

# Career Insight: Ben, Legal Trainee, Government Legal Department

“Following my graduation from a law degree in 2016, I was eager to gain experience of different sectors and spent a year working in industry. During this period, my desire to pursue a legal career solidified and I began investigating training contracts. The opportunity to train at the intersection of law and politics at the [Government Legal Department \(GLD\)](#) stood out immediately and I was fortunate to secure a traineeship in 2017.

Before commencing my training contract in 2019, I took up a non-legal role in GLD’s Commercial Law Group (CLGp) while completing the LPC. CLGp is made up of 7 teams which provide a specialist commercial law service to clients across government. The role gave me an insight into CLGp’s work and I was keen to return in a legal capacity when the chance arose. Fortunately, I would not have to wait long.

I was delighted when my training got underway and spent the first year conducting litigation on behalf of the [Ministry of Justice](#) and [Home Office](#). I managed a significant caseload throughout and worked on cases in courts across the country, including the [Court of Appeal](#). This degree of responsibility is characteristic of training at GLD and provided me with the experience and confidence to develop quickly.

The opportunity to return to CLGp materialised during the third seat of my training contract, when I joined the [Cabinet Office](#) and Central Commercial Team (CLGp B) for a six-month placement. CLGp B is made up of 7 mini-teams which each provide support to specific government clients. I was assigned a supervisor in the [Department for International Trade \(DIT\)](#) mini-team, but had numerous opportunities to work on matters for other CLGp B clients including the [Cabinet Office](#), [Crown Commercial Service](#) and the [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](#).

I was struck by the breadth of the CLGp B’s practice, encompassing traditional commercial work such as drafting contracts and advising on contract management, as well as public-sector specific issues including procurement law, grants and subsidy control. To give a flavour of the type of work I completed for my primary DIT clients, I drafted contract variations and extensions, advised on remedies following a supplier default, and worked on a grant agreement to help establish a digital trade network in Asia Pacific.

I also had the opportunity to support the [Cabinet Office](#) in its preparations for the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference. This involved negotiating sponsorship agreements with commercial partners to help finance the conference and reduce the expense on the public purse. Communicating the government’s commercial priorities to some of the world’s largest companies was an exhilarating experience and a highlight of my career to date.

The combination of commercial and public law makes CLGp's work unique and, in my opinion, some of the most interesting in the legal sector. Implementing the government's policy objectives brings a new dynamic to commercial work and means that no two briefs are the same. Naturally, this is not without its challenges but the reward of contributing to the national interest is one I am grateful for at the end of every day."