



**Diana Deju, barrister at the GLD (now Principal Legal Advisor at Ofgem)**

**Year of Call:** 2011

**Practice Area:** Communities and Local Government



I am an employed barrister with the [Government Legal Department](#) (GLD), which is a non ministerial government department that acts as the government's principal legal advisers. Over my career, I have been able to work in both litigation and advisory roles, which has really helped me to develop a strong grounding in public law. At the moment, I am working in an advisory role for the Department for Communities and Local Government.

I normally begin my day at about 8 am; other lawyers tend to arrive anytime between 8 am and 10 am. Advisory lawyers are usually located in the same building as their policy colleagues, which means they are embedded into the department and that they are able to more easily learn about the department's goals, understand the unique legal and practical challenges it faces, and appreciate how a legal role fits into the machinery of the department. Each lawyer covers certain streams of work. I currently have a broad portfolio which includes special controls in planning.

One of the attractive features of working for GLD is that no two days are the same. My day to day work includes advising on the development and implementation of government policies and decisions, drafting secondary legislation and working alongside parliamentary counsel on primary legislation. For example, I can be asked to advise on whether a policy can be implemented under existing legislation, or

whether new legislation is required. If new legislation is required, lawyers often get the opportunity to work closely with officials and ministers, and to support ministers in Parliamentary debates.

In policy development, our role involves considering legal implications and ensuring that the result will withstand external scrutiny. I typically spend a working day researching, drafting advice or other documents (such as statutory instruments), and in conference with policy colleagues or other lawyers. On a typical day I head home at about 5pm, although this varies. For example, some days I may be needed to attend ministerial briefings or to support ministers in Parliament.

Prior to pupillage, I worked as an adjudicator at the Financial Ombudsman Service, which is where I built my interest in the public sector. I was drawn to GLD when I learnt about the variety of work, and opportunities to move between different government departments. From the beginning I have been supported in gaining a broad spectrum of experience. The training period is structured so that you see a variety of policy areas through different postings, and in every posting I have had a broad portfolio of work. For example, as a pupil barrister in immigration litigation I was involved in cases at all levels, including a case before the Supreme Court.

I have found that there is a great deal of training available giving a taster or a more in-depth look into legal topics and other work streams. The variety of postings really allows you to develop into a well-rounded lawyer. There are also flexible working opportunities, which mean that you can work from home on certain days. For me the most satisfying part of any day, regardless of what it may involve, is working as a member of a team alongside policy colleagues towards an end result.

During my GLD pupillage I spent six months in immigration litigation and six months on secondment at Landmark Chambers. After qualification, I went on to spend six months in advisory postings in the Home Office and later at Her Majesty's Treasury. I have found a huge variety of work on offer at GLD with the opportunity to do interesting high-profile work from early on in my career. There have been many highlights along the way, but what truly stands out is the first time I attended the House of Lords. I had been working, alongside parliamentary counsel and policy colleagues, on a clause in the Serious Crime Bill (now the Serious Crime Act 2015), and attended Parliament to provide support to the minister during Parliamentary debates. This was a challenging piece of legislation, which raised interesting points in Parliamentary debates but working on the Bill was equally rewarding – there is nothing quite like watching law being developed right before your very eyes.