

New Park Court

Pupillage

“New Park Court Chambers has a wide range of counsel from the top silks to eager juniors. They are all very capable.”

Chambers and Partners

Introduction to New Park Court Chambers

Here at New Park Court Chambers, we do things a little differently. With over 80 barristers, including 18 King Counsel, our reach and influence stretches far beyond the bounds of our Circuit.

As a Tier 1 Set based in Leeds and Newcastle we are home to a number of high profile and nationally and internationally reputable Counsel, as well as the future of the Bar who are growing and developing their early career practice. Our wider team are also well known and well respected for delivering a stellar service across clerking and strategic business operations.

We have a reputation for shaping the world around us. We are home to the Circuit Leader of the North Eastern Circuit, a former Chair of the Bar and elected serving members of the Bar Council. We also have a number of Recorders within our ranks, covering various disciplines, as well as holding the privilege of being the former Chambers of a number of well-known Circuit Judges across England and Wales. You will also find us at the forefront of leading and driving learning, education, charity endeavours and wellbeing across our Circuit. This is in addition to the number of lecturing roles our people hold at Universities within the region as well as being volunteer mentors.

Our Clerking, Finance and Support team are regularly commended for the service they provide and their commitment; which is echoed across the entire Chambers family.

Importantly, we recognise and embrace our societal responsibility to be a force for good; in the community, across Circuit and at The Bar.



Our core values

New Park Court Chambers is wholly committed to making the world a better place.

We are well represented on our Circuit Diversity Committee and are leading our peers on a number of initiatives aimed at removing bias, unconscious or otherwise, from how the industry manages recruitment and the fair allocation of work. We are proud supporters and participants of 10,000 Black Interns, we have a committed core of LGBTQ+ Activists and Allies and are prominent in supporting, enabling and promoting those from the lower end of the socio-economic pyramid to reach their potential.

We are also proud of our culture and ethos of ensuring that we are a welcoming, collegiate and safe environment for all. Which is reinforced through our partnership with The Diversity Trust.

We take our Environmental, Societal and Governance (ESG) responsibilities incredibly seriously. We are delighted to be one of a small group of Chambers to be certified as a Carbon Negative organisation.

We also acknowledge that we have a role to play in exposing future potential barristers to the inner workings of a set of Chambers; which we do through our new University Outreach Programme as well as via our people who voluntarily lecture and mentor at Universities and beyond.

Closer to home, safeguarding, supporting and inspiring members of Chambers and staff to be the best that they can be is very important to all of us. From internal mentoring schemes to our Employee Assistance Programme (which provides 24 hour welfare support) as well as our regular social activities and a clear commitment to regular transparent communication to all, we want you to be your authentic self, aim high and flourish with us.

Areas of work

Pupils can be expected to be exposed to work across our five key areas: Crime, Regulatory, Inquests and Inquiries, Family and Civil. New Park Court Chambers has a nationwide presence across each of these areas, an achievement which is recognised in Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500 each year. New Park Court Chambers is consistently ranked as a Tier 1 and Band 1 set.

Regulatory

New Park Court Chambers has a long-standing history of receiving instructions in all aspects of regulatory law and is recognised for its expertise in this area.

Such work includes advising and representing a number of professions in relation to disciplinary proceedings, in particular, but not limited to, medical professionals, solicitors, teachers and police officers.

The experience of the regulatory team extends to environmental law and health and safety law, an area in which members receive instructions in a wide range of complicated cases, many involving fatal accidents in the workplace.

Inquests and Inquiries

New Park Court Chambers has a proven track record with Inquest and Inquiry matters, demonstrating a considerable depth and breadth of expertise available to our clients.

Major Public Inquiry casework has included the Manchester Arena Inquiry, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the COVID Inquiry and most recently, the Omagh Bombing Inquiry.

Members of Chambers act in prominent Inquest matters, such as the Hillsborough Inquests, the Deepcut Inquest and an Inquest into a death on a 'Smart' Motorway. They also represent various medical and care organisations, corporations, governmental bodies and individual interested parties at Inquest hearings, some of which have involved deaths in custody and state detention, traffic accidents and corporate manslaughter.

Crime

New Park Court Chambers has one of the most established and widely experienced criminal teams on the North-Eastern Circuit and routinely receives instructions in major criminal casework across Circuit and nationally.

