

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

"I am a second seat trainee on the [Government Legal Department \(GLD\)](#) commercial law training contract. The Commercial Law Group is a group of teams within GLD that provide specialist commercial legal advice to various government departments. This ranges from advising civil servants on the negotiation of contracts with suppliers, which procedures to use when procuring a product or service and how to resolve commercial disputes.

My first seat was in the team that provides commercial legal advice to the [Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\)](#). This includes advising on large-scale procurements for goods and services required by the [NHS](#), advising on contractual issues, and working with DHSC to find creative commercial solutions to achieve new policy aims.

As a trainee, I had a high-level responsibility from the start of the seat, taking control of a piece of procurement advice from its initiation through to the negotiations of the contract between the department and the supplier. This was a fantastic first seat, as the work that DHSC does, and the sorts of contracts it procures, are unique. It was highly rewarding to know that the work I was doing was supporting the department in dealing with COVID-19.

I am currently in my second seat, in the commercial litigation team, which handles commercial disputes for departments across the civil service. This includes procurement disputes, contractual claims and judicial reviews. So far this seat has been really interesting, as there is huge variety in the type of work the team does and the types of cases it deals with.

I have worked with a mini team on a large high profile case, where my responsibilities have included attending and taking notes of witness interviews, reviewing the evidence to build a clearer picture of the case, and managing some of the disclosure documentation. I have also worked on smaller cases with other clients, and it is interesting to see the diverse types of litigation that different departments face.

I started my training contract in September 2020, when GLD was still working mostly from home. Despite the pandemic, I have felt fully supported throughout my training contract. I have had daily catch ups with my supervisor and regular contact with other lawyers on the team. Both of the teams I have worked in have ran virtual social events, so I still felt a fully integrated part of the team despite working remotely."