

POST: **Two Year Training Contract/QWE/Paralegal**

POST AVAILABLE: September 2021 & September 2022

1. Summary

- 1.1. Bhatt Murphy has opportunities starting in September 2021 and September 2022 for trainee solicitors and paralegals. The contracts will generally be for two years, but there may be some flexibility depending on the needs of the firm and the candidates' own circumstances. Successful applicants will work primarily in either of the firm's police law, immigration detention or prison law departments, but may also be asked to offer assistance to others within the firm, including our public inquiry team.
- 1.2. These positions are open to applicants intending to qualify as a solicitor either by completion of the LPC or via the Solicitor's Qualifying Exam route and to paralegals who may not be seeking to qualify as solicitors. All roles will constitute qualifying work experience for the purposes of the SQE route.
- 1.3. Some financial assistance may be available towards the costs of either the Legal Practice Course (LPC) or the Solicitor's Qualifying Exam (SQE). We also offer study leave for staff studying for their legal qualifications on a part-time basis while employed by the firm. Candidates seeking to qualify via the SQE route will need a qualifying law degree (GDL or LLB) in order to meet the SRA's qualification requirements. All candidates will need to demonstrate that they have sufficient legal knowledge to meet the demands of the position.

2. Application Process

- 2.1. Applications should be made by the submission of the relevant application form (available from the Vacancies page on our website at www.bhattmurphy.co.uk), a copy of your CV and a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. All documents should be sent to jobs@bhattmurphy.co.uk marked for the attention of Diane Fisher.
- 2.2. Applications will not be considered without submission of the relevant application form and a copy of your C.V. Completion of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is optional, but we do encourage applicants to complete this form as it helps us to assess the effectiveness of our recruitment procedures as part of our aim to improve diversity in the firm. We regret that due to the volume of applications we expect to receive, we may not be able to contact you if your application has not been successful.
- 2.3. Please indicate in the box provided on the application form, whether you wish to be considered for a position commencing in 2021, 2022 or both start dates.
- 2.4. Please note that we have sought the details of two referees who can comment on your work and character. One of these referees should be someone whom we can speak to pre-interview in the event that you are shortlisted. Please indicate whether it is acceptable to contact your referee(s) without further reference to you.
- 2.5. Interviews for the vacancies will take place on either 5 or 6 May. The interview process will include a written task intended to test the candidate's comprehension and communication skills and ability to work under pressure. A second interview may be arranged if necessary.

2.6. The closing date for applications is **Monday 12 April 2021**.

3. Person Specification

3.1. Essential Characteristics

- Commitment to publicly funded legal representation, civil liberties and social justice, including empathy with Bhatt Murphy's ethos
- Ability to communicate effectively with the firm's client group
- Ability to contribute to the team working ethos of Bhatt Murphy, including sensitivity to the needs of others
- Excellent written communication skills
- Ability to understand and deploy legal principles
- Ability to prioritise and work efficiently under pressure
- Problem solving ability and intellectual rigour

3.2. Desirable Characteristics

- Experience of working in a law firm or similar environment
- Experience of one or more of the firm's areas of work
- Client care experience
- Completion of the LPC/Qualifying law degree

4. Description of Role

- 4.1. You will assist solicitors in the conduct of complex public and/or private law litigation arising from a policing, prison and/or immigration detention context.
- 4.2. You will be expected to take statements from clients and witnesses, prepare funding applications, collate evidence, rationalise paperwork, prepare formal documents, liaise with courts, experts and counsel, compile disclosure lists and comply with the Civil Procedure Rules and the Lexcel Standard. You will also be expected to assist with filing and other administrative tasks. To offer effective assistance on cases you will need to develop the ability to understand the complex legal territory of the case and accurately reflect the client's instructions in formal paperwork.
- 4.3. The role can involve a significant degree of contact with clients, including visits to prisons and immigration detention centres. The highest standards of sensitivity and professionalism are therefore essential.
- 4.4. All of the firm's junior lawyers are expected to undertake outdoor clerking work, including filing and issuing of documents at court and occasionally delivering papers to counsel's chambers.

- 4.5. The firm prides itself on its ability to share skills and offer effective supervision. Trainee/paralegal positions with the firm are inevitably busy and demanding and the successful candidate will need to inspire us with confidence that they can take responsibility for the day-to-day management of his/her own action lists.
- 4.6. We operate a number of procedures to ensure effective collective working including detailed case and file management procedures, and an extensive library of templates, authorities and materials (including Westlaw). The successful candidate will need to be able to use these tools effectively.
- 4.7. From time to time, our trainees and paralegals are required to assist with general office duties such as reception and telephone duties as and when the need arises.
- 4.8. Like other publicly funded practices, Bhatt Murphy works to tight profit margins and requires the commitment and contribution of all members of staff to ensure the viability of the firm.

5. Bhatt Murphy

- 5.1. We offer specialist help to members of the public who seek accountability from the state and its officers. Our focus is primarily upon state agencies such as the police, the prison service, immigration authorities and the prosecuting agencies (and where appropriate their private contractors), and on their exercise of coercive powers including detention, the use of force, surveillance and data collection. We also act in other matters of public interest.
- 5.2. We rely upon a collaborative style to ensure that our clients benefit from the commitment of their own individual lawyer as well as the creativity and innovation of the entire team.
- 5.3. The firm enjoys Band 1 ranking in the Chambers Guide to the Legal Profession (2020/2021) in all areas of the firm's practice.
- 5.4. Bhatt Murphy is Lexcel accredited and is a London Living Wage employer.
- 5.5. At a time when access to justice is increasingly under threat, we aim to make ourselves as accessible as possible to our clients, to provide them with high quality legal services, and to contribute to the progressive development of the law in our specialist areas.

6. Benefits

- 6.1. The starting salary will be £23,500 - £24,600 per annum.
- 6.2. The firm will match pension contributions made to the firm's group scheme to a maximum of 5% of your annual salary. You will also be entitled to apply for an interest free season ticket loan.
- 6.3. You will be entitled to 23 days annual leave per annum increasing by 1 day for each year of service to a maximum of 25 days. In addition, you will be entitled to all English and Welsh public and bank holidays and to time off between Christmas and New Year without relying upon your annual leave entitlement.