

The Barrister Group Pupillage Guide and Handbook

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Pupillage Guide

Introduction

This handbook is intended to be a useful guide for prospective and current pupils to use starting at the application stage and taking them throughout their pupillage which will help them to understand the process, responsibilities and track their progress. As we take a continuous improvement approach, we welcome any suggestions for additional content.

The Barrister Group welcomes pupils to the start of their journey as (most likely) a self-employed barrister. We consider that this is an important distinction to make so that pupils recognise from the outset that they are responsible for developing and creating their own future business. Naturally, the pupil supervisor volunteers are here to support pupils in developing the competences in the Professional Statement and the clerking team will support business development and administration. We look forward to building relationships for the future as well, where in time, our former pupils will volunteer to become pupil supervisors.

About us and our mission

The Barrister Group is a national set of chambers which provides advocacy, advice and mediation services throughout England and Wales. The Barrister Group head office is based in Taunton and there are barrister members all over the UK who work remotely and travel to all of the courts in England and Wales. The Barrister Group also have offices in London and Manchester.

The Barrister Group's mission is to provide an open and transparent application process for aspiring barristers to apply for pupillage, resulting in a diverse and talented intake of pupil barristers. The training will be the best quality of training available and will go above and beyond the minimum requirements expected, with a particular emphasis on preparing pupils for their own self-employed practice.

Pupillage with The Barrister Group

Key details are here and explained in more detail further in this handbook:

- Length of pupillage: 12 months full time unless the pupil has a reduced pupillage period from the Bar Standards Board ("BSB") or an equivalent pro rata period for part time pupillages.
 - Location: Remote, with physical offices in London, Taunton, and Manchester.
 - Financial award: The minimum pupillage award¹ as set annually by the BSB. The additional benefits below (which you can skip to [here](#)) will also be provided.
- Minimum requirements: None, above those set by the BSB².

¹ The minimum award as of 1 January 2022 was £19,144 per annum for 12-month pupillages in London and £17,152 per annum for pupillages outside of London. Further details can be seen in the Bar Qualification Manual [here](#).

² At the time of commencing pupillage the pupil must have completed the academic and vocational component of training. Further details can be seen in the Bar Qualification Manual [here](#).

We would encourage anyone considering applying for pupillage with us to read our pupillage advertisement in full for all of the up-to-date information in relation to dates, funding, and positions available. This can be found on the Pupillage Gateway (www.pupillagegateway.com) during the mandatory timetable when we are allowed to advertise. Applications are then made on the The Barrister Group website; there will be a link available on the Pupillage Gateway.

Pupillage structure and regulatory matters

So long as an individual has been called to the Bar, they may use the title “Pupil Barrister” whilst undertaking pupillage.

Pupils are allocated a pupil supervisor during their pupillage, and they will have the opportunity to work with other members of chambers and gain experience in different areas of law. One of the many positives of undertaking pupillage with The Barrister Group is that there are over 200 barrister members and a vast array of work undertaken.

Prior to the start of pupillage, all pupils will be introduced to their pupil supervisor, and they will have a meeting to discuss their pupillage and how it will work for them. The aim is for the pupil and pupil supervisor to get a better understanding of what the pupil would like to get out of the process, for example, if they are interested in a particular area of law. Prior to the meeting, the pupil will be required to undertake a self-reflection exercise against the competencies in the Professional Statement and submit this to the pupillage co-ordinator and the pupil supervisor. At the meeting a pupillage training plan will be drawn up for the pupillage.

- **Non-practising period**

Throughout the non-practising period pupils will undertake training, shadow members at court, complete drafting exercises and work on developing and demonstrating the competencies necessary for them to reach the threshold standard required by the BSB, so that they are in a position to begin the practising period of pupillage.

The pupil supervisor will set tasks and assessments throughout the pupillage to assess the pupil’s progress and to ascertain in which areas they need further support or training. Assessments will also help the pupil supervisor gauge whether the pupil is ready to be signed off from their non-practising and practising period. The schedule for any assessments or tasks will be set between the pupil and pupil supervisor as part of the pupillage training plan and will develop on an ongoing basis. The pupil supervisor will discuss the plan with the pupil and explain The Barrister Group’s approach to consistent measuring of whether the competencies are being met and the methods that will be used for assessment.

During the non-practising period pupils are not permitted to accept any client instructions, except for noting briefs with the permission of their pupil supervisor or head of chambers.

At the end of the non-practising period, it is the obligation of the pupil to submit a certificate, completed by their pupil supervisor, to the BSB which certifies that the non-practising period had been completed satisfactorily.

Prior to commencing their practising period, a pupil will meet with their pupil supervisor to agree and update their training plan for their practising period.

