

PALLANT

C H A M B E R S

(Civil) Pupillage at Pallant Chambers

It is trite to say that pupillage is a hard and stressful year – it is a year-long interview for a job you’ve worked your socks off for. Many warned me of it and I in turn warn others of it. However, how enjoyable and rewarding it is is another question. The answer depends on your set. Fortunately, my experience at Pallant was certainly both enjoyable and rewarding.

I started my civil pupillage in October 2022. From day one my excellent supervisor and the clerks threw me right in at the deep end. On my second day, I was doing an opinion on potentially using a Group Litigation Order in a freeholder v leaseholder dispute – I admit I had only ever really heard about these from Suits. Even though I was thrown in at the deep end, I was still always supported. A good chunk of my time in Chambers was spent talking to other members about the work I had been set and where my thinking was going – this was so helpful in looking at everything from both a litigation and commercial perspective.

My first six involved a wide range of work from gypsy planning injunction trials in the High Court to a multi-million-pound mediation in a professional negligence case to possession lists. The variety of the work I undertook and saw enabled me to really focus my sights on how I wanted to develop my practice. In particular, the work on the cases with vulnerable clients was so very important. The exposure to how the different barristers handled clients with all sorts of vulnerabilities and also cross-examined vulnerable witnesses is essential. After all, the first six of pupillage is partly about learning by osmosis.

As time passes, the standards expected increase and the workflow increases. However, the clerks were always on hand to stop that workflow from becoming overwhelming. Barristers would often ask for help on research with their cases from me and in turn would discuss all the angles with me. One of my highlights, however, was when my skeleton arguments were adopted in big cases. My supervisor relied on me as a first-six pupil as I relied on them. While they take the fame and glory the satisfaction of helping them win a huge case for their practice is unimaginable.

Second six – it seems a mile away when you begin pupillage but comes around like a flash. The months leading up to it I sat behind counsel thinking I can do this and as the big day got closer the prospect got scarier. I can still remember my first case vividly, a credit hire small claims track final hearing in Southampton County Court. I prepped the life out of this case and spent hours talking it through with the civil juniors. I won the case. Not because I am a natural advocate or anything like that but because of what I had learnt during my first six and the confidence it had instilled in me. Admittedly, I did have a glass of champagne to celebrate.

Second six then flew by in a flash. My second six was massively varied. In the beginning, it involved lots of procedural applications, possession work, small money claims and personal injury, through Chambers' connections I was even able to play a fee-paying part scrutinising evidence for the very topical Post Office Horizon Inquiry. As time went by the work became more and more complex and by my eighth week in practice, I was in the Chancery Division of the High Court doing an urgent insolvency injunction. The support was still there though. My supervisor was my biggest cheerleader and supporter. The clerks were always there to hold off the tide if I ever felt overwhelmed and help me obtain my desired balance between paperwork and court work. As a result, I was able to begin to steer my practice. I began undertaking more traditional chancery work including winding up petitions, Inheritance Act 1975 cases and even judicial reviews and a pro bono undue influence will case.

As a result of all of this, I went into tenancy feeling fully confident in my ability but knowing where I needed to grow. Practice at the Bar is always a learning experience. Pupillage at the right Chambers really helps give a head start with it. My pupillage at Pallant certainly gave me that head start since I am already the undertaking judicial reviews, Chancery Division litigation and multi-track trials and as sole counsel. None of this would have been possible without the support of all of the team at Pallant Chambers.

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PALLANT CHAMBERS
22 JANUARY 2024