Our Crime Team comprises of highly skilled and experienced advocates who focus on complex casework within the entire spectrum of criminal proceedings and offer advice at the investigatory stage through to Crown Court or Appeal Court proceedings.

Whilst our King's Counsel focus on complex murder, manslaughter and terrorism offences, our very able junior practitioners deal with cases of substance and cover all aspects of criminal law. Many both prosecute and defend and are appointed to government panel lists, such as the CPS and Attorney General's lists. Some specialise in sexual offences, often dealing with vulnerable witnesses whilst others are instructed in criminal cases with a medical or regulatory bias.

"New Park Court Chambers has great strength in depth and offers counsel to handle cases of the most complex and sophisticated nature."

Chambers and Partners

Family

The Family Team at New Park Court Chambers represent parties in all aspects of Family Proceedings. This includes both private and public law work and financial remedy proceedings.

In Public Law matters, our members act for local authorities, parents and guardians. These cases often require an excellent understanding of medical evidence and detailed cross examination of multiple expert witnesses.

Our members have a broad experience of Private Law cases, including residence applications, contact applications, prohibited steps orders and issues of child abduction. Some cases involve applications to relocate internationally.

The team undertakes all types of Financial Remedy proceedings, from low value to high net worth cases, including cases with business assets, properties and pensions. The team advise in Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 proceedings and draft bespoke both pre-nuptial and post-nuptial agreements.

Civil

New Park Court Chambers provides expert advice drafting and advocacy services for civil and commercial work.

Practitioners have extensive experience, both as an advocate and in an advisory capacity, of a wide variety of complex, serious and multidisciplinary commercial and civil claims. Members act on behalf of both Claimants and Defendants in a wide spectrum of claims, including a number of cases that have resulted in multi-million pound awards or settlements. In addition to litigious work, members of chambers undertake a substantial amount of advisory work and the drafting of commercial documents.

About pupillage at New Park Court Chambers

The Pupillage Committee at New Park Court Chambers strives to provide first class training and a thorough grounding to equip the pupil for life at the Bar. We offer a 12 month pupillage and guarantee earnings throughout that period. We fund compulsory and non-compulsory courses and authorise travel expenses for those incurred outside of the Leeds or Newcastle area.

At the start of pupillage at New Park Court Chambers, the pupil will familiarise themselves with the practice of their pupil supervisor(s). The pupil is then encouraged to see and assist in work conducted by other practitioners at all levels including, those involved in “led” work and major litigation. The success of this has been in the fact that the majority of recent pupils and recent tenants have been instructed in many areas of work including major litigation and public inquiries.

It is our practice that the pupils are not left to work alone and they have access to interactions with other members of Chambers. In particular a collegiate working environment is encouraged.

New Park Court Chambers understands the financial pressure on those early years post pupillage and offers a reduced commission rate for tenants in their first three years of practice.

Life as a Pupil by Daisy Wrigley.

Applying for pupillage, whilst you are going through it, feels like a process in which the goal posts and obstacles are ever changing. As you will have heard time and time again, the competition is tough. It takes considerable determination to keep applying year on year. It took me four years of pupillage applications before I was successful, so I really do know how difficult the yearly November to May period is. The day when you are made an offer is made all the more sweeter knowing how hard you worked for it, and ultimately, my pupillage at New Park Court Chambers was everything I hoped it would be and more!

The summer before I started Pupillage I met with our CEO, Rob Wagg, who spent time talking to me in greater depth about New Park Court, plans for Chambers' progression and what my pupillage would look like. I met multiple members of Chambers' before I even began which meant, when I eventually got through the long 16 month wait, I already knew many friendly faces. That friendly and supportive atmosphere continued throughout pupillage with any member of Chambers being more than happy to take time to help with any question I had (and still have!).

