

Emma O'Hara

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Dear Ciara,

I am writing to apply for the Training Contact at ByrneWallace.

Upon graduating with a First Class Honours LL.B from Manchester Metropolitan University, I undertook an LL.M at Trinity College Dublin. My postgraduate degree in particular has equipped me with strong legal research skills whilst also enhancing my ability to analyse and think critically; all of which are skills that will assist me as a trainee solicitor, and ultimately as a qualified solicitor.

Following my LL.M, I joined ByrneWallace in July 2018 as a Legal Secretary. My experience in ByrneWallace over the past year has given me an excellent insight into how a vibrant top-tier law firm operates.

However, it was the commencement of Project Homegrown in June of this year which has allowed me to apply my skills to more trainee-type work and to flourish in doing so. I requested that Patrick McClean be my mentor and I am so grateful that we were paired as Patrick has gone above and beyond to give me exposure to the life of a trainee in ByrneWallace.

Over the past four months, Patrick has consistently delegated more distinctly non-secretarial tasks to myself, including substantial amounts of legal research. Regularly, Patrick would invite me to internal planning meetings where he would outline a certain issue that had arisen within a matter, for example a word or phrase in a policy or legislation which seemed unclear. He would then ask me to conduct research on same and revert to him within a set timeframe.

I have hugely enjoyed this greater sense of autonomy and added responsibility. My research would regularly feature in letters of advices to clients, and this provided me with a great sense of achievement. Completing these legal research tasks for Patrick has given me first-hand experience of the work that a trainee at ByrneWallace is asked to do on a daily basis, and I feel that I have excelled.

Patrick has impressed on me the need to be a solicitor who can 'peer around the corner'; this involves anticipating risk and challenges and also requires a level of lateral thinking. I have embraced this concept during Project Homegrown and will continue to do so throughout my career.

Further to Project Homegrown, my experience in ByrneWallace has shown me that a law firm is ultimately a business, and that financial management is particularly important. I deal directly with financial matters each day, ensuring that payments are processed promptly. Further, I have to be mindful that different clients charge different rates, for example the Child and Family Agency, the HSE and the Mental Health Commission. In fact, I was recently included in a meeting on a Mental Health Commission case and saw first-hand the different and more detailed breakdown of costs.

To conclude, a traineeship is what I have been working towards through my years of legal study, several legal internships and my year of working as a Legal Secretary in ByrneWallace. I am now an FE1 candidate, thereby demonstrating my commitment to this career path. As my work experience at ByrneWallace particularly demonstrates, I am reliable, self-motivated and also collegiate; I value and understand the importance of working collaboratively with my colleagues. I feel that I am a well-rounded candidate with the requisite experience, energy and drive to excel at this opportunity.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Yours sincerely,

Emma O'Hara