



ST JOHN'S
BUILDINGS
BARRISTERS CHAMBERS



PUPILLAGE GUIDE 2023

Welcome to St John's Buildings.

This brochure will guide you through all aspects of pupillage here, from why you should consider applying to us, to application tips, details about the process and case studies of past pupils.

We view Pupillage as a vital way of developing high calibre tenants who will ensure the continued success of St John's Buildings in the future.

We make a considerable investment in our pupils and most pupils become tenants. We hope you will consider applying to St John's Buildings and we look forward to finding out more about you.

Chris Ronan, Chief Executive





WHO ARE WE?

We are one of the largest sets of barristers' Chambers in the UK, with 241 members and 64 support staff across four cities.

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE

We have a proven reputation for providing expert barristers and delivering a complete legal solution. We build long-term partnerships with clients by providing exceptional counsel backed by professional, reliable and consistently high quality standards of service.

FORWARD-THINKING

We are an early and enthusiastic adopter of new technology and AI to facilitate better and more cost-effective service delivery. Innovations include electronic booking, cloud storage, online diaries, remote access and automated billing. We invest heavily in our IT infrastructure and related technologies.

We have developed and employ award-winning electronic case collaboration software, which greatly improves client service while enabling a dramatic reduction of both our costs and our environmental footprint.

Already one of the largest Chambers in the country, we are following a strategy for growth to enhance our ability to service clients' needs by providing advocacy and advisory services nationally. This strategy is underpinned and enabled by our values of Service Excellence, Approachability, Community and Agility. These values define how we behave collectively and individually, to clients and to colleagues.

OUR CLIENTS

Our clients are spread nationally and range from the full spectrum of legal firms, insurance firms, local authorities and high-net-worth individuals through to commercial enterprises and SMEs.

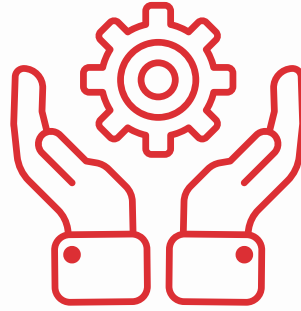
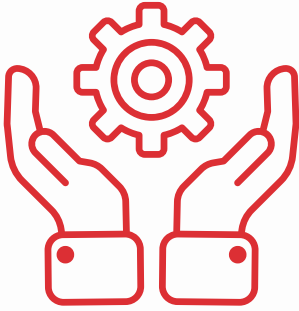
PUBLIC ACCESS

Members of Chambers accept instructions from members of the public under the direct access rules, and we are developing and marketing this area as a key new business stream.



10 REASONS TO APPLY TO SJB

1. You'll feel like part of the team even before your first day in Chambers. You will be invited to our induction day and will receive an information pack in the summer before pupillage. You will also meet your supervisor, clerks, other members and our CEO at your induction meeting - to make sure you feel supported in the weeks before you start
2. We offer a huge support package and clear signposting of who to go to for help - again this is all available before your pupillage begins
3. You'll receive a grant during your first six and an earnings guarantee in your second six - we understand that pupillage can be a worrying time financially, so we do everything we can to ease these pressures
4. We are a friendly, efficient set based in four great northern cities and we have a proven reputation for the quality of our advocacy
5. We have an ambitious strategy focused on continued growth across all practice groups
6. We have a clear focus on business development
7. We provide a supportive environment in which pupils can flourish and learn
8. Our pupils are sought after, kept busy and in court 95% of the available working days
9. We offer a rich and diverse training package in a professional and friendly environment
10. Most important of all, we offer pupillage with the expectation that you will become a tenant at SJB - there is no competition for tenancy between our pupils!



SUPPORTING YOU THROUGHOUT PUPILLAGE

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

During the first six months of pupillage a grant of £15,000 is made to all pupils and during the second six months there is an earning guarantee of £25,000. Our pupils almost always comfortably exceed their guaranteed income. Most importantly for any applicant with real aspirations, we offer pupillage with a view to tenancy. That gives you the opportunity to be part of one of the biggest and most diverse sets of Chambers in the country.

YOUR PUPIL SUPERVISOR

We are deliberately flexible as to who is the best pupil supervisor for any particular intake. The Management Committee decides the number and practice areas of pupillages to be offered for the coming year and invites suitable members of Chambers to be pupil supervisors.

