



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 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.

Other responsibilities of the Attorney include considering referrals under the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016; 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, her Office has an arm's length relationship with the Executive Office.

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.

[* Note – the formal 2 year traineeship start date is 18th October 2021 however the successful candidate will be contracted to work from 1 September 2021]

Remuneration

The total remuneration for the trainee will be £17,143 per annum (pensionable).

Institute 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's base location is at the Belfast City Centre offices of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland however it is likely that working from home will also be required.

Availability

Due to the nature of the post the successful candidate will be required to be available to start on 1 September 2021.

Training

The Attorney General will appoint a Master from within her office 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 October 2021.

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 from the 18th October 2021. **A permanent position will not be offered to the solicitor trainee after this period.**

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

contact@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 Thursday 15th July 2021 (the closing date for e-mail 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 scanned /photographed copy of their result letter from the Institute **must** be enclosed with their e-mailed application form. Application forms received without a copy of the letter enclosed will not be considered.

Preference may be given to applicants that have completed the Attorney General's Living Law Programme during sixth form studies at a participating non-grammar school. Applicants **must** state the school attended while on the Living Law Programme.

(ii) Sift

The second selection stage will be a case analysis.

Please attach to your e-mail application form your analysis, amounting to no more than 750 words, of the opinion of Lady Hale (paragraphs 1 – 50) in *In the matter of D (A Child)* [2019] UKSC 42.

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2018-0064-judgment.pdf>

The analysis will be used to identify those candidates who will be invited for interview via Zoom. 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 e-mailed to the candidates approximately 40 minutes prior to their Zoom interview. Candidates will be given time to consider information provided and to prepare answers for questions to be asked.

Once candidates complete the exercise they will be invited to the Zoom interview. The interview panel will ask candidates to present their answers to the exercise and may ask further questions on the topic under discussion.

The selection panel will then 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 via Zoom will take place on Thursday 29th July 2021.

5. GENERAL INFORMATION

Filling in the application form

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

Application Form Submission

Only e-mailed applications forms will be accepted. 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 on 1 September 2021 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
- 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 participate in 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.

Pensions

Successful candidates will be offered an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni