

Wealth of law graduates draws another US firm and 78 jobs to Northern Ireland

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A US law firm is to create 78 jobs at a new Belfast base to help as Northern Ireland's strong pipeline of law graduates tempts another global name.

Ogletree Deakins, one of the largest labour, employment and immigration law firms in the US, joins a growing list of law firms which have established back office functions in the city and said it is on the lookout for graduates, paralegals and a number of managers.

The firm said the pipeline of graduates from Northern Ireland's two universities was a big factor in its decision to set up in the province, with a pool of 600 new law and legal studies students graduating each year.

Average salary for the roles is just under £23,000 a year and the firm has already filled 25 of the post.

Matthew Keen, Managing Shareholder at Ogletree Deakins, said the firm has a real need for additional paralegal team support for its immigration practice.

"Northern Ireland's strong pipeline of quality graduates and

strong staff retention rates were keys to our decision to locate here,” he said. “It gives us the confidence that we will have access to outstanding staff members to allow us to continue to expand, scale and be successful long-term.”

Mr Keen said a legal qualification is not necessary to apply to the firm.

“A law degree is not a requirement to join the team, and we offer continuous investment in training to allow employee career growth. We are excited to open this new legal support centre, and we are very excited about our future here.”

Ogletree Deakins serves some of the best-known corporate names in the US, it said.

Invest Northern Ireland has offered £312,000 of support toward the new jobs.

“We are delighted Ogletree Deakins has chosen to locate this new centre here, joining many other leading firms,” Kevin Holland, CEO, Invest Northern Ireland, said. “The project will increase the knowledge and talent pool in the local Legal Processes Outsourcing ecosystem and strengthen our reputation as a region with high skills in a growing cluster.”