

**Commercial and Public Contracts Team**  
**Welsh Government Legal Services**

**Information for applicants**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



## **G7 COMMERCIAL LAWYER – WELSH GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICES**

### **Foreword – Helen Lentle, Director of WGLS**

Thank you for your interest in the posts as a member of the Commercial and Public Contracts Team in Welsh Government Legal Services.

This is an opportunity to make a substantial contribution to delivering high quality legal advice and support at the heart of government in Wales.

The Legal Services Department is the largest legal department in the public sector in Wales and is responsible for the delivery of all legal services to the Welsh Government. The appointment of additional lawyers to the Team will further strengthen the ability of the WGLS to support the Welsh Government at this critical and busy time.

As a government lawyer you will have a unique opportunity to work within a dynamic environment that places you at the heart of devolved government, working on high profile projects of national significance.

This is an exciting time to be joining the Welsh Government and to be able to play an important part in the delivery of the Welsh Government's programme for government.

We look forward to receiving your application.



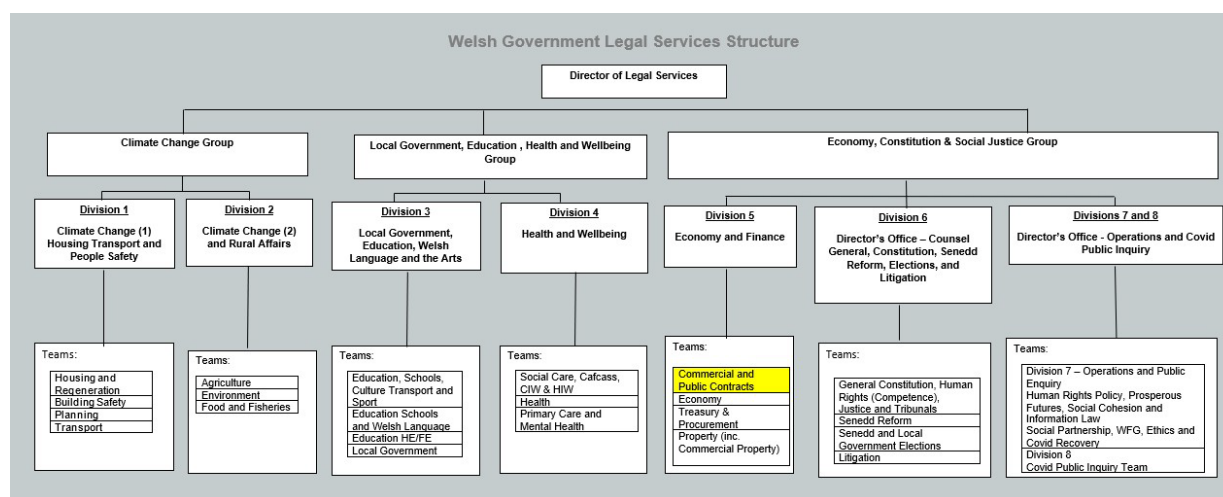
**Helen Lentle**  
**Director of Legal Services**

## Welsh Government Legal Services – who we are

Welsh Government Legal Services (“**WGLS**”) is the largest provider of legal services in the public sector in Wales. WGLS lawyers provide advice to the primary Welsh Government departments on some of the most important projects in Wales. From infrastructure, health, education, tax and the economy to name but a few areas, our work touches on most aspects of public life in Wales.

WGLS is made up of eight divisions; the Commercial and Public Contracts Team (the “**Team**”) is one of four separate teams within the Economy & Finance Division. The Team provides specialist commercial legal services to Welsh Government, and we have set out more detail about the nature of the Team’s work below. The diagram below shows the structure of WGLS, and where the Team sits within that structure.

## Information about the role and the Team



WGLS is currently aiming to increase legal capacity to provide specialist commercial legal advice, and we are seeking to grow the Team by recruiting up to two lawyers to expand the Team’s broad based commercial/corporate/finance expertise.

Our work includes specialist support in a wide range of commercial and corporate areas such as commercial law, intellectual property, finance and security arrangements and corporate to name a few. As a general guide, these are of some of the areas of work that we cover in the Team:

- reviewing/drafting commercial contracts;
- drafting and structuring funding arrangements, and related security arrangements (including whether funding should be advanced as a loan or grant);
- advising on corporate structures and Welsh Government equity arrangements and investments;
- intellectual property matters;
- non-disclosure agreements, letters of reliance etc.

Below are some examples of recent matters where the Team has provided legal advice:

- Advising on the interpretation of commercial contractual provisions in relation to the litigation relating to the Baglan Energy Park;

- Advising on various corporate and funding matters relating to the Welsh Government's commercial and equity interests in Cardiff Airport;
- Assisting the Wales European Funding Office on aspects of its £31m investment into the Morlais tidal energy project.

You will play a key role in the Team, working in an exciting professional environment on a range of commercial matters. Your clients will be officials from across the whole of the Welsh Government – they come to the Team when specialist commercial legal advice is required.

The Team's work is the provision of specialist commercial legal advice. Although we don't advise on matters of public law nor the drafting of legislation, we do however often work closely with other members of the wider WGLS group where there are elements of overlap between the commercial and public law spheres.