- **Practising period**

In order to undertake the practising period of pupillage, a pupil must be called to the Bar. They are entitled to supply legal services and exercise rights of audience provided that they have received permission from The Barrister Group and that a provisional practising certificate has been issued by the BSB.

Once a pupil has been signed off from their non-practising period and has obtained their provisional practising certificate, they will be able to accept client instructions and undertake cases under the supervision of their pupil supervisor. Once a provisional practising certificate has been granted, the pupil must provide a copy of this to the pupil supervisor and pupillage co-ordinator so that it can be properly recorded.

In the practising period of pupillage, pupils may supply legal services at a designated Legal Advice Centre on a voluntary basis, provided they do not receive any fee or reward for their services, and do not have any financial interest in the venture or any of the circumstances where they deliver services.

Pupils will be able to set their work preferences (a feature of our online diary system) which will inform the clerks of the type of work and hearings they are comfortable to take on. Pupils are encouraged to start gaining advocacy experience early during their practising period and a pupil can do as many hearings as they feel comfortable and able to do subject to the agreement of their pupil supervisor.

It may also be appropriate for pupils to continue to work with and/or shadow their pupil supervisor and/or other members in order to continue to gain valuable experience. Additionally, training experiences will continue to be provided.

If, a pupil in the practising period of pupillage, intends to accept instructions in Youth Courts, they must register this activity with the BSB. All barristers, including pupil barristers, must declare that they have the specialist skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to work effectively with young people, as set out in the [Youth proceedings competences and guidance](#). It is important to remember that by declaring that they intend to do the work, they are declaring that they meet the requirements set out within the competences. This does not mean that they are competent to undertake any case in the Youth Court, simply that they meet the competences as they apply to the cases in which they are likely to be instructed.

Throughout the pupillage process the BSB requires that several documents are completed, including relating to: pupillage registration; non practising period sign off; and practising period sign off. These forms are the pupil's responsibility and they should ensure that they are aware of the BSB rules. Support and guidance can be sought from the pupillage co-ordinator in the event of uncertainty. The pupil should ensure that they obtain, complete the relevant form and send it to the pupil supervisor

(and copy the pupil co-ordinator) in plenty of time for it to be signed and submitted to the BSB.
Blank versions of the necessary documents can be found [here](#).

Pupils will be required to send a copy of their sign off forms to their pupil supervisor and the pupillage administrator; the pupil administrator will keep a diary to ensure that this is completed (although pupils should not rely on this and should ensure they set up their own reminder) and that they have a provisional practising certificate prior to undertaking any reserved legal activities and that they apply for a confirmation of Full Qualification Letter and a Full Practising Certificate on satisfactory completion of pupillage.

- **Failure of sign off**

If a pupil supervisor has made the decision that it is not possible to sign a pupil off as having successfully completed either the non-practising or practising period, in the first instance, the matter will be referred to the pupillage co-ordinator who will liaise with both parties and try to reach an agreement informally. If this is not possible, within the pupil is entitled to raise a grievance under the The Barrister Group Internal Complaints Procedure as detailed [below](#).

Any arrangement for an extension will naturally have to be agreed by both The Barrister Group and the pupil and it should be noted that there is no obligation imposed on us by the BSB to provide such an extension. However, The Barrister Group is committed to carrying out its best endeavours to support pupils in achieving the competencies in the Professional Statement. We can only follow through with this commitment if there is equal determination and effort from the pupil.

- **Other provisions**

A pupil may provide unreserved legal services, pro bono advice or voluntary work in any other capacity outside of their pupillage. In these instances, the pupil should not describe themselves as a barrister or pupil barrister and they should follow the BSB guidance for unregistered barristers³.

A pupil may take part time work with the permission of their pupil supervisor, provided it does not materially interfere with their training. Such experience may usefully form part of the training programme, enabling them to meet the competences in the Professional Statement that may otherwise be difficult to achieve within The Barrister Group.

- **Completion of training**

Upon completion of pupillage, it is the pupil's responsibility and privilege to apply for a Full Practising Certificate.

We do not offer or require so-called "third six" pupillages. As stated above, if a pupil's circumstances are such that (for whatever reason) they are not ready to receive their Provisional or Full Practising Certificate at the relevant stage, this will have been addressed with them during their pupillage and arrangements made to support achievement of the competencies in the Professional Statement and

³ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/uploads/assets/5b88103e-e5e8-4df3-bd78768f706fb69d/Unregistered-Barristers.pdf>

an application made to the BSB for an extension of the pupillage if appropriate as we are obliged to inform the BSB.

Therefore, there is no need for the probationary period (as generally intended by “third six” pupillages) in relation to membership of The Barrister Group.