Supervisors are selected on the basis of the quality of their practice, their ability to provide guidance and support and their ability to relate to others.

Our pupil supervisors will be familiar with and act in accordance with The Bar Standards Handbook. They will ensure to the best of their ability that any pupil receives experience, instruction and advice in accordance with the appropriate pupillage checklist and they will use their best endeavours to introduce pupils to colleagues and professional clients.

YOUR MENTOR

As well as a supervisor, we will also assign you a mentor. This will be someone who has recently completed pupillage within your practice area. They will understand the pressures of pupillage - and will also introduce you to your peer group, your wider practice group and the social side of Chambers.

OUR PRACTICE AREAS

Our chambers offers a wide range of services and each barrister belongs to at least one of our practice groups.

One of our greatest strengths is that each individual barrister benefits from being part of a cohesive team within a large, multidisciplinary set of chambers. This means that we can offer expertise and experience in a wide range of areas, with each area complementing and informing others. It also means that we are able to consider pupillage applications in each of our specialist areas.

Accidents Abroad	ADR and Mediation	Banking, Finance and Insolvency
Catastrophic Injury	Clinical Negligence	Company and Commercial
Costs	Court of Protection	Courts Martial and Service Law
Crime	Data and Information Law	Disease
Education	Employment	Family - Children
Family - Finance	Fraud - Civil	Fraud - Criminal
Inquests	Personal Injury	Professional Negligence
Property and Private Client	Public Access	Public /Administrative
Regulatory	Sports, Media and Entertainment Law	Tax

OUR VALUES



SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We are proud to have been recognised as Chambers of the Year on numerous occasions and continue to apply the same high standards across all sites. Our barristers and staff are committed to delivering high-quality services and support to all of our clients. We don't rest on our laurels, but continuously seek to improve our services.



APPROACHABILITY

Our clients say we are friendly and approachable. We provide a supportive service and environment to clients, members and colleagues. We are always exploring ways to ensure our services are accessible and welcome Direct Access clients.



COMMUNITY

Our barristers and staff work together to provide a seamless service to clients. Our barristers enjoy collegiate support across practice groups and sites, sharing their expertise to develop others. Welfare is high on the agenda in Chambers and we have been recognised for our work in this area by the Bar Council. Equality, diversity and inclusion are critical to Chambers' success, both as a workplace and service provider.



AGILITY

Forward thinking - we scan the horizon and talk with market leaders about technical opportunities to enhance our services. We continue to adapt to market needs and challenges to ensure continuity and to provide the services our clients want and need. We embrace new technology enabling our barristers to work anywhere in the UK and radically reducing our use of paper.



DIVERSITY IN PUPILLAGE

BRIDGING THE BAR

Chambers is proud to have signed up to the Bridging the Bar Mini Pupillage scheme. Bridging the Bar is a charity committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and diversity at the Bar. The organisation has three objectives:

- Equal access to opportunity: An integral part of this is enabling students from non-traditional backgrounds to gain practical work experience with barristers through a structured mini pupillage programme
- Mentorship: By connecting a diverse pool of students with dedicated mentors, the aim is to make the Bar a more accessible and better understood profession
- Transparency: BTB directories are a point of reference which serves to highlight those chambers and organisations which are leading the way towards equal access to opportunity.

Find out more by visiting bridgingthebar.org

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

We are strongly committed to equality of opportunity and will apply objective criteria in all shortlisting and selection processes. We aim to ensure there is no discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, class or age in recruitment and working at Chambers. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to accommodate candidates with a disability. We particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates, transgender candidates and those with a disability, who are under-represented in our membership.

EQUALITY POLICY

Chambers is committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of its work. All barristers have committed to observe the Bar Council Conduct in relation to non discrimination in the acceptance of work, the carrying out of that work and all dealing with clients, colleagues, staff and others. All staff have committed to comply with this policy.



STRUCTURE OF PUPILLAGE AT SJB

The one-year training period is split into two halves. The first six months give you a chance to learn about the Bar and life in Chambers as well as your specialist chosen area of law, under close supervision from a pupil supervisor, who is a specialist in that field. This will include working on cases with your supervisor and learning from them. The second six-month period will see you owning and carrying out advocacy on cases and representing clients with close supervision from your pupil supervisor.

