



A Guide to Pupillage at Garden Court Chambers





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About Garden Court Chambers

The Beginning

Garden Court Chambers, located in Lincoln's Inn Fields has come a long way from its origins in 1974. It was then that six barristers just out of pupillage set up, with the help of a loan, in three rooms in Lincoln's Inn.

At the time, their aspirations were revolutionary as much as they were subversive.

They wanted

- To provide socially useful legal services, supporting and complementing law centres.
- To work in an environment that was democratic with a balance of sexes and races.
- To train pupils and pay them.
- To argue cases that made a difference; in particular, to engage in the struggle for human rights (at a time when the term was regarded with nothing less than ridicule) and for sexual and racial justice - if necessary, working for no reward.

Such ambitions, they realised, could only be achieved by setting up a new set of their own. Indeed, today three of the founders are still members of Chambers.

Over the years Chambers expanded, it moved; first to Farrar's Building in the Inner Temple and finally to our present home. By 2000 three floors of 2 Garden Court and one of 1 Garden Court were still not enough and so we acquired additional premises in Devereux Court, just outside the Judge's Gate. Following continued expansion, in the summer of 2005, we changed our name to Garden Court Chambers and moved to 4 newly renovated 17th century houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The aspirations of our founders are as integral to Chambers now as they were then.

Through thick and thin the commitment of the members of Chambers and staff has not wavered and much of the founders original vision has been achieved, with some innovations being accepted by the Bar in general and some even becoming compulsory! Our casework has substantially contributed to the progress of the law and to social progress. Turn to the reported cases and you will find, in all our areas of practice, that counsel from Garden Court Chambers have argued in the defence of the rights of accused and in furtherance of the rights of individuals against the state in landmark decisions. Time and again the stance taken has been bold and inventive and, in the end, successful.

And, as times move on, our belief in our motto *Recte faciendo neminem timens* (Do right, fear no-one!) and our commitment to principle and to the quality of our service to our clients remains as strong as ever.

The Present

In 2019 we celebrated 45 years since Garden Court Chambers came into being. During this time Chambers has worked with literally thousands of campaigning organisations and individuals to fight injustice and inequality. We intend to continue this fight for another 40 years and beyond!

Garden Court Chambers is a multi-disciplinary chambers offering cutting edge legal advice from a strongly client focused point of view.

We have specialist teams of barristers working in the following areas of law:

Civil Actions Against the Police

Civil Liberties

Community Care

Court of Protection

Criminal Defence

Employment

Environmental Law

Extradition

Family Law

Gypsy and Traveller Rights

Housing

Immigration

International Law

Inquests

Mental Health

Nationality

Planning

Public and Administrative Law

Prison Law

Professional Negligence

Leading multi-disciplinary chambers

Our multi-disciplinary expertise has proved vital to clients where cases bridge a number of areas. This innovative approach to such cases has often resulted in positive developments in the law.

We have an on-going history of ground-breaking cases

We have been involved in many landmark cases and decisions, particularly in the areas of crime, immigration, claims against the police and public authorities, and inquests. We have acted in many of the recent anti-terrorism cases and have historically been involved in overturning great miscarriages of justice - such as the Birmingham Six and the case of Derek Bentley.

A passionate belief in human rights and social justice

Garden Court has always been driven by our strong ethics and a passionate belief in human rights and social justice. This affects all of our practice areas and is reflected in our work. At the same time we preserve our duty of independence. We have advised and represented organisations such as JUSTICE, LIBERTY, the Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.

Many of our barristers also undertake a substantial amount of pro-bono work and we have won the Bar Pro Bono Award.

The progression of civil liberties and access for all to social justice is important to us. Consequently we aim to support other organisations that support our agenda of inclusion and our commitment to diversity and equality. Every member of chambers contributes to a [Special Fund](#) which supports the work of smaller organisations to carry out legal, campaigning or charitable work in defense of civil liberties and social justice.

A fearlessly progressive attitude

We have recently completed a three-year Legal Services Commission contract providing advice and representation in the fields of immigration, housing and employment law. We were the first chambers to stand forward to take on this Special Support Service role and we are the only chambers to have won a contract in three different areas. Although our contract has finished we are continuing some of the areas of work which began with the contract, e.g. circulating regular bulletins on these three areas of law.

We actively support others to encourage positive progress through all members of chambers contributing to a 'Special Fund', which, in turn, contributes to the work of smaller organisations doing legal, campaigning or charitable work in defence of civil liberties and social justice.

Information for Applicants

Chambers takes four pupils a year, each for twelve months. Within the twelve months all pupils will gain experience in a variety of areas of practice.

Applications, Short-listing and Interviews

We ask applicants to apply to Garden Court through the Pupillage Gateway scheme administered by the Bar Council. Please visit our website for details of when the Pupillage Gateway will open for applications to be submitted and the closing date for applications is final. We will not consider any applications received after this date. We aim to notify those who have been shortlisted for interview as soon as possible after the Pupillage Gateway closing date. For the dates on which our First Round Interviews and Final Round interviews will be held, please visit the Pupillage page on the Garden Court Chambers website.

Chambers operates an equal opportunities selection policy for both pupils and tenants. As a result a much higher proportion of the tenants in Garden Court are women or from ethnic minorities than is the case across the whole of the Bar. We continue to positively encourage applications from ethnic minorities and from women.

In selecting pupils we aim to treat all applicants fairly, irrespective of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability and age.

