

What It's Like To Work As A Legal Secretary In A Large Practice By Someone Who Knows!



Working As A Legal Secretary In A Large Practice.

Being a [legal secretary](#) offers varied career opportunities, whether you want to specialise or work across other areas of law.

This article is designed to give those already on, or considering going on [legal secretary courses](#) an idea of what options are available.

Heritage.

Gill Timms is a [legal secretary](#) to Jonathan Clement and Lorna Buckwell, fee-earners in personal injury and clinical negligence at Thomson Snell and Passmore, a legal firm in the south-east, just outside of London.

The firm employs over 200 staff and has 38 partners, including 12 lawyers who are recognised as leaders in the field by the Chambers Guide to the Legal Profession.

Thomson Snell and Passmore is made up of eight practice areas, including corporate and commercial, employment, commercial property, dispute resolution, private client, family and residential conveyancing, as well as the clinical negligence and personal injury area that Ms Timms works in.

This large firm's history dates back to 1570, when Nicholas Hooper, a curate at Tonbridge Parish Church set himself up as a "scrivener and drafter of documents", drawing up Wills, charters and indentures for the local people.

"I work for two fee-earners and basically do their secretarial needs and phone calls, whatever is necessary, even down to photocopying," she said.

Necessary Skills.

Ms Timms works with the personal injury team, which has a narrow remit. She said that anyone on [legal secretary courses](#) who wants to go into clinical negligence may require some [medical](#) knowledge, but suggested that it is not absolutely necessary.

"You do pick it up as you go along," she said.

"Obviously with clinical negligence you've got a lot more of the terminology, whereas it is probably easier for personal injury. The more you do, the more you pick up."

Ms Timms also suggested that [legal secretary courses](#) would be very useful for anyone wanting to enter the profession.

She recommended that typing skills are very important for the job, as are good English and communication. A dose of common sense is also necessary, she said.

Rewarding Job.

Ms Timms made a specific decision to go into personal injury as she finds it very rewarding.

"I think it brings you down to earth as you see how some families are absolutely torn apart by an accident. It can obviously change their lives and the families around them," she explained.

Ms Timms moved from working in matrimonial law, which she eventually found very stressful after 15 years of being a [legal secretary](#) in this area.

"I knew I wanted to change that," she said.

"Personal injury is something different I suppose, and it's the fact that it can happen to anybody," Ms Timms explained.

Working in personal injury allows her to make a difference in people's lives and it is this that appeals, she said.

"It is helping and assisting people to make their lives better from what's happened to them," Ms Timms added.

Personal Relationships.

She also gets personal contact with clients in her line of work.

"Obviously if they come into reception and don't have an appointment, you're dealing with them then, or queries on the phone, especially if the case is going on for quite a long time, you do build up a rapport with the clients," she said.

Those embarking on [legal secretary courses](#) will find a competitive jobs environment at the moment, Ms Timms confirmed.

She said that when she moved from matrimonial law to personal injury, she found it relatively straightforward to get a position as a [legal secretary](#) in a different legal area.

When there are [legal secretary](#) jobs available, changing career direction is a feasible option, she confirmed.



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