester area then to Suffolk, Norfolk and back to Leicester again. I am currently a Partner in the licensed conveyancing practice, The Roberts Rose Partnership.

I studied for my ILEX qualifications at Leicester Polytechnic and became a Fellow of the Institute in 1982. I joined the local Leicester branch of the Institute in 1972 becoming Treasurer, Secretary and eventually Chairman in 1984.

Following the move to Norfolk I became ILEX Council Member for Norfolk & Suffolk, a position I held until my return to Leicester in 1996. Whilst in East Anglia I helped reform the branch of the Institute in Norwich.

I rejoined the local ILEX branch in Leicester on his return and served as Branch Chairman in 1999 and 2001. I continue to serve as a member of the Branch Committee.

In 2000 I was re-elected to the ILEX Council as council member for the East Midlands Constituency. I served as Vice-President of the Institute for 2004-05 and became the 42nd President of the Institute in 2005-06. I continue to be a Council member and serve on a number of ILEX Committees.

When not on ILEX business I like to spend time with my family. I am proud of the fact that my daughter was the first in our family to attend university and is now a qualified doctor. I enjoy playing golf, and watching both Leicester City Football Club and Leicester Tigers Rugby Club.

**Statement of Andrew Weavers F.Inst.L.Ex.  
President of ILEX In 2001 to 2002**

I left school having studied 'A' levels in Economics and Public Affairs. I became interested in Law and Government through my Public Affairs studies, and particularly when I was shown round the Houses of Parliament by our local MP.

When I left school I saw an advertisement in the local paper for a position as trainee Legal Executive with Colchester Borough Council. This was in 1980 and I have been there ever since. I am the Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer at the local authority.

The Council supported me throughout my studies, paying for the qualification, and giving me day release to study at Further Education colleges. The ILEX route proved to be a real earn and learn route. I was not just learning theory, but I was able to put into practice immediately what I had learnt at college upon my return to the office every day.

My experience in local authority informs my view that it can be a concern that newly qualified solicitors have no 'worldly skills'. They lack practical expertise, which the earn and learn route provides. I have on many occasions been assigned to train solicitors who join us from outside local authority work.

No one in my family before me has attended university. My father was a local small business owner, a Greengrocer. My mother worked in the local Registrar's office, her father being the local Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

**Statement of Derek William Larkin F.Inst.L.Ex.  
President of ILEX In 1999 to 2000**

When I came to leave school I really hadn't got much of an idea as to what I wanted to do as a career. I vaguely knew someone called Andrew Prince who was involved in the law. I recall that I went to his home one Sunday afternoon and listened to what he was telling me about in career in the law.

I can recall that what he was saying to me interested me sufficiently to contact the Birmingham Law Society to find out if they were aware of any trainee legal executive vacancies. Happily the BLS were able to help me which resulted in me attending three interviews at different firms.

Following those interviews I received an offer of employment from all three firms which arrived on my doormat on the same day.

I ended up accepting the position with Mackintosh & Co which was a small 2 partner firm in the centre of Birmingham. The junior partner was Mr Kevin J Martin who himself became the National President of the Law Society.

I learnt my trade as it were whilst in the employ of Mackintosh & Co. Initially I undertook conveyancing work, then both civil and matrimonial work. My first real introduction to criminal law (which I have now practiced for many years) was whilst my firm were on court duty where we first represented one of the conspirators involved in the Birmingham pub bombing trial.

I left school with 4 Certificates of Secondary Education/G.C.S.E's and as I said earlier I didn't really know what I wanted to do, as a career.

I was born into a working class family and for the majority of my life have lived in Birmingham.

My father was a Irish Immigrant from Northern Ireland and he came over to England, initially worked on the railways and subsequently moved on to become an engineer.

My mother was a housewife although in the years after I had completed my junior school education she became a part-time administrator for a scaffolding company.

I should say that I have a brother who is 4 years younger than myself and he has really followed in my father footsteps by being involved engineering in some form or other. He is currently self-employed and repairs forklift trucks.

None of my family had previously been to university. My father attained some engineering qualifications and my brother obtained City & Guilds Certificates. Ironically my three children have all been to university and obtained degrees.



**Statement of Paul Reed F.Inst.L.Ex.  
President of ILEX In 1998 to 1999**

It would have been unpredictable when I was at school, that 20 years later, I would be standing to welcome my guests as the youngest national President of the third legal body. I still wonder how I managed to get where I am today.

I was born in Croydon into a working class family. Despite my current status and financial position, I still feel more working than middle class. On my paternal side, my father was a shipping clerk after a short spell in the Navy and his father a clerk with the Water Board. On my mother's side my grandfather worked for the Co op. My grandparents and my mother's older siblings were all council tenants. My parents managed to purchase my paternal grandparents house on their retirement, which meant that I was raised in a semi middleclass area of Croydon.

I am the only member of my immediate family to hold a professional qualification and none of my family has been to university. A few have studied at college. I have cousins who have done well, one owns a chain of estate agents and another qualified late as an accountant. I assume through AA T.

With an August Birthday, I was always one of the youngest in the class. I left School in June 1977 aged fifteen, with very little education. My secondary comprehensive school was very rough with poor education standards. In fact my class and school was the subject of a Panorama programme evidencing the failure of the comprehensive system.

Clearly I had no plans to become a Lawyer, although I did opt to do O 'Level law, rather than Social Studies or Religious Studies. The law classes started after lunch, so the teacher would let us watch Crown Court to kill time. Funny that all those years later, I would be a friend and co presenting conference seminars with the shows narrator Peter Wheeler.

