

Ian Casework and Advice Officer

My name's Ian, I'm a Casework and Advice Officer in the Casework and Advice Division and I've worked at the Information Commissioner's Office for just under two years.

Well, after I'd finished university I was looking through the different jobs and I saw this one advertised, and I thought how interesting it would be to work in an environment such as this, where you're working with legislation where there is no fixed answer, things aren't certain, it's all about points of view. And, of course, with case law, new interpretations of the legislation are coming out all the time, so things are always changing.

The Casework and Advice Division sits as the second step in the casework process at the Information Commissioner's Office, so cases are received by the Customer Service team. They will resolve the more straightforward queries and provide general advice on helpline. The Casework and Advice Division receives the more complex cases, what we call Level 3 cases, and they also deal with sector specific issues. The department are split in to sector specific teams, two private and two public, so we deal with the casework that has to do with the most sector specific issues.

Much of my days is taken up responding to complaints and making assessments in terms of compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Outside of that I mentor new starters and I go to meetings occasionally with the stakeholders and with members of other departments, we work quite closely with those as well, and obviously we provide some advice as well to members of the public over the phone and to the helpline on sector specific enquiries that they might receive.

You need to have good analytical skills so that you can apply the legislation to a variety of different circumstances and sift through the evidence to make your assessments. You need to have good personal skills and be good with people. You need to have good communication skills, because we do a lot of work in writing and over the phone, and I think you also need to be quite comfortable with the idea of dealing with people on the phone.

In terms of supporting my career the ICO has been a really good place to work. I think the opportunities to develop your skills and learn new ones are rife in this organisation. We've got very good training and induction methods in to help new starters settle in to their roles. Then there's the development opportunities that you'll get as well.