Previous pupils

The Barrister Group has been offering pupillages and training pupils since 2011. Between November 2020 and April 2022, The Barrister Group has had 18 pupils, 17 of which successfully completed their pupillage with The Barrister Group.

We have a high retention rate of pupils who become members and we feel this reflects our collaborative approach to working, friendly culture, and positive environment. Of the 17 pupils who completed pupillage set out above, all 17 accepted offers of membership with The Barrister Group and 2 have since taken opportunities at more local sets for personal reasons.

You can read about the background and experience of our previous pupils on our website here [\[link when finalised and live\]](#).

Applying for membership

When the time comes and a pupil is successfully signed off from their practising period, they will be invited to make an application to become a full member at The Barrister Group. Our Recruitment Policy and criteria can be found here: [\[LINK to TBG website once live\]](#).

The Barrister Group would hope that pupillage was an enjoyable experience and pupils would wish to join the The Barrister Group team permanently.

Pupillage funding

First of all, it is important to clarify that as self-employed individuals, pupils are not paid a salary or on a “PAYE” basis. The Barrister Group as an AETO is funded an award or grant (which is tax-free) mandated by the BSB.

The Barrister Group’s strategy in relation to pupillage funding is to deliberately maintain the strict financial payment at the level mandated by the BSB so that we can offer the most pupillages possible. In addition to the strict financial payment, we offer valuable resources which we believe offer an incomparable enhancement to the pupillage award.

The provisions below will apply across-the-board unless The Barrister Group have made an application for a waiver from the pupillage funding requirements. Such circumstances will be in agreement with any relevant pupil, who will be fully aware of the circumstances and their pupillage agreement will reflect their particular circumstances.

The minimum pupillage award is set annually by the BSB, having regard to the Living Wage Foundation’s hourly rate recommendations, the annual increase applies from January each year to

all pupils, regardless of when they started pupillage. Monthly payments to pupils will be adjusted accordingly.

The Barrister Group will ensure that all pupils are paid no less than the minimum amount specified by the BSB from time to time. Minimum monthly payments to pupils are mandatory but flexibility is permitted to allow upfront payments. The Barrister Group will consider this on a case-by-case basis upon request by a pupil.

Whilst the pupillage award is the minimum amount set by the BSB, previous pupils have often far exceeded this amount in the practising period of their pupillage through developing a good strategy, business plan, contacts and practice management skills as well as following the guidance of the clerking support team and their pupil supervisors. For pupils and junior barristers, it can be difficult to approximate earnings as at The Barrister Group the emphasis is very much on the fact that it is their own practice, and they can undertake as much or as little work as they feel comfortable with. The Barrister Group also encourages pupils and newly qualified barristers to have a sensible work life balance.

Generally speaking, the type of hearings a pupil can be expected to undertake will pay in the region of £250 - £350 + VAT. During the practising period, our most recent pupils earned an average of £15,504.06 in billing during a typical practising pupillage of 6 months. Naturally, this can vary significantly based on the pupil's previous experience, competence and opportunities they wish to undertake. For example, some of our recent pupils have had a deliberate strategy to develop a very bespoke practice and chose not to take on all work which would have been available to them. With the right approach, hard work, marketing and repeat business it is likely a newly practising barrister at The Barrister Group could achieve £60,000 of billing in their first year of practice.

In the non-practising period, the pupil will receive the full minimum award and in the practising period, The Barrister Group will cover any difference ("Top Up") between a pupil's earnings and the minimum monthly amount.

In the event that the pupil's receipts during the pupillage period exceed the prescribed minimum remuneration, The Barrister Group shall be entitled to reclaim the Top Up or part thereof to the extent of the excess of receipts. Any payments would only ever be recouped from earnings the pupil receives above the minimum pupillage award amount and only up to the amount that has been funded by The Barrister Group. The intention behind this is to allow The Barrister Group to offer as many pupilages as possible as set out above and such recoupment will always be allocated to the pupillage fund. To be clear, this is only permissible provided the pupil earns at least the monthly minimum guaranteed amount and would not create a hardship situation.

For example, a pupil based in London in 2022 is paid £4,288 during a 3 month non-practising pupillage and earns £30,000 in fees during a 3 month practising pupillage. The Barrister Group would recoup the Top-Up of £4,288 which would go directly into the pupillage fund and the pupil would receive £25,712 in fees.

Under no circumstances will The Barrister Group profit from any pupillage.

Naturally, the funding arrangements will come to an end if the pupillage agreement is terminated by either party once contractual payments have been made.

If a period of pupillage is undertaken at another AETO, then alternative fee arrangements may be put in place depending upon the circumstances. You will be fully informed and at no stage will you receive a less than the mandatory pupillage award.

