



## **SOLICITOR TRAINEE SCHEME (1 PLACE)**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

The Justice (NI) Act 2002 provides for the appointment of an independent, non-political Attorney General for Northern Ireland. The Attorney General has a range of statutory and non-statutory responsibilities including as chief legal adviser to the Executive.

The Attorney General's Office deals with the most important and complex legal matters facing the Executive and Departments, providing advice and where necessary conducting litigation. The establishment of a statutorily independent Attorney General marked a significant change in how the top end of government legal services is organised and delivered in Northern Ireland, and puts the rule of law at the very heart of government.

The Attorney has responsibility for referring any Assembly legislation, where there is doubt about its vires, to the UK Supreme Court, and is a notice party in devolution litigation. Statute provides that the Attorney General for Northern Ireland may participate in the proceedings of the Assembly to the extent permitted by its standing orders but he may not vote in the Assembly.

Other responsibilities of the Attorney include representing the public interest in charity matters; ordering fresh inquests; and issuing human rights guidance to criminal justice organisations.

To guarantee the independence of the Attorney, his Office has an arm's length relationship with the Executive Office.

At the core of the Office is a legal secretariat responsible for providing advice on the most important and complex matters facing the Executive and Ministers.

## **2. JOB DESCRIPTION**

The Attorney General for Northern Ireland is offering a solicitor traineeship. The successful candidate will be contracted to undertake a 2 year traineeship within the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

### **Remuneration**

The total remuneration for the trainee will be £16,000 per annum (non-pensionable).

### **Institute/Graduate School Fees**

The Office of the Attorney General will pay 50% of the tuition fees for the successful candidate. The successful candidate must sign a Certificate of Understanding requiring them to repay the tuition fees in the event that they fail to complete the training programme.

## **Location**

The successful candidate will be based at the Belfast City Centre offices of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

## **Availability**

Due to the nature of the post the successful candidate will be required to be available no later than 2 September 2019.

## **Training**

The Attorney General will appoint a Master on behalf of the successful candidate, and as part of the training contract the trainee will be required to comply with the agreed Training Schedule at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.

## **3. OFFER OF TRAINING CONTRACT**

On completion of the selection process an offer of a traineeship will be issued in merit order to successful applicants who have received an offer of a place on the solicitors' course at the Institute for the year beginning September 2019.

Continuation of the traineeship will be dependent on satisfactory completion of all aspects of the training programme.

The traineeship is strictly for a 2 year period only. A permanent position will not be offered to the solicitor trainee after this period.

If you wish to learn more about the traineeship before deciding to apply, please contact Maura McCallion by email at:

[Maura.McCallion@attorneygeneralni.gov.uk](mailto:Maura.McCallion@attorneygeneralni.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the competition process, please contact Maurice Dowling by email at:

[Maurice.Dowling@attorneygeneralni.gov.uk](mailto:Maurice.Dowling@attorneygeneralni.gov.uk)

#### **4. SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process will involve 3 stages:

##### **(i) Eligibility**

In order to be considered for this training opportunity, applicants must, by noon of 31 May 2019 (the closing date for applications) hold an offer (including the waitlist) from the Institute and be provisionally accepted for a place within the solicitors' course.

Applicants should note that a copy of their result letter from the Institute **must** be enclosed with their application form. Application forms received without a copy of the letter enclosed will not be considered.

##### **(ii) Sift**

The second selection stage will be a case analysis.

Please attach to the application form your analysis, amounting to no more than 1000 words, of the key points for government clients following this recent UKSC decision:

R (on the application of DA and others) (Appellants) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Respondent) R (on the

application of DS and others) (Appellants) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Respondent) [2019] UKSC 21

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/uksc-2018-0074.html>

The analysis will be used to identify those candidates who will be invited to attend for interview. The analysis must be your original work. Plagiarism will result in removal from the appointment process.

### **(iii) Final Selection**

The final selection stage will be in 2 parts: (i) a short exercise; and (ii) an interview.

The details of the exercise will be made known to the candidates when they arrive for interview. Candidates will be given time to consider information provided and prepare answers to questions asked. The interview panel will ask candidates to present their answers and may ask further questions on the topic under discussion.

Once candidates complete the exercise they will move directly into the interview. The selection panel will ask questions to test the candidate's knowledge and experience in each of the areas below and award marks accordingly:

1. Legal Knowledge and Skills
2. Working with People
3. Managing work/study

In the event of 2 or more candidates having equal scores following the final selection stage, a tie-break exercise will be used to determine the successful candidate.

**It is anticipated that the final selection stage will occur on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Belfast.**

## **5. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Filling in the application form**

It is essential that all parts of the application form are completed and a copy of the result letter from the Institute enclosed.

### **Application Form Submission**

Incomplete application forms, application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted application forms will not be accepted.

### **Pre-Employment Checks**

Due to the nature of the work in the Attorney General's office the successful candidate must be available to start no later than 2 September 2019 and must successfully complete pre-appointment checks including a Counter Terrorist Check security level check.

### **Vetting Procedures**

For the Solicitor Trainee Scheme post in the office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland the level of vetting is Counter Terrorist Check which includes Baseline Standard and Counter Terrorist Check (CTC).

1. For the Baseline Personnel Security Standard check you will be required to provide the following:
  - a. Your passport OR
  - b. A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
  - c. Other acceptable documents are listed on [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)
  - d. A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form, etc.
  - e. Your consent to the validation of your previous 3 years employment as outlined in your application form if you are placed sufficiently high in the order of merit (determined after interview) to be considered for appointment.

The Office of the Attorney General will arrange for vetting procedures to be carried out and will request those applicants placed sufficiently high in the order of merit to be considered for appointment to complete the necessary form.

Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as an offer of appointment. Failure to complete the above form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as an indication that you are no longer interested in the position and your application will be withdrawn.

You should not put off applying for this post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

Criminal Record information is subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

2. Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): as point 1 plus check of Security Service records.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

### **Disability**

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.