Your progress will be monitored on a continuing basis through the whole of the pupillage by your pupil supervisor.

We offer monthly review meetings with the chief executive, to ensure that you feel that you are getting the most out of your pupillage.

Formal monitoring will take place every three months, so that you and your pupil supervisor can assess your progress by reference to a pupillage checklist so as to:

- Identify which areas of work have been covered;
- Identify which areas of work remain to be covered and discuss how this will be achieved;
- Give you and your supervisor an opportunity to comment in writing generally on all or any matter relating to the conduct of your pupillage.

This way we can ensure that you get the best training possible.

Towards the end of the second six months of the pupillage period, the Pupillage Committee will meet with the pupil supervisor and the Head of Chambers to review your progress.



PUPILLAGE GATEWAY

APPLYING

OUR CRITERIA

We are looking for commitment, passion, intelligence and drive. We expect candidates to have a minimum 2:1 degree classification, although we will take into account exceptional circumstances. We also look for:

- Intellectual and analytical ability
- Written communication and advocacy
- Oral communication and advocacy
- Understanding of the law and legal practice
- Demonstration of attributes required to support a successful career at the Bar.

WILL A MINI-PUPILLAGE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

We recommend that applicants for pupillage should try to complete a mini-pupillage in Chambers. Mini-pupillages are a great way for Chambers to get to know the applicants but also for the applicants to get to know Chambers. The fact that a mini-pupillage has not been completed will not be held against any applicant who is otherwise perfect for Chambers, but applicants who have not completed a mini-pupillage may be requested to undertake a mini-pupillage before a decision is made. If you are interested in a mini-pupillage please visit

<http://stjohnsbuidings.com/join-us/pupillage>



TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM, FROM OUR PUPILLAGE COMMITTEE

The tips below aim to help you give your application the best chance of making it through the “sift” – the process whereby hundreds of applications are whittled down to those offered a first interview.

1. Remember that the person reading your application will be reading a lot of others. You need to make your points quickly and for the application to stand out. A well-edited application will have better impact than a very lengthy one.

2. The academic section needs to align with Chamber’s requirements. Make sure it is and if not highlight why not and detail any extenuating circumstances where requested in the form.

3. Make sure everything is grammatically correct. We are looking to assess your written communication skills across the form and in later questions you have an opportunity to demonstrate your written advocacy. A reader may be put off or misunderstand your intent if, for example, apostrophes are out of place or there is misspelling and incorrect use of commas.

4. Mini-pupillages are helpful. However, an extensive list in your application form is less so and we recognise that not all candidates can spare paid working days to attend so many or experience equal access to them. We suggest selecting no more than four and for each only give a succinct two or three sentence description of what you did or saw during it. Similarly, with marshalling.

5. Legal work experience: You may have full or part-time legal work experience, e.g. in a solicitor’s office or using legal skills in other commercial environments. Increasingly, pupillage applications are from people who are not coming straight from the Bar Vocational Course and indeed have already started working in the legal sector. Keep this separate, if you have it, from voluntary legal experience (Free Representation Unit, Citizen’s Advice Bureau etc) when presenting in the form.

6. Again, for this employed legal work good editing is essential. Highlight the number of cases you have advocated in, what areas of law you have started to practise in and notable successes. Remember, barristers are advocates, so the more advocacy experience you can show the better.



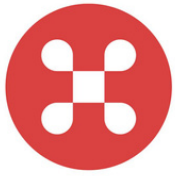
TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM (CONTINUED)

7. Non-legal work experience: This can help demonstrate your work ethic and other useful attributes for the Bar. However, don't gild the lily or spend a lot of words telling us what is obvious about the role. Highlight transferrable skills and knowledge.

8. The questions at the end of the form are set by each chambers. These are an opportunity to demonstrate your written communication and advocacy skills, knowledge and critical reasoning. Our tips for completing these are:

- Answer all elements of the question, including offering your opinion/evaluation where requested. For example, last year when asked about whether the independent referral Bar is likely to exist in the future, some applicants described only the threats to the Bar without providing an evaluation of those threats and whether they would or would not cause it to diminish or disappear.
- Using key phrases from the question in your answer can keep you on course to answer the question and help the reader see you are doing so.
- Answer each of the questions using two or three paragraphs at most. One single block of text can be a bit off-putting for the reader.
- Avoid humour, it rarely works. But do try to engage the reader with answers that are genuinely interesting to read and stand out.
- If the chambers has a particular unique selling point or attracts you for a particular reason, mention it.