Furthermore, because of The Barrister Group's approach to flexible and remote working, pupils and members do not have to pay expensive chambers rent and clerking fees. Instead, 15% will be charged on fees received and paid to barristers. During the pupillage period, there will be no charges on the minimum award, only on anything paid above that amount.

In addition, pupils will have access to additional benefits during their pupillage period at no extra cost, such as:

- Expenses covered (*see below*)
- Access to Lexis PSL
- Training webinars produced internally by The Barrister Group members and staff, ranging from topics such as data protection to what to expect in your practising period.
- IT support
- Marketing and social media support with a legal marketing expert
- Xero bookkeeping software
- Practice management sessions with the clerks to allow a pupil to promote and develop their practice (these are also available throughout membership)
- Advice on compliance and ethical questions from a regulatory expert
- A Public Access course for early qualification to allow pupils to undertake Direct Access work
- Access to an individual profile on the The Barrister Group website which can be updated and amended 24/7
- Access to Chambers 365 which is an integrated suite of the most up to date Microsoft 365 package, including: Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams etc.

Anything not included above, will be a cost which will have to be self-funded by the pupil. This may consist of access to additional online legal platforms, court clothing, laptops and/or books.

• Expenses and training courses

The Barrister Group will also pay such further sums as may be necessary to reimburse expenses reasonably incurred by the pupil in relation to:

- travel for the purposes of pupillage during that month unless the travel expenses were incurred for the purpose of practice as a barrister (for which fees will be received); and
- cost of the course and travel attendance during that month on courses which they are required to attend as part of their pupillage; subject to the provisions below on the funding of resits.
- any other expenses not set out above or will need to be paid by the pupil unless specifically agreed in writing by the Professional Standards Team.

Support and training

Full details of the curriculum and development and assessment processes can be found [here](#).

In summary though, during the pupillage year, the pupils will have access to online and electronic support documents, their own pupil supervisor, an assigned buddy, a group of barristers in each area of law who they can ask questions and the clerking team who are available for advice and support.

Live and recorded training sessions have been provided to previous intakes of pupils which included training and webinars, such as: the art and psychology of advocacy; data protection in practice; what to expect during your practising period; costs; time and practice management; how to market yourself; a practical guide to common hearings; how to reach and retain STAR clients; clerks in the chair; and much more. These sessions will be available to incoming pupils, and additional training and webinars will be provided as well. The Barrister Group are always keen to hear from pupils with suggestions for webinars and training, and tries its best to arrange those requested.

Whilst much of the support that is in place for pupils will continue after the completion of their pupillage, once they are on their feet, they will need to be comfortable with independent working. The modern set-up of chambers means there is an emphasis on IT, remote working, and a willingness to travel. As a result, a barrister would need to be IT literate, independent and flexible. These are areas which will be developed during pupillage in line with the competences in the Professional Statement.

Along with a modern business approach to clerking and running a chambers, The Barrister Group prides itself on assisting its members with the set-up of their own practice. Being a self-employed barrister means that it is the barrister who decides which direction they wish to take their business. Clerks and other members of chambers will offer support and guidance, but the direction and amount of effort stems from the individual. This is why The Barrister Group places a lot of focus on developing competencies from the Professional Statement, ensuring that pupils are prepared for life after pupillage and that a pupil barrister has all of the pre-requisites to flourish.

Transferable skills

During the course of pupillage, pupils will learn and develop a multitude of skills required from a barrister with the purpose of setting them up for the competencies to be performed on 'day one' of practice.

Pupils will achieve the competences in the Professional Statement providing them with comprehensive communication, analytical and evaluative skills which will be exercised through their daily activities both in the practising and non-practising period. They will be able to manage themselves in a professional and appropriate manner, make good judgements about situations and recognise how to adapt in different environments depending on their audience. Advocacy and negotiation skills will also give them the ability to positively contribute to a variety of different business situations.

The available support network and training opportunities provided by The Barrister Group will greatly assist in preparing the pupil to manage themselves and their own practice. They will have access to systems to assist in organising and manage time effectively as well as learn from the expertise of the clerks, technology teams, barristers, marketing professionals and compliance experts. They will have a thorough understanding of how to implement effective processes and procedures to build and run a successful practice.

The Barrister Group strives for pupils to not only meet, but exceed the threshold standard outlined in the Professional Statement, this provides for a wealth of transferable skills that the pupil will demonstrate on completion of pupillage.