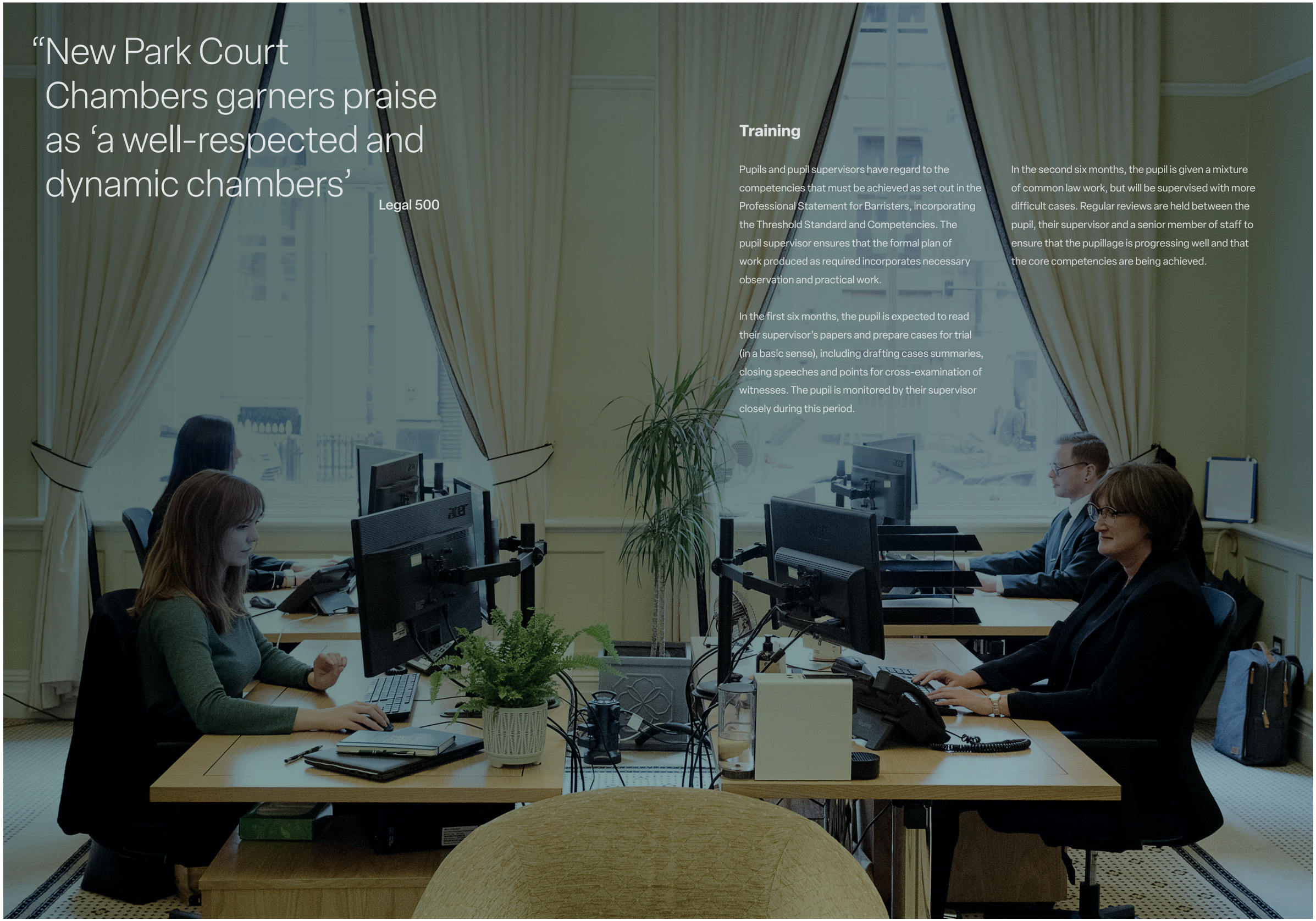
New Park Court pupillage is structured slightly differently to the traditional approach. When you reach your second six months you start with three 'working' days and two 'shadowing' days. The number of working days increases as you pass through second six and your shadowing days are spent doing tasks for your supervisor(s). The shadowing days in second six were invaluable as by that time, having experienced my own cases, there were aspects of first six which made much more sense but meant I had questions I had not thought about or come across in first six. Those days meant I had set days each week when I knew I would see my supervisor(s) to ask questions and/or discuss my cases.

The other aspect of pupillage at New Park Court which was hugely beneficial were the pupil review meetings every two months. Chambers' Manager, Kirsten Frankland, Chambers' Manager, your supervisor(s) and you spend time discussing the last two months of pupillage, set targets for the next two months and for you to say whether there was anything, within reason, you would like to change (e.g. the type of work you were shadowing, or to be given more work etc). This was another factor which cemented my appreciation that my pupillage really was focused on me, my learning and development, and what I could, one day, bring to Chambers.