We hope this has been helpful and wish you good luck in all your future applications.



CASE STUDIES

Sarah Harrison-Fisher Pupil 2021, Tenant 2022



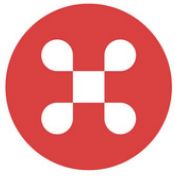
I joined St John's Buildings as a pupil in 2021, specialising in family law.

Throughout pupillage I had the benefit of two pupil supervisors, and I gained experience of all areas of children law. In addition to this I often accompanied other tenants to court in order to experience the work I would be doing during second six. I have had the opportunity to observe and learn from all members of Chambers. I was involved in the cases of my supervisors and other members and so felt well prepared for second six.

The family clerking team are very supportive, during second six I had a well-balanced diary which meant I was able to undertake the work to the best of my ability. The clerks are able to provide direction and guidance on matters such as billing, business development and how to get to court in far flung places!

The most stand-out feature of St John's Buildings is the community. I have developed long lasting friendships which have made my pupillage a very enjoyable experience. I have been incredibly well supported by all sectors of Chambers. There are regular social events, and there is always someone who you can pick up the phone and call when you are stuck. Such is the breath of expertise at St John's Buildings there is always someone on hand to help.

Overall, whilst pupillage has been a challenging time, I have been very well supported so that I am able to meet those challenges head on. St John's Buildings has given me a strong foundation for a successful career at the Bar.



CASE STUDIES

Emmanuel Coniah Pupil 2021, Tenant 2022



I began my criminal law pupillage in October 2021, based in Manchester. A few months before I started, I was invited to attend an induction meeting to give all the pupils the opportunity to meet each other and raise any queries or concerns. This was followed by regular contact with Chambers to ensure that I was fully prepared for my first day.

I was informed by the chief executive that the intention was for me to be a tenant in Chambers at the end of pupillage and felt that everyone was genuinely rooting for me to succeed.

I was fortunate to have two excellent supervisors who both had strong prosecution and defence practices. They actively involved me in their cases by discussing their case preparation and views on each case. I was regularly asked for my view on how I would approach certain issues.

The research tasks and written exercises completed were aimed at ensuring I was prepared for my second six. The feedback given was incredibly useful, as I routinely draft the same documents in my own cases.

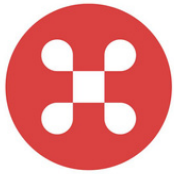
The work I observed meant I had experienced almost all types of hearings in the Crown Court and magistrates' court in my first six.

I was assigned a junior mentor who was a criminal pupil the year before me. I was also added to the SJB Crime WhatsApp Group, where I was guaranteed a swift response by a member of the criminal team to any legal or ethical issue encountered at court.

I was in court almost every day in my second six. In the magistrates' court, I prosecuted and defended in trials, sentences and case management hearings. I appeared in the Crown Court within a month of starting my second six. I had monthly meetings with my senior clerk to discuss billing, receipts and business development. My senior clerk ensured that I was doing work which allowed me to comfortably surpass my second six guaranteed minimum income.

I usually travelled to courts across the Northern Circuit but occasionally went off-Circuit. All off-Circuit travel during first six was reimbursed by Chambers. During my second six, travel expenses were often included for off-Circuit travel.

Outside of work, I was pleasantly surprised at the number of social events available. They ranged from informal drinks to formal dinners. I found that attending social events allowed me to meet and get to know members in other areas of law. Taking time off during my pupillage was strongly encouraged. I used my full holiday entitlement before my pupillage ended.



CASE STUDIES

Cressida O'Connor Pupil 2021, Tenant 2022



I undertook a civil pupillage at St John's Buildings specialising in personal injury cases.

Information

SJB is very upfront about providing actual and would-be pupils with all the information they might want. I had two induction sessions – one in the summer just before I started, and one on my first day of pupillage in October 2021 – which covered most of the bases, and the further questions I did have were answered thoroughly.

Training

The circuit organised civil and criminal advocacy training towards the end of the first six for all pupils, which involved role play and useful real-time feedback.

Support

Chambers dearly wants its pupils to succeed and will do all it can to help that to happen. At the induction point, I was given a list of useful contacts for various types of issue that may arise, and if I ever did have to raise an issue it was dealt with well and thoroughly.

Supervision

Chambers works hard to try to match pupils with supervisors with whom they will get on and work in a similar way. Before I started pupillage, I was asked if I wanted my first six to consist of learning primarily by observation, or if I wanted it to be more hands-on, and my answer informed Chambers' allocation of supervisor.

Mentoring

As well as a supervisor, pupils also have a mentor (a junior member from the previous year's pupillage cohort). My supervisor was always just a phone call or text message away, failing which I could seek help from the many Chambers WhatsApp groups – everyone from the heads of Chambers down is very happy to assist those at the junior end of the profession.

Money, receipts and billings

Pupils receive a monthly grant during the first six, and guaranteed billing during the second six so that, even if you have slack periods of work, there is a safety net in place to top up your income if you should need it. In practice, the top-up is almost never needed – nearly all pupils, even those doing legally-aided criminal and family work, comfortably exceed the promised minimum level of billing.

Quality of work and court opportunities

During first six, I spent most days in court shadowing my supervisor or another member of the team to give me the opportunity to see a range of advocacy styles. Once on my feet, I was in court almost every day doing trials, applications and Stage 3 quantum hearings, as well as being given plenty of paper-based tasks such as advising on prospects or quantum. I felt very ready to do my own work after first six.



CASE STUDIES

Alexa Carrier Pupil 2021, Tenant 2022



I was based in Chester undertaking a pupillage in Crime and Family.

Before pupillage

We had an information day, where we were given all the information we needed, as well as sorting out issues such as internet access, useful phone numbers and access to databases and websites. We were also given a chance to ask any questions to our senior clerk and the CEO.

We were given a clear financial plan. Chambers offer a loan at the start of second six, if necessary, knowing this comes at a difficult time financially. We then met other members of Chambers, who were all people we could ask questions of throughout pupillage.

First six

I was assigned a pupil supervisor for crime and one for family. Both of my supervisors were incredibly supportive, and nothing was too much trouble – or too small an issue to raise with them. They are both at the end of a message or call anytime I have a question, even after pupillage.

During my first six, I spent most of the time shadowing my supervisors, but also was given the opportunity to follow other members. This meant that I was able to know more people, see more court centres, and build my list of contacts.

Chambers organised training in ethics, diversity and inclusion and advocacy. A mandatory advocacy course was conducted by the Northern Circuit.

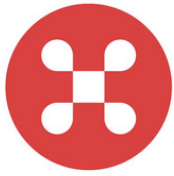
Before beginning second six, we had a meeting with our senior clerk who explained the expectation of being in court every day during second six, and an anticipation that billings would exceed minimum earnings.

Second six

During my second six, I was in court every day, but the support from other members of Chambers meant that I never felt alone. I knew there was always someone I could ring to ask a question that had popped up in the middle of a trial, and I knew the clerks would support me if I needed to be put in touch with someone immediately.

Billings did surpass minimum earnings, even when undertaking a criminal pupillage, where my second six began the same week the Bar Action began, and did not end until the end of my second six. Billings are quickly turned around, and receipts follow.

SJB is a supportive and encouraging community. Everyone in Chambers is available to hear any concerns and help you through.



CASE STUDIES

Hannah Bakshani Pupil 2021, Tenant 2022



I was based in Sheffield undertaking a pupillage in the Court of Protection.

After the excitement of being offered pupillage started to fade, the nerves set in. I was therefore grateful when Chambers organised an induction day where I was given a USB containing information about the forms which I would need to complete before starting pupillage, suggestions for accountants with experience of managing barristers' accounts and information about the financial support available to pupils.

During my induction, I was assigned a mentor who had recently completed pupillage and who was building a practice in my chosen field. I really appreciated having someone to speak to who could remember the stresses of pupillage. My mentor also made sure that I met the other junior barristers and engaged in the social aspects of chambers and I quickly started to feel like one of the team.