Applying for pupillage with us

Essentials

The BSB Authorisation Framework⁴ sets out the mandatory requirements for pupillage/work-based learning as follows:

- 2.2 or equivalent degree required, either a law degree, or a non-law degree plus further graduate/post-graduate study and in both cases must cover the seven foundations of legal knowledge.
- Successful completion of the vocational component.
- Student is a member of an Inn and has been Called.
- Student has completed the required number of Qualifying Sessions.

It is possible to obtain a waiver/exemption⁵ from any of these provisions either as a transferring qualified lawyer or on the basis of significant work experience. Many individuals who have obtained such waivers/exemptions are still required to undertake pupillage or a proportion of it. Indeed, many of The Barrister Group's previous pupils and members have done justice and we welcome applications from such individuals.

Therefore, whilst it is possible to apply for pupillage with us at any stage, you must have satisfied the BSB Authorisation Framework requirements before commencing any period of pupillage with us. If we agree that you could secure an exemption/waiver, we will guide you through the BSB application process ahead of your pupillage commencing.

⁴ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/the-authorisation-framework.html>

⁵ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/barrister-training-waivers-and-exemptions.html>

The 'ideal pupil barrister'

The BSB Professional Statement for Barristers⁶, describes the knowledge, skills, and attributes that all barristers are required to have on 'day one' of practice. It is a thorough document setting out the expected competencies and attributes/under the following headings:

- Barristers' distinctive characteristics
- Personal values and standards
- Working with others
- Management of practice

When looking for a pupil barrister we are looking for applicants who will be able to meet this standard on 'day one of practice' after they are signed off from the pupillage process. For the purposes of assessing pupillage applicants, we have devised a hypothetical 'ideal pupil barrister', based on the competencies set out in the Professional Statement. The ideal pupil barrister will be able to demonstrate the following criteria:

Criteria for the The Barrister Group 'ideal pupil barrister'
<p>High standards <i>This criterion includes the requirements to have:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>high standards of legal knowledge and the practical skills to interpret the law; and</i> • <i>the ability to analyse and interpret evidence and information effectively.</i> <p>These skills will be assessed to some extent by achieving a minimum of the required score to pass stage 1 of the recruitment process.</p>
<p>Business acumen <i>This criterion includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IT literacy;</i> • <i>marketing and networking capabilities; and</i> • <i>ability to manage own self-employed practice.</i>
<p>Strong communication and advocacy skills <i>This criterion includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>written and oral advocacy;</i> • <i>personability;</i> • <i>client skills;</i> • <i>and ability to work with others.</i>
<p>Drive and determination <i>This criterion will look at:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the applicant's route to the Bar;</i> • <i>professional experience (legal and non-legal work);</i> • <i>difficulties the applicant has had to overcome; the reasons why they want to become a barrister at The Barrister Group; and</i>

⁶ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/uploads/assets/a4556161-bd81-448d-874d40f3baaf8fe2/bsbprofessionalstatementandcompetences2016.pdf>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>hard work.</i>
Flexibility and time management <i>This criterion will look at:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>whether the applicant can deliver work on time;</i> • <i>work independently; and</i> • <i>is prepared for a career at the Bar which often involves last minute changes and instructions.</i>
Professionalism <i>Under this criterion we will consider general points which will be assessed throughout, such as:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ethics;</i> • <i>presentation of the application (no spelling mistakes, correct grammar etc); and</i> • <i>whether the question that has been asked has been answered.</i>
Demonstration of exceptionalism <i>This criterion will be met when a candidate can demonstrate they have gone above and beyond in their pursuit of a career at the Bar and achieved something which is outside the normal boundaries and expectations of an aspiring barrister.</i>

The Barrister Group's model will not necessarily work for everyone and the 'ideal pupil barrister' will need to understand the business aspect of chambers, be able to network effectively, and be able to understand marketing and client care. These abilities, coupled with drive and determination, will be a necessity when launching a legal practice with The Barrister Group.

Closely linked to the business aspects discussed above is the quality of personability. Traditionally a barrister was seen to be removed from client interaction. However, with the development of the legal sector and the introduction of Public Access, this is now not the case for an increasing number of barristers' practices. A barrister always needs to interact and be able to create a good working relationship with solicitors and/or the client. For many barristers, a large percentage of their work will come from instructing solicitors, and it is important for a barrister to be able to nurture and grow these kinds of relationships. As such, it is important for the 'ideal pupil barrister' to be able to exhibit these skills. The 'ideal pupil barrister' should also be able to interact well with their peers, colleagues, clerks, and support staff at chambers.

Additionally, when it comes to clients it is important for a barrister to be able to relate to all types of clients. They should be able to explain the legal process in an understandable way, especially as many clients will have no familiarity with the process and will find the experience complex, emotionally draining or distressing. The 'ideal pupil barrister' will be able to identify this and put their client at ease. As the client's mouthpiece, they will be able to communicate well with the client, opposing counsel and the judge.

