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**KING<sup>7</sup>S**  
**BENCH**  
**WALK**

## ***Pupillages at 7 King's Bench Walk***

### ***Policy and Practice***

## ***Introduction***

### ***OUR VIEW OF PUPILLAGE***

At 7 King's Bench Walk, we recognise that pupillage is an important stage of a barrister's career. First and foremost, it is an opportunity to develop the skills which the pupil will use throughout his or her practice and to observe others putting those skills into practice. Second, it is a time for the pupil to get to know the individuals who make up Chambers and to decide whether he or she wants to build his or her career amongst them. Third, it is an opportunity for the pupil to put developing skills into practice and, hopefully, to secure a tenancy.

We do not embrace the old-fashioned perception of pupillage as a year-long interview. Whilst securing a tenancy is an important aim for most of our pupils, we believe that the emphasis of a pupillage at 7 King's Bench Walk should be on the pupil's development as a barrister as well as on his or her assessment as a future tenant. Our pupillages are, we hope, designed to achieve this goal.

### ***EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES***

In accordance with the Bar Code of Conduct and the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar, we practise an equal opportunities policy for selection of pupils and tenants. We select candidates solely on merit irrespective of race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, political persuasion or disability (so far as the physical constraints of our premises permit). Concerning disability, we will make reasonable adjustments to the application process for pupillage and tenancy for disabled applicants, and will consider making reasonable adjustments to facilitate pupillage and/or practice as a tenant in the event of a successful application.

Vacancies for pupillage and tenancy will be advertised on the website designated by the Bar Council save, exceptionally, in the circumstances set out in paragraph 5 of the Pupillage Funding and Advertising Requirements 2003 (see Annexe R to the Code of Conduct). All such advertisements will include: (a) encouragement of applications from groups which are under-represented in Chambers; (b) a statement of compliance with the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar; and (c) a statement indicating our willingness to make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates. The Pupillage Secretary will maintain a record of the number of applications received and the stage of the application process they have reached according to ethnicity, gender, disability and age in the form provided by OLPAS. This information will be periodically reviewed by the Equal Opportunities Officer in consultation with the Pupillage Secretary and (as necessary) the Head of the Pupillage Committee and appropriate

action considered if it appears that this information may suggest an inequality in the application procedure or its implementation.

## ***OUR POLICY***

This document summarises our policy and practice in relation to the recruitment of pupils and tenants. It is to be distributed to all members of the Pupillage Committee, pupil supervisors and pupil assessors, to all pupils at the beginning of their pupillage, and to any candidate who requests a copy. It is to be read in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar and with the Pupillage File and other guidance produced by the Bar Council.

A summary of the information contained in this document appears on Chambers' website at [www.7kbw.co.uk](http://www.7kbw.co.uk).

## ***At the application stage***

### ***OUR WORK***

The most important decision for most of our applicants is whether the type of work we offer interests them and will stimulate them throughout their practices.

All members of Chambers specialise in commercial law. In practice, commercial law covers everything from small-scale contractual disputes to complex multi-jurisdictional insurance, shipping, banking and financial litigation. The core of our work is insurance, reinsurance, professional negligence and shipping disputes. As a pupil, you can expect to be involved in all of these areas of litigation. In addition, members of Chambers are regularly involved in a much wider variety of commercial disputes, such as commercial fraud, conflicts of law, EU and competition law, banking, international sale of goods, energy supply, and City work. Members appear regularly in the Commercial Court and Court of Appeal, and also in the House of Lords and Privy Council. They also appear in arbitrations, and in other jurisdictions such as Singapore and Bermuda. Whatever the nature of a pupil supervisor's work, a pupil can expect to be fully involved in it.

One of the questions most commonly asked by our applicants is what work the more junior members of Chambers can expect to undertake. There is no single 'mould' for the practice of new tenants at 7 King's Bench Walk. During the early years of practice, our universal experience is that the work is diverse. Typically, junior tenants divide their time between advising and representing clients on their own in more straightforward cases and assisting more senior members of Chambers in large and

complex disputes. The nature of commercial work is such that opportunities for advocacy are less frequent during the early years of practice than in many other branches of the law. However, we encourage our junior members to appear in county courts, in arbitrations and in suitable High Court hearings whenever they can, and the opportunities to appear as an advocate in commercial cases increase rapidly after two or three years in practice.

For most of us, the primary appeal of commercial work is that it is intellectually demanding and stimulating. Our work involves reading and absorbing large quantities of documentation, understanding complex factual and technical information, analysing the legal and commercial issues which arise, and researching the law which applies to them. Being a good commercial lawyer requires strong intellectual and analytical abilities, as well as common sense and sound judgment.

### ***OUR MEMBERS***

We recognise that one of the most difficult factors for a pupil to assess when applying for pupillage is whether he or she is comfortable with the ‘feel’ of a Chambers. Whether you enjoy your working environment is as important, we believe, as whether you enjoy the work you will be doing.

We believe that the atmosphere at 7 King’s Bench Walk is friendly and easy-going, as well as highly professional. Whilst we have a strong contingent of QCs (18 out of 46 current members are QCs), we are a relatively young and dynamic set with an atmosphere which we believe reflects that composition. We often work in teams together on large cases. It is also important for young barristers to be able to work alongside their contemporaries at solicitors’ firms, especially in large-scale cases where team-work is required. Junior members of Chambers are increasingly involved in work of this nature and we believe this is a reflection on the approachability and professionalism of our members.

Members of Chambers have come to the Bar through a variety of routes. Some of our members are non-law graduates, a few are former solicitors and some are practitioners from other jurisdictions. On leaving Chambers, many of our members have become judges, including Lord Denning, Lord Brandon, Lord Goff, Lord Hobhouse, Lord Mance, Lord Justice Longmore, Mr. Justice Tomlinson, Mr. Justice Cooke and Mr Justice Flaux.

There is, of course, no formula for deciding whether a set will suit a pupil. If an applicant is interested in pursuing a career at 7 King’s Bench Walk, we recommend that he or she spends a few days in Chambers to gauge the atmosphere for himself or herself. Details of how to apply for a mini-pupillage appear in the *Mini-Pupillage*

section, below. We also encourage applicants to whom we may make an offer of pupillage, particularly those who have not already attended for a mini-pupillage, to spend a day or two in Chambers before deciding whether to accept our offer. We would stress that having done a mini-pupillage at 7 King's Bench Walk is not a prerequisite for successful application for pupillage, and that any mini-pupillage that is done will form no part of the assessment process on an application for pupillage. We must also emphasise that the suggestion, that a person to whom an offer of pupillage may be made should spend a day or two in Chambers, is made purely to assist him or her in making an informed choice. We take no account of whether an applicant has or has not already spent time in Chambers.

### ***SELECTION CRITERIA***

We do not expect applicants to have any knowledge of commercial law when they apply to us and we recognise that many, in particular non-law graduates, will not have had an opportunity to study the areas of law in which we practise. We do, however, expect applicants to have the strong analytical and intellectual abilities that are necessary to meet the demands of commercial practice. For this reason, we do not interview candidates who do not have a first or a good upper-second class degree, save in very exceptional circumstances.

It is also important that our pupils have the potential to become good advocates. For this reason we ask all applicants who are invited to an interview to prepare and present a short advocacy exercise, usually an application for permission to appeal to the House of Lords.

Applicants are assessed by reference to the following criteria:

- A first class degree or a good 2:1
- Lively intelligence
- Advocacy skills
- Sound judgment
- Written skills: presenting arguments, giving advice and drafting documents
- Oral skills: ability to communicate with solicitors, clients and experts
- Ability to absorb information from extensive documentation
- Ability to analyse documentation and oral information, and to identify salient issues
- Attention to detail
- Professional stamina/capacity for hard work
- Resilience
- Ability to work alone and as part of a team
- Commitment to a career at the Commercial Bar

- Sense of responsibility

A more relaxed standard may be applied to a candidate applying for an unfunded pupillage, who intends to practise abroad and who thus does not intend to seek a tenancy in these Chambers.

## ***HOW TO APPLY***

### Application

7 King's Bench Walk is a member of OLPAS and accepts applications for pupillage during the OLPAS summer season. The application procedure is therefore as prescribed by the OLPAS system, by way of completion of an online application form. If an applicant is by reason of any disability unable to apply through the OLPAS system in the ordinary way, he or she should contact the Pupillage Secretary, and an alternative but (so far as practicable) equivalent method of applying will be identified which is the most suitable for the applicant and for Chambers.

### References

Applicants will be asked to procure two references to be sent to Chambers in support of their application. We would prefer the references to be academic and/or professional, but will accept personal references if academic/ professional references cannot be provided for any reason. The applicant will be sent a copy of the selection criteria to provide to his or her referees, and will be asked to invite the referees to have regard to the selection criteria when composing their references .

### Short-listing for interview

Each application for pupillage will be separately assessed by two members of the Pupillage Committee, each of whom will independently form a judgment, on the basis of the application form and references and by reference to the selection criteria identified above, as to whether the applicant should be invited for interview. They then record their individual assessments of the applicant on an assessment form, a copy of which is distributed with this document. They will not confer with one another before or while carrying out their assessments. If the two assessments differ in the conclusion reached, the application will be referred to the Head of the Pupillage Committee for a final decision on whether or not to invite the applicant for interview.

### The interview

Only one round of interviews will be held. Not all applicants will be interviewed. Those who are interviewed will be required to undertake a short advocacy exercise, of

which they will have been given notice several days in advance. Interviews will be conducted by three or more members of the Pupillage Committee comprising members of Chambers of varying levels of seniority and, as far as practicable, including members of Chambers of different age, gender, and social, racial or cultural background. The interviewing panel will not include any relative or close friend of any of the applicants invited for interview. Applicants are assessed on the basis of the selection criteria set out above, which will be provided to all applicants invited for interview. Each member of the interviewing panel will, immediately following the interview and independently of any of the other members, record his or her assessment on an interview assessment form, a copy of which is distributed with this document. The assessment forms are then collated and a consensus decision arrived at.

Disabled applicants will be asked what, if any, adjustments may be needed to enable the applicant to practise as a barrister.

Chambers will make any reasonable adjustment required to ensure that a disabled applicant is not disadvantaged at interview. The communication inviting an applicant for interview will include a question as to whether the applicant may need any special arrangements to be made for the interview.

It is intended that all interviews should take place as near in time to each other as is practicable. In the recent past, Chambers has conducted all such interviews during the course of a weekend, and it is intended that this practice should continue.

Offers will be made in accordance with the OLPAS timetable and in accordance with the rules stipulated by the Bar Council applying at the time.

Records will be maintained of each application, including all assessments made during the application process, for at least two years.

## ***Pupillages offered***

### ***TYPES OF PUPILLAGE***

We offer funded 12-month pupillages to those successful applicants who intend to seek a tenancy at 7 King's Bench Walk.

In addition to funded pupillages, we may offer unfunded pupillages to candidates who intend to practise abroad and thus do not intend to seek a tenancy in Chambers. These unfunded pupillages are usually for 12 months, although we are prepared to consider other periods. Application for such pupillages should be by way of a covering letter,

and CV containing a breakdown of results achieved in all examinations undertaken to date, and will in the first instance be considered by one member of the Pupillage Committee.

Exceptionally, and subject to obtaining any waiver that may be required of the advertising requirement in the Pupillage Funding and Advertising Requirements (where they apply), we may be prepared to offer a funded second six-month pupillage to a pupil who has completed, or is about to complete, a first six-month pupillage elsewhere. Also, but again exceptionally, we may be prepared to offer a third six-month pupillage to a pupil who has completed, or is about to complete, a 12-month pupillage elsewhere. In such cases, the criteria for selection are the same as set out above, but are more stringently applied. The procedure for application for a second six-month or third six-month pupillage is the same as for funded twelve-month pupillages, save that such applications usually cannot be made through OLPAS. Chambers will therefore provide to candidates Chambers' own application form, which will be based on the OLPAS form, for completion and submission. The application should be accompanied by a CV and two academic and/or professional references addressing the selection criteria outlined above. The application will be subject to assessment in the same manner as an application for a funded 12-month pupillage, followed (where appropriate) by invitation to interview. A sub-committee of the Pupillage Committee, consisting of not fewer than three members of the Committee, will determine what form the interview should take and in particular whether it should involve an advocacy exercise. It will be for the Pupillage Committee to fix the appropriate length of pupillage to be performed (bearing in mind any requirements of the Joint Regulations Committee) and the pupillage award, if any.

