Introduction from Caroline Beattie - Deputy Director in the Scottish Government Legal Directorate (SGLD)

Caroline Beattie is the Deputy Director of the Commercial and Business Services Division of SGLD. Caroline is also the Directorate’s Diversity & Inclusion and Wellbeing Champion.

“The GLSS has a very strong commitment to all diversity and inclusion issues. We have known for a very long time that many great ideas are generated through discussions moulded by different life experiences and that seeing the world through a myriad of lenses provides the richness, depth and colour necessary for growth and development. I am the SGLD Champion for Diversity and Inclusion and have been in the many variations of the GLSS since 1992.

I joined after my traineeship and have to confess that I really did not know what the then Scottish Office did. When I attended University back in 1982 I was the first from my family to get any qualification - let alone a higher education qualification. I spent my entire University career waiting to be found out for the imposter I believed I was. A very long and varied career in Government changed all of that. I don’t believe that any other legal career offers the same support, variety and personal reward as a Government career.

In my almost 30 years I have been involved in very high profile legal matters which are now discussed in history books - that makes me feel old! We are committed to being inclusive and not only welcome - we actively encourage - applications from every background as we know that to reflect the population we ultimately serve we have to mirror it and, in doing so, we create a vibrant, dynamic and really exciting place to work.”
Kate Connelly - Trainee Solicitor

Kate Connelly is a first year Trainee Solicitor and is currently working within the Marine, Transport and Natural Resources Division of SGLD.

“Completing my traineeship within the GLSS has enabled me to enter the profession through what I think must be one of the most supportive work environments in the legal community.

I come from a deprived area of Glasgow, and my family was really poor when I was growing up. We have never had a lawyer in the family, and when I was studying law I was really worried that I wasn’t ‘connected enough’ to find a job, or that once I did, people would be able to tell I came from a poor family and that I would be seen as less capable or wouldn’t fit in. The application process for SGLD was different from others I completed – there was no point where I felt like anyone was asking about my background or trying to establish what connections I had. I had the same chance as anyone else to demonstrate that I had the desired competencies, and I was offered the traineeship based on what truly felt like a fair assessment of those competencies. This feeling of being accepted as an equal has stayed with me since commencing my traineeship, and that’s exactly how it should be.

I am really enjoying my traineeship, and honestly look forward to coming to work every day. The work is really interesting, but I think what makes Scottish Government such an enjoyable place to work is that this is an inclusive workplace. I find it exciting to think that, as the Scottish Government continues to make efforts to encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds to apply, our workplace will be increasingly diverse and reflective of all the different groups which make up modern Scottish society.”
Leanna MacLarty - Trainee Solicitor

Leanna MacLarty is a second year Trainee Solicitor and is currently working within the Constitutional and Civil Law Division of SGLD.

“I am a second year trainee with the Scottish Government, now in my third seat, doing advisory work for the Constitutional and Civil Law (CCL) division.

The traineeship has been as interesting and challenging as I’d hoped and expected it would be. This is my second advisory seat which involves providing legal advice to Ministers, drafting secondary legislation and writing instructions for Bills to be drafted. The advisory work is split into subject-matter areas and CCL is a particularly fascinating place to be just now.

I’ve also done a litigation seat, working for the Office of the Advocate General. I spent six months focused on judicial review work and was given my own caseload to be responsible for. This gave me a unique opportunity to get to know how the Court of Session operates and to instruct Counsel and work on cases.

At 36 I am not as youthful a trainee as the rest of my cohort and I was worried about how I would fit in and whether I would manage, particularly because there was a significant gap between my LLB and Diploma. The worries were for nothing. A huge range of people come to work as government lawyers, with different backgrounds and experiences. It would be impossible not to fit in, because we’re all so different.

The traineeship is very competitive and the application process can be a little daunting. The competency based-application is unlike anything I’d found in the private sector, but there is a trick to how to answer those questions and after reading all of the guidance it became clear.

All interviews are daunting, to me at least, and this was no different. But everyone was very friendly and put me at ease instantly. And the presentation and exercise weren’t as hard as I expected.

To anyone considering a GLSS traineeship I would say absolutely apply! The work is rewarding, the workplace is welcoming and the people are lovely.”