



CASE STUDIES

Kate Riekstina

Pupil 2018, Tenant 2019



I received the phone call from our chief executive in October 2017. "We would love to offer you a criminal pupillage at St John's Buildings in Sheffield". I could not have been happier. From the moment I received the phone call to now, I have been supported by Chambers in everything that gets thrown at this young barrister.

I commenced pupillage in January 2018 as a pupil to Richard Thyne and Ian Goldsack – two of the most fantastic advocates I have ever had the pleasure to observe and learn from. As someone with no ties to Sheffield, I felt that members went out of their way to make me feel welcome in Sheffield from the moment that I joined.

I was in court almost every day during my first six. My pupil supervisors encouraged me to ask questions and discuss cases that I observed. I was given tasks to prepare opening speeches, committals for sentence, pleas in mitigation, bail applications, hearsay and bad character applications and defence statements.

My supervisors also spent time discussing what (if any) my concerns would be when I got on my feet and then tailored exercises to address those concerns. We often discussed trial strategies, cross examinations and I was given the opportunity to observe other senior counsel in Chambers throughout my first six.

The training I received made me feel comfortable as an advocate and prepared me well for my second six. I felt like I was supported and encouraged by my supervisors and everyone else in Chambers.

My second six began on a Thursday. Again, I was in court almost every day. The exercises I had undertaken in my first six meant that I was well prepared to commence my second six. I also found that the junior members of Chambers provided me with additional layer of support especially when I appeared in the Magistrates' Court.

The clerks at St John's Buildings ensured that I was busy, but not overwhelmed. One of my favourite moments in pupillage was when I spoke to our senior clerk because I wanted to shape my practice in a particular direction – I was encouraged to do so and supported by the clerks. I mention this moment because I felt valued, listened to and trusted by my senior clerk. Since then, my practice has developed steadily, and I am absolutely loving my job.

Overall, I consider to have been one of the luckiest pupils out there.