

Career Insight: Ella, Legal Trainee, National Crime Agency

[“National Crime Agency \(NCA\) Legal](#) plays an essential part in achieving Agency objectives, including detecting, tackling and disrupting serious and organised crime. As a trainee lawyer you will see all sides of typical government legal work as well as fascinating projects unique to the Agency.

My first seat was in the Civil Litigation Team, which defends the NCA against civil claims and judicial reviews and represents the Agency at public inquiries. In this role, I got to know officers from across the Agency, learning about the context to the legal issues they were experiencing. I attended court hearings in the Royal Courts of Justice and worked directly with senior barristers to shape the NCA’s defence. Early on, I was given my own caseload supervised by a lawyer and I managed pre-action correspondence with a view of finding a solution before the matter escalated if possible. Despite being given responsibility from this early stage, the supportive environment encouraged me to rise to the challenge.

My second seat was in the Financial Disruptions Litigation team, bringing claims in high-profile asset recovery cases: this was a fast-paced, proactive team working on complex and often novel issues of law such as tracing cryptocurrency and seeking to disrupt sophisticated perpetrators operating across multiple jurisdictions at the high end of high harm. Most significantly, I supported on two high value civil recovery cases targeting what has become known as the “Azerbaijan laundromat” in national and international headlines and assisted with expert reports ahead of trial.

NCA trainees typically spend their third seat on secondment to the [Home Office](#) to gain policy development experience. Here, I joined an advisory team working on immigration policy and the introduction of the Nationality and Borders Bill. I attended debates in the Houses of Parliament, during which I sat in the “box” with legal colleagues to give on-the-spot advice to Ministers and Lords.

I recently returned to the NCA for my final seat in the Data and Operational Advisory team. We carry an eclectic caseload, advising on ongoing operations, new investigative techniques, and international issues. Many lawyers in the team have areas of specialism but as a trainee I am able to experience the full breadth of the team’s responsibilities, including cybercrime, biometrics, data protection, extradition and police powers. Given the urgency and variety of our work, there is no “typical” week: instead we must respond to anything and everything that comes up. It is a brilliant way to absorb knowledge and identify areas of interest – although the real difficulty is narrowing my interests down!

The sheer volume of work and breadth of expertise in NCA Legal, as well as the complex and unusual legal issues at play, makes the NCA a brilliant environment to develop as a trainee.”