One of our biggest assets is our clerks. We have a close-knit team who manage everyone's diaries. They are equally focused on helping you progress and ensuring you are offered for work which enables you to do so. The work I undertook in my second six was extremely varied, and although I very much valued the time I spent in the Magistrates' Court, by the end of second six my diary was much more heavily weighted with Crown Court work, both prosecution and defence in equal measure. I was also instructed on regulatory, family and civil cases.

Pupillage at New Park Court is set up to give you the best platform to develop in the early years of your practice and to follow in the footsteps of the many highly regarded barristers on our Circuit and beyond. So if, like I was, you are coming back to the process for another year, slightly hardened, consider your resilience as preparation for what will ultimately be a tiring year and a hard, but rewarding, career. Pupillage is not easy and without doubt, the extra year it takes you to getting pupillage will only benefit you in the long run.





“New Park Court Chambers garners praise as ‘a well-respected and dynamic chambers’

Legal 500

Training

Pupils and pupil supervisors have regard to the competencies that must be achieved as set out in the Professional Statement for Barristers, incorporating the Threshold Standard and Competencies. The pupil supervisor ensures that the formal plan of work produced as required incorporates necessary observation and practical work.

In the first six months, the pupil is expected to read their supervisor’s papers and prepare cases for trial (in a basic sense), including drafting cases summaries, closing speeches and points for cross-examination of witnesses. The pupil is monitored by their supervisor closely during this period.

In the second six months, the pupil is given a mixture of common law work, but will be supervised with more difficult cases. Regular reviews are held between the pupil, their supervisor and a senior member of staff to ensure that the pupillage is progressing well and that the core competencies are being achieved.

A pupil supervisor's perspective by Claire Anderson

I started my own journey at New Park Court as a pupil back in October 2012 and since then, have gone full circle by supervising the pupillage of one of Chambers' most recent pupils, Samantha Brown.

My own experience of pupillage was very positive. I felt fully supported and built a great rapport- and ultimately friendship- with my supervisor. I am still in regular contact with him, despite his move to the Western Circuit for a judicial appointment. The role of a pupil supervisor is to ensure that pupils have adequate tuition, supervision and guidance within their pupillage to prepare them for life at the Bar. I learned so much from my own supervisor that it was important to me that Sam had a similar, rewarding experience.

Pupillage in chambers offers individuals an opportunity to learn, grow and develop their skills and understanding of law in practice. It allows them to see how everything they learned at University and Bar School is applied in real life.