Chambers is also prepared to consider applications for pupillage from those qualified for call to the Bar under regulations 35, 36 and 55 of the Consolidated Regulations, but required by the Qualifications Committee to undertake a period of pupillage (i.e. solicitors, other qualified lawyers, and teachers of the law of England and Wales of experience and distinction). The application process is the same as for those applying for second or third six-month pupillages.

### ***NUMBER OF PUPILLAGES***

A maximum of four funded 12-month pupillages per year are available to applicants who intend to seek a tenancy at 7 King's Bench Walk. A maximum of two unfunded pupillages per year are available to candidates who intend to practise abroad. At present, Chambers does not advertise vacancies for second six-month pupillages, but it may in certain circumstances be prepared to offer a second six-month pupillage, subject to obtaining any waiver that may be required of the Pupillage Funding and Advertising Requirements (where they apply). There is no restriction on the number

of third six-month pupillages offered, or on the number of pupillages available to solicitors, other qualified lawyers, and teachers of the law.

Chambers accepts deferred applications.

### ***FINANCE AVAILABLE TO PUPILS***

Trainee solicitors in major City firms of solicitors are well paid during their period of training and we see no reason why pupils at 7 King's Bench Walk should not also be well rewarded. Thus, pupillage awards of at least £43,000 are available for the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 pupillage years. Such awards may be supplemented by any fees earned during the second six months of pupillage (although pupils should not expect to undertake any paid work of their own during the first or second six months of pupillage). Any travelling expenses incurred by a pupil during pupillage, other than the cost of travelling to and from Chambers each day, will be reimbursed by Chambers.

Pupillage awards are payable in equal tranches at the beginning of each month of pupillage. In the event of a pupil leaving Chambers, the balance of any award will not be paid.

We are willing to advance a proportion of the pupillage award (usually up to £10,000) on an interest-free basis for use during the Bar School year, on condition that the advance will be repaid if the pupil does not pass the Bar exams or complete his or her pupillage. Chambers will recoup any advance made out of the award payable during the first six months of pupillage. We therefore suggest that, before asking for an advance, the question of how much to ask for is considered carefully, as this will affect the amount received in that first six months.

## ***During pupillage***

### ***PATTERN OF PUPILLAGE***

A pupil will normally be attached to one pupil supervisor for the first three months of pupillage and will be involved in every aspect of his or her practice. In order to ensure that the pupil obtains a width of experience, however, he or she will then change pupil supervisor every two months or so for the remaining period of pupillage.

## ***YOUR WORK***

The work of a pupil is diverse. A large component will be helping in the preparation of trials and applications and attending Court with your pupil supervisor. It will also include drafting Statements of Case, researching the law, writing Opinions and attending Conferences, where advice is given and the case is discussed with solicitors, clients and expert witnesses. These are all skills which a barrister at 7 King's Bench Walk can expect to use throughout his or her practice. We ensure that pupils have the opportunity to develop them during pupillage, and help them as far as we can to do so.

You will, of course, also attend Court with your pupil supervisor. This will enable you to see the preparation, in which you will have played a part, put into practice. You will be able to observe many different styles of advocacy, not only those of your pupil supervisors, but also of opponents.

## ***YOUR DUTIES***

The duties of a pupil, and of pupil supervisors and the heads of Chambers, are set out in the Pupillage File produced and provided to you by the Bar Council. Your attention is drawn to sections 1.2 through 1.4.

You are asked, in particular, to note the requirement in section 1.2.2 regarding the completion of a checklist. 7 King's Bench Walk uses the General Commercial Pupillage Checklist. You should expect to complete all the matters covered on the checklist within the period of your pupillage, and your pupil supervisors should monitor this. Complete pupillage checklists should be sent to the Pupillage Liaison Officer.

## ***HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT***

In accordance with the Bar Standards Board's current guidance, you are entitled to four weeks leave during the 12 months of your pupillage (in addition to any bank holidays that fall within the period of pupillage and any weekdays falling on 27-31 December inclusive). Except with special permission given by the Head of the Pupillage Committee, no more than two weeks leave may be taken prior to the Decision as to Tenancy, which is usually taken in the 10<sup>th</sup> month of pupillage.