Finally, The Barrister Group has identified that there are many applicants who do not fit the traditional mould and who have taken alternative routes to the Bar; whether this has been achieved

through their choice of qualifications, professional achievements, or other demonstrations. As such, one of the criteria included is the demonstration of exceptionalism. This will be met when a candidate can demonstrate they have gone above and beyond and achieved something which is outside the normal boundaries and expectations of an aspiring barrister. The selection criterion is discussed in more detail below.

The application process

The Barrister Group recognises that access to pupillage is one of the biggest barriers to increasing diversity at the Bar and prides itself on ensuring that we work towards reducing those barriers rather than contributing towards them.

In order to comply with the BSB regulatory requirements, our recruitment process does the following:

- Complies with the statutory requirements in the Equality Act 2010.
- Uses fair, effective, and objective criteria.
- Avoids unconscious bias.
- Increases opportunities for social mobility for those who have the potential to succeed.
- Provides evidence of how we support pupils to develop and demonstrate the competences in the Professional Statement.

The application process will be split into a four-stage process, with the first three stages requiring engagement from the applicant. The stages are set out below.

The BSB has a regulatory objective of “Improving accessibility – so that the best candidates are able to train as barristers and that the Bar as a whole better reflects the communities it serves” to which The Barrister Group is wholeheartedly committed. In order to monitor our performance against this objective, we will invite candidates at every stage of the recruitment process to complete our anonymous online EDI survey. Whilst we encourage candidates to help us in assessing our contribution to improving accessibility, candidates are not obliged to complete the survey. At the end of the recruitment process each year, we will analyse this data, develop an action plan for improvements and publish this to the pupillage page of our website.

- ### Reasonable adjustments

Any candidates whose circumstances mean that they would benefit from reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process should contact us at pupillage@clerksroom.com or on 01823 247 247. Our Reasonable Adjustments Policy can be found [here](#) and you can click for [details about the accessibility of our offices](#).

Stage 1: The anonymised questionnaire

The Barrister Group feels strongly about promoting and encouraging equality and diversity at the Bar and encourages applications from under-represented groups. One thing that chambers has implemented to attempt to combat biases is to anonymise the entire stage 1 process.

Stage 1 begins with an online anonymised questionnaire. The questionnaire will focus purely on the competencies in the Professional Statement and will not record any identifying information which will:

- Identify any of the 9 protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide information on current personal circumstances or personal history.
- Provide information on social or educational background.

By assessing applicants in this way, we believe we can completely remove any unconscious bias whilst still upholding high standards. Applicants scoring within the top 15% will automatically be invited to complete stage 2 of the process.

As the questionnaire is focussed on the Professional Statement for Barristers, it is recommended that any applicants that are not already familiar with this document, have digested it in advance of beginning the application process with The Barrister Group. The document can be found [here](#).

Once the questionnaire is completed:

1. If the applicant passed the assessment, they will receive a link to complete stage 2 of the process. At the start of the assessment, the applicant will have created a unique identifier which ensures anonymity. This will also be used at Stage 2 to ensure that only those who passed Stage 1 progress to this stage in the recruitment process.
2. If the applicant failed, they will be immediately advised of this and invited to apply again if they wish.

Stage 2: The application form

If successful at stage 1, applicants are invited to complete The Barrister Group's Application Form. They will be asked 6 questions.

As questions and the process for submitting the form may change from time to time, the most up to date document with these details will be the pupillage advertisement when it is published on the The Barrister Group website (www.clerksroom.com) and the Pupillage Gateway (www.pupillagegateway.com).

Once submitted, the form will be marked on a scoring system and points will be awarded for skills, experiences and abilities that align with Chambers criteria, values, aims and ethos. The aim of the process is to highlight individuals from the application process who have the best possible chance of successfully completing pupillage and successfully launching their self-employed practice with The Barrister Group.

The Barrister Group does not have any minimum degree requirements and no extra weighting is applied to particular degree classifications or educational institutions and therefore we do not ask for this information. This is another way in which The Barrister Group is promoting diversity and accessibility at the Bar.

Stage 3: The paper sift and interviews

Between the dates prescribed by the BSB, we will review all of the application forms received and invite successful applicants to interview.

The paper sift

Throughout the entire process, we will have regard to the competencies set out in the Professional Statement for Barristers as this sets the standard of knowledge, skills, and attributes that all barristers will have on 'day one' of practice. We have built criterion around our hypothetical 'ideal pupil barrister', as set out above, which also correspond to the competencies set out in the Professional Statement.

During the paper sift points will be awarded, to each criterion, on the following scale:

- 0 = Not met
- 1 = Partially met
- 2 = Fully met
- 3 = Exceeded

The application will be looked at as a whole and candidates will be ranked by their total score. The top 10 scoring candidates (this may increase depending on the number of vacancies) from the paper sift will be invited to interview.

In rounds where more pupillage positions are available, more candidates may be invited to interview; however, they will always be ranked by their score. Similarly, should applicants at the end of selection from the sift score equally, all of them will be invited to interview.

The interview

The interview will be conducted either remotely via video link or in person. Given The Barrister Group's national reach and focus on flexible working, it is understandable that candidates and interviewers may not be able to meet in the same physical location.

Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes and the applicant will be interviewed by no less than two members or chambers staff. The panel will, wherever possible, represent a cross-section of chambers.

The criteria that the applicant is marked against is the same as the criteria set out for the paper sift portion of the process. The scoring starts fresh at interview and once finalised will be added to the score achieved at the paper sift producing a total score.

The interview will begin with questions from the interview panel and then move on to an advocacy assessment. The candidate will have been sent the facts for the exercise in advance and will have been asked to prepare a piece of written advocacy. This piece of advocacy will be assessed alongside the applicant's performance at the interview.

Once all the interviews have been conducted, the applicants will be ranked by their score again and the scores from stages 1, 2 and 3 added together.

Stage 4: Offers

After stage 3 is complete and the applicants have been scored, the applicant(s) with the highest scoring mark will be offered pupillage and the next highest will be offered a reserve spot(s). In rounds where there is more than one pupillage position available, the total number of offers will be made based on ranked scores before reserves are contacted. For every pupillage position there will be one offer made and one reserve.

In the event there is a tie in the final score, the applicants' entire applications will be reviewed (including their questionnaires, application forms and interview scores) by an independent panel of three members and they will make the final decision. During the review the panel will base their decision around the Professional Statement for Barristers and The Barrister Group's criteria set out above.

Offers will be made on the date specified by the BSB in line with the mandatory timetable. Applicants have 7 days to accept offers before the offer will be rescinded and offered to the reserve applicant. The reserve applicant will have 7 days to accept the offer.

Feedback for unsuccessful applicants

As part of our ongoing work to improve accessibility to the Bar and in the spirit of transparency, The Barrister Group has committed to providing written feedback to every unsuccessful applicant that applies to us for pupillage. Naturally however, we cannot provide feedback to those who do not pass stage 1 of the process given that this will have been completed anonymously.

In providing feedback we acknowledge how much time and energy goes into completing applications and how difficult it is for unsuccessful applicants to know what to focus their energy on developing and improving without receiving any feedback.

When receiving feedback, applicants will be provided with a cover letter and a feedback form. This will be sent directly to the applicant when they are informed of the outcome of their application. The Barrister Group aims to provide feedback within 14 days from the date the questionnaire or application is reviewed or 14 days from the date of interview if the applicant has reached the final stage.

The feedback form allows for a summary of the applicants' scoring during the process and for comments if appropriate. Feedback in the form of comments will be provided in bullet point form, wherever appropriate and will aim to identify:

- At least one thing the applicant did well;
- At least one thing that the applicant could improve on;
- General or overall feedback noted by the reviewer.

The further in the process an applicant has reached, the more feedback will be appropriate. The idea is to give succinct feedback that gives the applicant some focus for improvement rather than a full or in-depth review of their performance.

Pupil Handbook

Once an offer of pupillage has been made and accepted, the following provisions will guide how the pupillage will be delivered.

Induction

The The Barrister Group induction process will introduce you to key people in the organisation, explain how we operate, the type of work undertaken, how training is organised and how pupils are assessed.

Once you have accepted your offer to join The Barrister Group, and ahead of your commencement date, you will be sent a form/link to complete which allows us to set up access to all systems and facilities needed as well as creating a profile for you. This process will also allow us to gather all of the necessary information needed from you and to comply with the BSB notification requirements.

Whilst The Barrister Group is an open and collaborative environment, it is often useful and confidence building, particularly in the early days, to have particular points of contact. Therefore, you will be allocated a 'Go to Team' in addition to your pupil supervisor consisting of the pupil co-ordinator, a location manager or member of the clerking team who you can approach if you have matters which are more appropriately discussed with someone on the administrative side of the business as well as a buddy who will be an existing pupil or newly practising barrister with whom you can raise questions that you have or matters that you would prefer to discuss with someone other than your pupil supervisor.

Emails will be sent by the pupillage co-ordinator formally introducing you to:

- the Head of Chambers;
- your pupil supervisor;
- your buddy; and
- your nominated location manager or clerk.