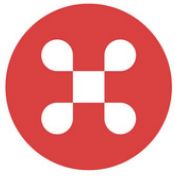
The attitude to pupillage at SJB is to provide pupils with the best foundation upon which to build their own practice. Although the bulk of my time during first six was spent with my supervisor, I attended court with practitioners from different practice areas and therefore observed different styles of advocacy. Chambers also holds a number of advocacy training days and I was invited to attend specialist training with a view to broadening the scope of my practice over time.

My supervisor and I generally worked together as a team though the first six months which meant that I was drafting almost daily, undertaking research, preparing cross-examination and developing my case handing skills. This was an excellent foundation for second six. Importantly, he also helped me to develop connections with solicitors and to build my professional network which has been absolutely invaluable to me as I start to establish my own practice.

I have been busy since starting on my feet and have been in court regularly with instructions for drafting papers filling days that I am not in court. My busy diary also meant that I comfortably exceeded the minimum guaranteed income.

Chambers is also very clear that whilst you are expected to work hard, wellbeing is a priority. I was told in no uncertain terms that holiday should be taken and I am regularly reminded to speak to the clerks if I am struggling – either with work related or personal pressures.

Overall, my pupillage has been outstanding. It was undeniably challenging but provided an excellent foundation on which to build my practice and I would not hesitate in recommending the SJB pupillage experience. The standout moment for me was when my supervisor took silk and I was able to attend the Silks' Day at the Royal Courts of Justice which was the most incredible and inspiring experience.



CASE STUDIES

Rosemary Proctor Pupil 2021, Tenant 2022



I undertook a Criminal pupillage in Chester.

From the very start of my pupillage, I was encouraged to show my personality. 'You have to be yourself,' my supervisor told me. 'Everything you say will sound hollow if it's not in your own voice.' Pupillage at St John's Buildings wasn't about pouring me into a mould; it was about shaping me into the advocate I could be.

The clerks were a constant source of support. Pupillage can be a daunting time, and it was really reassuring to know that behind me always were these calm, highly competent people who had seen it all before; who weren't going to shout at me if I came to them with a problem, but would work with me to work it out. For questions about law and procedure, I had my supervisor, and when he was in court, there would always be at least one criminal barrister available and happy to help.

It's strange how quickly the year went by, especially my second six. I think it seemed to pass in a flash because I was so busy. On my very first day on my feet, I was off to prosecute a Magistrates' Court list. From then on, it was rare for me to have a day when I wasn't in court – and not just the Magistrates' Court, but the Crown Court too. I was surprised by the amount of Crown Court work I received. By my second month on my feet, I was appearing there regularly.

Pupillage at St John's Buildings never felt like a test. It was, of course, technically a test, but I felt as if it were one that Chambers wanted me to pass. After my co-pupil and I accepted tenancy, the clerks arranged a celebratory meal for us. It was a great welcome to the team, but the preceding 12 months had made me feel part of that team already.

There's a real sense of community and camaraderie at St John's Buildings. I would advise any applicant to consider it for pupillage.

TIMETABLE

Date	Step	Did you know?
28 November 2022	Pupillages are advertised	Chambers is a member of the Bar Council's Pupillage Gateway scheme and our vacancies will be advertised there. Applicants will have access to an online practice application form to help you prepare.
4 January 2023	Application system opens	Chambers will not have access to applications yet.
8 February 2023 2pm	CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS	
16 February 2023	The applicants are sifted for the first time	Our pupillage committee is responsible for the sift. It is made up of at least three of our leading barristers as well as the CEO.
1 March 2023	Second sift	Following this, the committee meets to discuss the outcome and agree candidates.
24 March 2023	First Interviews	The first interview is a short and snappy interview, undertaken by members of the pupillage committee. Each interview lasts 15 minutes at the most, with a series of set questions to be answered by each candidate. We ask for references for everyone who is invited for interview. However, references will only be considered after the first interview has taken place and a preliminary view has been reached.
27 & 28 April 2023	Second interviews	Our second interview is designed to test your developing skills as a barrister and includes a role play element with a legal problem, which will be provided half an hour before the interview. The problem is designed to test your analytical and communication skills and not your legal knowledge of the subject matter. Second interviews are conducted by the pupillage committee.
5 May 2023	Offer letters sent from this date	Applicants have seven days to accept any offers made to them.
October 2023	PUPILLAGES COMMENCE!	