To aspire to the professions, was not an option. That meant staying on at school to take A' level's and University. In those days only posh kids were coached to pass the eleven plus or able to pay to attend grammar schools. They got their names on the school honours board. Everyone else was shunted off to one of the comprehensive schools.

Croydon then had a thriving electronic industry with big names such as Phillips, RACAL and PYE. The reality was that unless you went to a grammar school, your role was to either work in a factory, in retail in the Croydon Shopping Centre or to become an artisan apprentice.

Parents back then believed the sign of success was to become a bank clerk. I was interviewed by Nat West, but without success. Ironically I suspect that many who were bank intakes at that time and probably promoted to senior positions, would then find themselves redundant in the late 80's and 90's when banks started to restructure taking decisions away from branches to faceless head offices.

On leaving school I went to the careers office in Croydon. They tried to push me into electronics, funny enough? However, I applied for two office jobs they had on the cards. One was for a clerk in a building contractors and the other

## **Annex B**

### **Press Cuttings**





**ON THE CASE ... Lesley**  
Graham and, inset, Rachel

AMBITIOUS LESLEY GOES FROM SECRETARY TO LEGAL EAGLE

Edited by LAURIE STONE  
laurie.stone@the-sun.co.uk

**WHEN Lesley Graham left school at 16 with no qualifications, a career as a lawyer seemed unlikely.**

But thanks to a course with the Institute of Legal Executives she became one at 40.

The mum of four is now 51 and working as a legal executive lawyer for a law firm in Manchester.

*Lesley grew up in a working class family in Salford where going to university was never an option.*

She said: "I left school at 16 and just wanted to start earning money. School had taught me to touch type, so I began my working life as a secretary.

"But when I had children, there was no flexibility in my secretarial working hours, so for seven years I could only do odd jobs, such as stacking shelves."

Leslie was in her 30s, and working as a legal secretary in a barrister's firm when her boss told her about the ILEX route to becoming a lawyer.

She said: "I really enjoyed the job and wondered if I could take it further. I found out that I could study while working within a law firm and still earn around £20,000 per year while I did so.

"As the courses were flexible, I could study part time, online or through distance learning, which

# I'm right type to be a lawyer

fitted perfectly around my full-time job and being mum to my four kids. If things got too much I could take a study break until I was ready to carry on again."

Lesley spent five years qualifying to become a legal executive lawyer. It's similar to being a solicitor but specialises in one particular area.

She said: "About three quarters of the people who go through ILEX are women. They are often people like me who left school with few qualifications, started working as secretaries in law firms, then realised they were capable of much more.

"I'm really proud of coming from a working class background. But I'm also proud that, through hard work and determination, I've become a qualified legal executive lawyer. If I can do it, so can others."

A four-year course at ILEX will cost you £3,500. But 80 per cent of

students have at least part of their study costs funded by their employers. And while students are leaving university with average debts of between £20,000 and £30,000, studying through ILEX means you will finish studying having earned about £63,000. The course is open to all, although a minimum of four GCSEs is needed.

Legal executive lawyers can earn up to £92,000 per year, depending on their location and what they specialise in.

It's not just mature students who chose to study law through ILEX. Rachael Palmer, now 33, opted out of university at 18 to study law with the organisation.

She said: "While my friends were partying hard at university, I was holding down a full-time job and studying in the evenings and weekends, which was tough at times." A

few years on, when her mates were fresh out of university, saddled with debts and loans, and with no experience of the legal profession, Rachael was streets ahead.

She had a permanent position in a law firm and had been earning for four years.

Rachael, from Birmingham, added: "ILEX provided me with the perfect alternative to university and degree routes. It allowed me to live at home and earn money through my job. As a result, my life changed completely. I was a secretary in my first year of working life and I am now head of the largest department of a highly recommended law firm.

"I earn in excess of £60,000, own six horses and holiday in Dubai and America every year."

To find out more about studying law through ILEX, call 01234 841000 or visit [ilexcareers.org.uk](http://ilexcareers.org.uk).



**Client:** Institute of Legal Executives  
**Source:** Faversham News (Main)  
**Date:** 05 February 2009  
**Page:** 18  
**Circulation:** 3470  
**Area(cm²):** 446



# Personal touch as experienced lawyer returns

**W**ITH 35 years' experience in the legal profession, Andrew Lawrie's expertise is now available in Faversham. Andrew Lawrie Legal Services has opened a branch in Granville House, The Mall, offering advice on wills, employment law, power of

**I'm looking  
to offer a more  
accessible and  
personable service**

## Advertiser's announcement

attorney and property.

"Having worked for other practices throughout my career in both Kent and London, this is like a new venture really and I'm finally working on my own," said father-of-two Andrew, 53.

"I'm looking to offer a more accessible and personable service. For instance, people think that making a will is something you only start doing when you're old and grey and I want to show that it can be done easily and simply."

Mr Lawrie has a long association with Faversham. He

first moved to the town in 1970 when his father was appointed town clerk.

On leaving Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, he joined a local solicitor as a trainee and once fully qualified, he was admitted as a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives in 1992.

He is keen to give something back to the community that has served him so well, through regular charitable donations, to organisations such as the Kent MS Therapy Centre.

For more information, visit the website [www.al-legal-services.co.uk](http://www.al-legal-services.co.uk) or call 01795 591674.