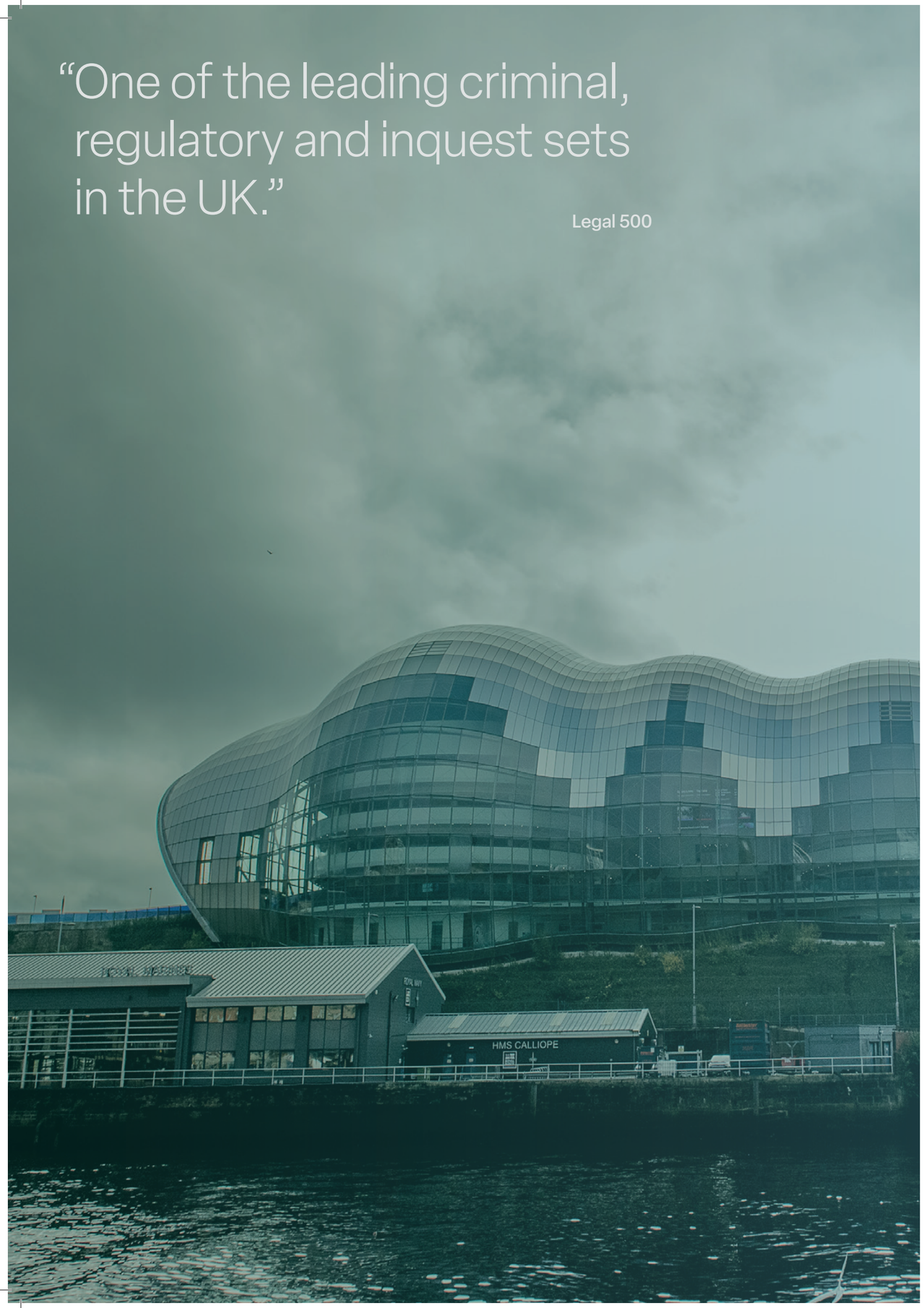
Pupils are supervised by the same supervisor throughout their pupillage, which allows a strong working relationship to develop. However, they are always given the opportunity to shadow other members of chambers, in order to broaden their working knowledge. Pupils are also given unrivalled access to senior members of Chambers to learn from advocates who are at the top of their career. Such exposure allows pupils to identify the subtle nuances within the profession, both in and out of the courtroom. It allows pupils to see different methods of case management, advocacy and witness handling. Whilst learning from senior juniors or watching an eminent silk cross examine in a murder trial is a great opportunity, pupils are also encouraged to spend time with the newest tenants in Chambers. This allows them to gain an insight into the type of work they will be doing when they are "on their feet".

In their first six, pupils are also given the opportunity to shadow barristers that practice in different areas of law. My practice is predominantly Criminal and Regulatory work, but Sam was able to spend time with Family and Civil practitioners. The opportunity to see different types of work and understand the different intricacies between the practice areas provided her with a basic understanding of that specialism, which helped her when she was instructed in those areas in her second six.

Throughout pupillage, pupil supervisors encourage that a pupil's *wellbeing* is considered. There are regular meetings between the pupil and their supervisor, but also with the Senior Management and Clerking Team. Such meetings allow pupils to speak freely, in a confidential environment, about their pupillage and the level of work they have. This is exceptionally important in a pupil's second six, as having an open channel of communication ensures that pupils feel comfortable in expressing their opinions. One of the biggest changes in support of this is the '3 day working week'. In their second six, pupils work 3 days a week. The other 2 days are spent preparing their cases or shadowing their pupil supervisor. This allows pupils the opportunity to speak to their supervisor about their workload and raise any queries with legal matters that are arising in the cases they have. It also allows for continual development and allowing the pupil to consider how they would approach certain cases or legal issues, with some practical knowledge behind them. All these steps are crucial in helping a pupil transition into a successful and busy junior tenant.