## **You**

We are looking for lawyers with demonstrable commercial/corporate experience, for example commercial contracts, finance, corporate and IP/IT, and with an ability to consider complex legal issues within a wider Welsh Government context. You will have reliable judgment as well as an ability to appreciate and analyse legal risk; you will be confident in delivering clear, balanced and strong risk-based advice.

You will play a key part in the Team and will often work with other WGLS lawyers. You will have well-rounded interpersonal skills and will be comfortable with working at pace.

Full details of the requirements for the role can be found in our advert on the Welsh Government website.

## **Testimonials from some of our existing lawyers**

**Lowri Gwyn**



### **Background – banking and finance lawyer, private practice**

Before joining the Commercial and Public Contracts team in Welsh Government Legal Services, I had been working since qualification as a banking and finance lawyer in private practice in London and then at Eversheds Sutherland in Cardiff. I know that working as a lawyer for Welsh Government wouldn't even occur to many people working in the commercial/finance/corporate spheres in private practice as there may be a perception that the in-house legal work in Welsh Government revolves around public law but think again! Whilst there is of course a sizeable multi-disciplinary public law team, what many people don't realise is that there are also dedicated in-house commercial teams which cover a vast set of specialist areas such as commercial contracts, finance arrangements, IT/IP, commercial property and many more. If you are looking for a change from private practice or other in-house commercial role, I would recommend that you give a role in Welsh Government Legal Services some serious consideration.

The work is very interesting and varied, and I have been involved in some fascinating projects since joining the team – many of these have been similar to my work in private practice, but it has been interesting to learn about specific areas and issues which are relevant to Welsh Government and which may impact on the commercial arrangements it enters into. I am still learning new things each day and have been fortunate to work on several high-profile matters; whilst these may have, on occasion, been challenging (be it because of the urgency or complexity of the work), it has been rewarding to see the results of our work coming into effect as various deals and projects complete across Wales. The support I receive from my colleagues is excellent, and it is such a friendly place to work – despite starting my role during the pandemic and therefore never having had the opportunity to work in an office with my team, I have been made to feel incredibly welcome from day one.



## **Gill Hopkins**



### **Background – commercial lawyer, private practice**

Before joining the Commercial and Public Contracts Team in the Welsh Government's Legal Services Department, I spent over 7 years working at Geldards LLP - initially as a trainee solicitor and later qualifying into the firm's Commercial team. My role involved advising on commercial and contract law matters, dealing with public procurement issues and also addressing queries involving intellectual property rights. Whilst at Geldards I was given the opportunity to undertake a secondment with the Welsh Development Agency. I very much enjoyed this role, which involved using my existing skills and knowledge but also learning how to apply these alongside public sector considerations.

As such, when the functions of the Welsh Development Agency were subsequently transferred to the Welsh Government and a vacancy arose for an in-house commercial lawyer, I jumped at the opportunity. I have been with the Commercial and Public Contracts Team ever since. Whilst I specialise primarily in intellectual property matters, I deal with a broad range of commercial issues and work with departments across the whole of Welsh Government, which means my work is always varied and interesting. The team supports policy colleagues in developing and implementing Welsh Government initiatives, so it feels like we are making a valuable contribution to public life. We quite often see matters we have worked on being reported in the press.

## **Emily James**

### **Background – commercial lawyer, private practice**

Before joining the Economic Development and Treasury team in Welsh Government Legal Services, I worked as a commercial lawyer in private practice. I trained and qualified at a healthcare law firm in London and then moved back to Cardiff to work as a commercial lawyer at Eversheds Sutherland in Cardiff and then Blake Morgan in Cardiff.

In private practice, I specialised in general commercial contracts, Procurement Law and Subsidy Control. I am continuing to work in these areas as I genuinely enjoy the work (and there is plenty of it!) There are also plenty of opportunities to get involved in other legal work.

Moving from private practice felt like a big leap of faith at the time but I am now a few months in and I don't have any regrets. Working in-house makes you feel as though you are really part of the projects you are working on and your "clients" feel like colleagues.

## **Richard Jarvis**



### **Background – commercial & litigation, local government**

I recently joined Welsh Government having worked as a lawyer for a Local Authority in North Wales for nearly 10 years. Although Local Government legal work naturally has a strong emphasis on public law and public law principles, many of the matters I had conduct of were commercial and technical in nature. What attracted me to Welsh Government was the prospect of retaining and building on the commercial aspects of my practice given that it plays a pivotal part within the workings of a Devolved Government.

I am currently a lawyer in the Economic Development & Treasury Team within the same Division as the Commercial & Public Contracts Team, which has a good variety in terms of the different type of work undertaken be it advisory, transactional or drafting.

The work is very interesting and I am enjoying the challenges of working at the heart of a devolved Government. I have found colleagues and management to be extremely engaging and supportive and there is a genuine focus on improving your work/life balance whilst providing learning and development opportunities for you to progress to the next level. Regardless of whether you practice commercial law in private practice, in-house, or like I did in the public authority sphere, I would strongly encourage you to consider a career with Welsh Government today.

### **For more information**

The Welsh Government Legal Services department will be hosting an on-line information session which will give you the opportunity to find out more about this role, meet some members of the Team and have a friendly chat about the Team's work and the role being advertised. The event will take place on Monday 13 February 2023 12.30 – 13.30 and more details on how to register for that event can be found in our advert on the Welsh Government website.