

30 October 2020

Re: Trainee Solicitor Programme

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the position of Trainee Solicitor with the ByrneWallace. Having obtained an undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in law together with professional admittance as an attorney in New York, USA I wish to pursue professional qualification and admission to the roll of solicitors in Ireland. I have set out below an overview of my legal and professional experience to date for your consideration.

Competition and Consumer Protection Law:

In my current role as Senior Investigator with the Competition Enforcement and Mergers Division of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC), I undertake civil investigations into anti-competitive agreements. This has given me a deep understanding of the provisions of competition legislation and the obligations placed on undertakings operating in the Irish market. In fulfilling my duties I am responsible for leading assigned investigations and developing the case through the drafting of investigation plans and making recommendations for further action to Divisional management. I develop lines of enquiry in each investigation to gather relevant inculpatory and exculpatory evidence of offences in accordance with the legal procedures. I collect evidence through obtaining witness statements from complainants, witnesses, relevant experts and suspects after caution. I also review notified mergers to assess the proposed transaction against the substantial lessening of competition standard assessing a number of legal and economic factors in my assessments.

In my role with the Criminal Enforcement Division I led inspection and search under warrant teams on various operations. This included designing the operational plan, evaluating operational risks, assigning tasks and specific roles to team members, briefing teams on collection of relevant evidence in a legally compliant manner and handling queries from the search or inspection subject during the course of the operation.

During my time with the CCPC, I have attended numerous training seminars which have deepened my understanding of competition and consumer protection law and policy in Ireland and the EU. In particular, I recently completed the CCPC Certificate in Enforcement Practice which has given me a broad overview of the wide gamut of competition and consumer protection legislation which the CCPC enforces. I have also completed a Certificate in Regulatory Investigations and attended training on financial investigation techniques by the Criminal Assets Bureau.

Legal Research and Policy Development:

From the completion of my LLM thesis, New York attorney qualification and legal and public policy research experience to date I have strong research and drafting skills. I am familiar with a broad range of research methodologies to collate and analyse information from a wide variety of sources to develop new insights and observations.

In my previous role with the Irish Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN Ireland) based in the ESRI, I co-authored a number of peer reviewed reports on the Irish immigration system. Compiling reports with EMN Ireland involved a comprehensive review of relevant immigration law and policy together with publications from civil society organisations. A key part of the research process was engaging with relevant stakeholders from Government departments and civil society to obtain their input on the topic. I worked on multiple research projects at once and managed my workload to meet the required publication deadlines. In this role I was also a regular attendee at meetings of the European Migration Network in Brussels and throughout the EU where I networked with the contact points of other Member States to advance Irish research priorities.

As a paralegal in Kerman & Co Solicitors, I researched the legal provisions in relation to a wide range of queries from large corporate and SME clients. This included the preparations of legal advices in relation to company formation, immigration provisions and employment contracts.

I volunteered as a paralegal part-time with the Legal Aid Board during my LLM studies. From this experience I developed my interest in the practice of family law. I am attracted to pursuing my traineeship with ByrneWallace in large part due to your excellent Child Law department.

I was a member of the Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown Strategic Policy Committee on Social Housing for two years where I contribute to the policy discussions and decisions of the Committee in relation to social housing provision in the DLR local authority area.

Corporate Governance and Organisation Development:

I am a director of two registered charities, the Irish Refugee Council and the Waterford Childcare Committee where I am responsible for ensuring good corporate governance. I provide input and oversight to the annual budget preparation for these organisations and contribute to ongoing financial decision-making. I review the annual work programmes for these organisations to ensure it meets our organisational objectives under our strategic plans which I had a role in developing. I was also a key contributor the Irish Refugee Council's review of its governance structures as it went on the Governance Code journey for charitable organisations.

Communication Skills:

From both professional and voluntary roles I am skilled in tailoring my verbal and written communications to best match the target audience, whether it be drafting a response to a legal query from a large corporate client, presenting a case file with a recommendation for prosecution or in communicating with senior management when reporting on project delivery metrics.

I believe I hold the legal research, report writing, legal drafting, interpersonal and communication skills to perform well as a trainee solicitor with ByrneWallace. I look forward to discussing this position with you further and how I can bring my skillset to make a real contribution as a member of your team as I commence the journey to qualify as a solicitor.

Yours sincerely,
Susan Whelan