In a world where pupillage is so competitive, New Park Court offers a pupillage that is educational, developmental and supportive. Pupils are inundated with kindness and a willingness to help- the bar really is a collegiate profession. All that we ask in return, is that pupils are determined and hard working but resilient and human. Pupillage should be rewarding and enjoyable and New Park Court really does, in my opinion, offer this.





Application procedure

New Park Court Chambers advertises vacancies through the Pupillage Gateway and follows the Pupillage Gateway timetable, set each year. While a mini pupillage with New Park Court Chambers is not essential, it is of assistance to the Pupillage Committee when considering any application for pupillage.

New Park Court Chambers receives around 150 – 200 application forms each year from which we select up to 30 to attend a first round interview and around 10 to attend a second round interview. Depending on the business needs of Chambers, we offer at least one pupillage each year to be based in Leeds and one pupillage to be based in Newcastle.

Selection criteria/procedure

New Park Court Chambers awards pupillages to outstanding candidates who have a strong desire to succeed at the Bar. Successful candidates will have a proven academic record, attaining a minimum of a 2:1 or equivalent at degree level. Only in exceptional circumstances will we consider applicants who have not reached this level and appropriate evidence of such circumstances should be included with your application.

The Pupillage Committee bases its selection on the following criteria:

1. **Intellectual/Academic Qualities:** the applicant will have a sound knowledge of the law and more importantly the intellectual ability to properly and effectively apply it.

2. **Motivation:** the applicant has shown a dedication to pursuing a career at the Bar.

3. **Aptitude:** the applicant has demonstrated the skills to succeed as a barrister (e.g. self-confidence, intelligence, judgment, advocacy, analytical ability).