Shortlisting and interviewing will be carried out by a representative sample of members of Chambers. Each applicant will be assessed against our selection criteria by at least two people. At interview all applicants will be asked the same questions and marked on the same basis. The interview process will include a short advocacy exercise at second round. We will keep written records of the decision-making and interview stage.

In circumstances where a vacancy unexpectedly becomes available it will be advertised on the Bar Council and Chambers' website, in Counsel and in Legal Action Journal. The procedures for submitting an application in those circumstances will be clearly outlined.

Tenancy

Towards the end of the pupillage year, Chambers assess all four pupils for tenancy. They will all have an equal chance of being recruited if they meet the requirements. The assessment procedure involves completing three formal pieces of written work, followed by an interview and an advocacy exercise.

Chambers reserves the right not to take on any of the pupils if no candidate reaches the requisite standard and there is in any case no guarantee that a pupil will be recruited.

Chambers also reserves the right to change the Tenancy application and interview process.

Selection Criteria

Our criteria for selecting pupils will be as follows:

1. Whilst we do not consider that the class of degree obtained by an applicant is necessarily a good indicator of their potential as a barrister, particularly in the case of older applicants and

those who have taken unconventional routes, excellent academic records will be given due weight. The institution from which an applicant has obtained his or her degree is not relevant.

2. We will be looking for an applicant's ability to grasp complex issues and concepts and think on his or her feet.
3. We will be looking for an applicant's ability to present clear, concise and logical arguments and express himself or herself confidently and articulately.
4. We will be looking for evidence of interest in and commitment to working in the law, e.g. work in advice centres and law centres, involvement in campaigning organisations, work for FRU, outdoor clerking and other work with solicitors, mini pupillages, relevant research.
5. We will be looking for knowledge of or interest in those areas of law in which Chambers specialises.
6. We will be looking for a demonstrable commitment to Chambers' founding principles in particular offering representation to those disadvantaged by poverty and discrimination.
7. In the case of older candidates we will be looking at the range of their previous legal or employment experience, and we will also give weight to the life experience of those who may have been outside the workforce because of family commitments. In the case of younger candidates we will take into account the fact that they have had less time to engage in extra-curricular activity.
8. We will be looking for an applicant's ability to communicate with a wide range of people from different backgrounds.
9. We will be looking for an applicant's ability to work hard and for a high level of motivation.
10. We will be looking for an indication that an applicant has given thought to the future of the Bar and to the likely problems for intending barristers.

We look forward to receiving your application. We hope that those applicants who are successful will enjoy their time as pupils at Garden Court. We aim to provide all our pupils with a good training, and believe that we are friendly and approachable, at the same time as striving for excellence in all the work that we do.

Finance

All pupils will receive £35,000 over the twelve months of pupillage, comprising an award of £29,000 plus guaranteed earnings of £6,000 in the second six. Pupils will receive all earnings during their second six and those earnings will not be subject to either a management fee or Chambers' rent.

We are very aware of the increasing financial burdens experienced by those training for the Bar, particularly for those who do not come from well off backgrounds and those with family and other commitments, and we will keep our financial provision for pupils under review.

Work for Pupils in their Second Six

We aim to provide pupils in their second six months with as much court work as possible to provide them with plenty of experience in court and to enable them to start earning money. All our pupils in their second six months are usually in court several times a week. We monitor the work given to pupils in their second six months and endeavour to ensure that there is a fair distribution of work.

We strive to balance the tension between the demands of the clerks who are able to place pupils in court daily and the need for pupils to consolidate what they are learning. There is, however, no escape from the fact that pupillage is hard work and stamina is needed. Chambers continues to maintain a supportive, friendly environment within which pupils can learn and develop.

Chambers in-house pupillage training aids this - cross discipline substantive topics are dealt with during the first 6 months and there are advocacy classes throughout the year.

Areas of Practice

The work of Chambers is broadly divided into six areas – criminal law, family law, housing law, employment, immigration law and civil litigation.

We seek to recruit able pupils with inquiring minds who will be receptive to a broad training base. Through working with a number of talented practitioners in a variety of fields pupils will have a stimulating and challenging pupillage equipping them with the fundamental skills required for successful practice at the bar. Whilst wishing to accommodate pupils' interests Chambers is committed to providing broad based legal training.

Pupils are encouraged to continue to undertake pro bono work/FRU etc and also pursue other interests which are within practice groups e.g. inquests/mental health.

Mini Pupillage

Garden Court Chambers organises two mini-pupillage courses each year. The first is held in February and the second in September. On each occasion we take 8 mini pupils.

On each day of the course, mini pupils are offered the opportunity to attend court or other hearings, to work on legal research in Chambers and attend conferences. Early evening feedback sessions are organised and followed up with a variety of workshops and lectures. It is expected that mini pupils will be available to attend the whole week.

Unfortunately, Garden Court Chambers is not able to offer any placements outside of the courses in March, June and September. Applications must be made through the Garden Court Chambers online application page and will not be accepted via post or email. To apply, please visit: <https://www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk/join-us>

Successful applicants for the February course will be informed during the month of January. Please note that due to the number of applications we receive, we are unable to respond to unsuccessful applicants.

Mini-pupillages are only available to students over 18 years of age. All applications will be sent to a member of the Pupillage and Mentoring Committee for review. They will select the successful candidates and provide a list of reserves.

We aim to offer mini-pupillages to those who share our commitment to human rights, social justice and equality and to those who would benefit the most from the experience.

Pupillage and Mini Pupillage Enquiries

All enquiries to Mia Haki-Law
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