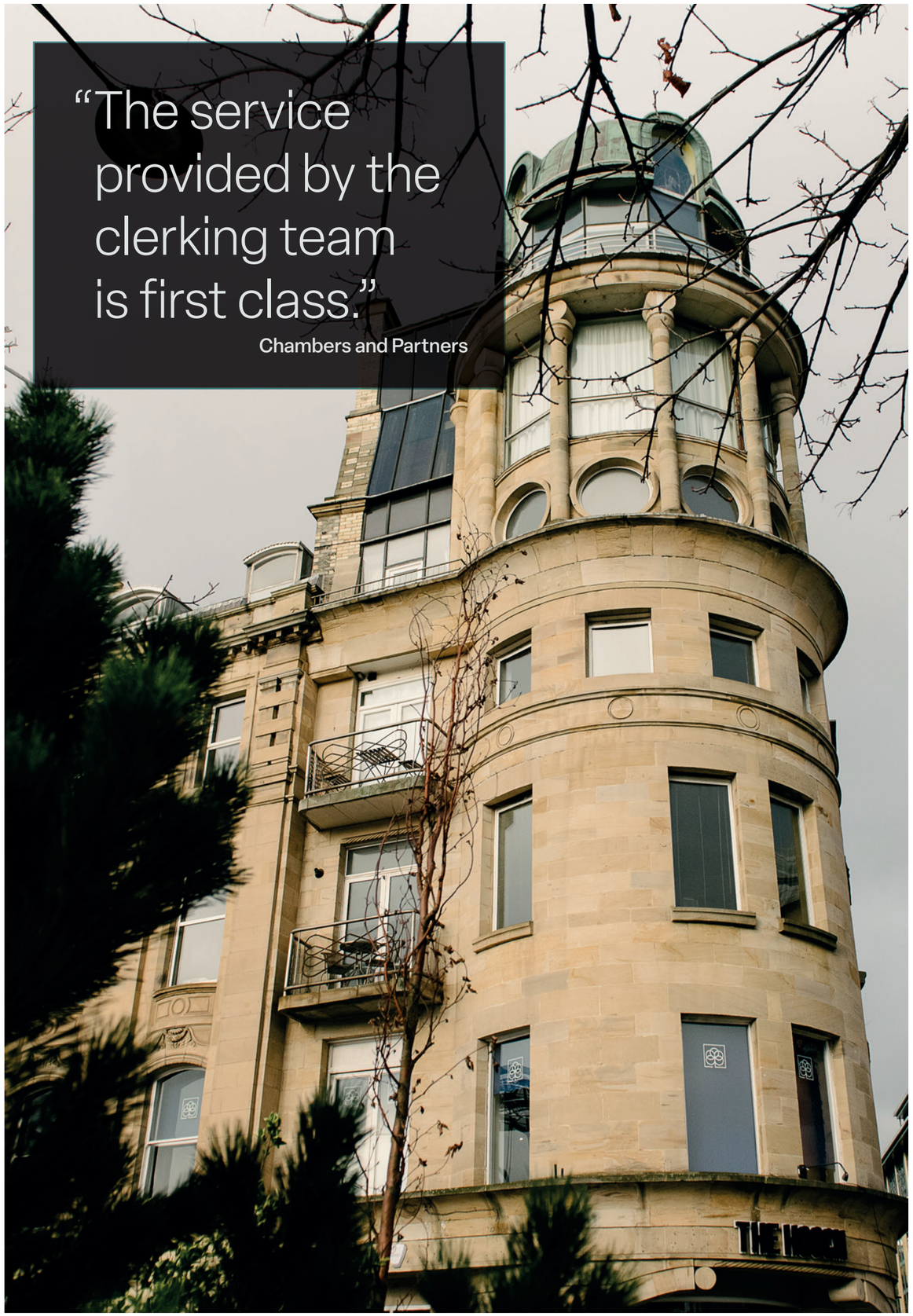
4. **Personal qualities/temperament**



Tenancy decision

The decision on whether to offer tenancy is made by the Heads of Chambers, on advice from the Head of Pupillage who, in accordance with the Tenancy Selection Criteria, will have consulted with the committee, the pupil supervisor(s) and as many other members of Chambers as required. The Head of Pupillage may delegate the task of consulting with other members of Chambers, to a member of the committee (provided that member is not or has not been a supervisor to the relevant pupil). The Head of Pupillage will also refer to the objective assessments made at each of the pupil review meetings.

The basic requirement is for the pupil to have successfully completed the twelve months' pupillage and to have shown themselves to be an able, enthusiastic and suitable member of the team. It is intended that the review system used during pupillage will highlight any problems, which can be discussed with the pupil so that, with appropriate support, they can put things right. The last review will be four to six weeks before the end of pupillage and the Head of Pupillage will tell the pupil then what their recommendation to the Heads of Chambers will be.



Life as a Tenant – by Ryan Donoghue

I've been a tenant at New Park Court Chambers since 2018, having secured pupillage to commence in September 2017. I applied to New Park Court Chambers initially due to my previous experienced gained at chambers while on a mini-pupillage. I found the mini to be great experience of life at the criminal Bar and was impressed by the welcoming nature of chambers and the way in which those I shadowed approached their cases.

When it came to the point of starting pupillage, I was incredibly nervous, particularly as I was stepping into a profession of which I had very little previous experience. However, I was quickly made to feel a real part of the chambers family and, looking back now, I feel like I was lucky enough to have a fantastic pupillage and one unlike very few others I have heard of, thanks in no small part to the kindness and commitment of my pupil supervisor.

When I initially joined chambers, my primary interest was in criminal law. However, soon after joining, I was given the opportunity, through chambers, to work with a national regulator, providing charging advices on potential criminal prosecutions. This work provided me with knowledge of regulatory prosecutions and formed the basis of what has become another of my key practice areas.

Since completing this work, I have been able to take on many regulatory cases, several of which involve fatalities and serious injuries – cases I never expected to be dealing with at such an early stage in my career at the Bar. Given chambers' strong presence in the field of professional discipline, I have also been able to take on an increasing amount of work in this area, which I find particularly engaging and it fits well alongside regulatory work. My practice now involves a mix of criminal work in the Crown Court, regulatory prosecutions and professional discipline. Chambers has a constant supply of great work in these areas and I really enjoy this variation, as it keeps every day interesting.

Taking on new practice areas does, however, present the challenge of unfamiliarity and uncertainty. I therefore found the support available from senior members of chambers to be invaluable. There is always somebody available to speak about any cases you are dealing with and to give you advice, or just that reassurance that you are doing the right thing.

I look back on securing pupillage at New Park Court Chambers as one of the most fortunate elements of my career so far and I could not have imagined that my career at the Bar would develop as quickly as it has, which is thanks to the support of other barristers and the staff team in chambers.



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