You will either be invited to HQ for a day or hold video meetings to meet the team, go through any queries and see how things work first-hand. You will be introduced to key contacts who will run through the various internal processes. Particular importance will be given to the role of the barrister's clerk and developing a good working relationship with clerks.

Either face-to-face or virtually you will be guided through the IT systems and processes and provided with guidance on obtaining additional support and training.

You will be required to review and confirm that you will comply with The Barrister Group's important policies such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion suite and Behaviour and Culture Policy as well as all of the documents relevant to pupillage.

You will be introduced to our marketing team to support you in establishing your profile and any relevant material needed.

You will be given instructions on how to carry out a remote working risk assessment and it will be your responsibility to ensure and maintain a comfortable and safe working environment.

Once the administrative and introductory systems have been established and you are comfortable with these, you will hold your first formal meeting with your pupil supervisor during which you will start the process of developing your Training Plan.

Pupil responsibilities

Our expectations of all pupils is that you will be professional at all times and ensure that you communicate in a concise and clear manner including with your pupil supervisor, the clerking team, lay and professional clients and other professional interactions. In our considerable experience, this approach is key to building a good reputation in the legal profession and can make the singular difference as to whether a barrister develops a successful practice or not.

During your induction process, you will have been introduced to The Barrister Group's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion suite of policies together with The Barrister Group Behaviour and Culture Policy which contain valuable information which sets out our commitment to all of these principles, as well as the principles of fair and equal access to opportunities. You will be required to read these policies and confirm your agreement to comply with them. They can be found in the The Barrister Group Operating Manual on the **myclerkroom** intranet and the EDI suite can also be found on The Barrister Group's website [here](#).

Before starting any period of pupillage, you must apply to the BSB for registration of your pupillage by submitting an application on a form prescribed by the BSB. You should ensure that the registration form is submitted at least two weeks prior to commencement of your pupillage, if possible.

The timing of this is important because if you apply for registration of a pupillage to the BSB after your pupillage has started, the pupillage will be treated as having started on the date the application is received, unless the BSB permits otherwise.

You must provide the name of your designated pupil supervisor and the commencement date of the pupillage; along with other BSB specified information.

If any of the information provided in your application for registration of the pupillage changes before the pupillage has been completed, you must promptly notify the BSB in writing of the change using the BSB prescribed form.

The declaration must be signed by the Head of Chambers or other person authorised by the Head of Chambers; for The Barrister Group, this is the Pupillage Co-ordinator.

You must understand your responsibilities to be insured, comply with the Data Protection Act and manage your personal tax obligations. The BSB handbook states that pupils must:

- ensure that you have adequate insurance, taking into account the nature of your practice, which covers all the legal services you supply to the public; and
- as a BSB authorised person, in the event that the BSB stipulates a minimum level of insurance and/or minimum terms for the insurance which must be taken out, you must ensure that you have put in place within the time specified in such notice will insurance meeting such requirements as apply to you.

You will be covered by your pupil supervisor's Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund ("BMIF") insurance for work performed during pupillage. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that this is the case.

Once pupillage is successfully completed, you must apply immediately to the BMIF for your own cover for legal services offered in self-employed practice. If you become an employed barrister, you should ensure that your employer has appropriate professional indemnity insurance in place for you.

As a self-employed practising barrister, you will be a data controller. As such, you are required to comply with UK GDPR if you process personal data. When registering as a data controller with the Information Commissioners Office, there is a requirement to pay a data protection fee unless you are exempt.

You should become familiar with your tax requirements, including VAT and National Insurance, for self-employed practice.

Guidance on all of these matters is provided by The Barrister Group during your pupillage and further information is available on the Bar Council website.

In addition:

- You are expected to comply with The Barrister Group's policies including those listed and linked in this agreement or its schedules and those contained in the Chambers Operating Manual.
- Throughout pupillage, you are required to keep adequate training records as this will assist your final assessment against the competencies in the Professional Statement.
- Throughout pupillage, you must ensure that any necessary reduction or waivers from the BSB have been granted and the BSB is properly notified of any material changes to the pupillage.
- During the non-practising period, you do not provide legal services as a barrister. The exception is doing a noting brief with the permission of your pupil supervisor, Head of Chambers or Head of Legal Practice.
- During the practising period, you do not provide legal services as a barrister without permission of your pupil supervisor or Head of Chambers.

Working hours, holidays, and sickness

The Barrister Group adopts the European Working Time Directive in relation to pupillage as a matter of good practice. Pupils will receive a minimum of four weeks' leave per annum, i.e., 20 working days plus public holidays in any 365-day period or on a pro-rata basis for increased or reduced pupillage.

Your specific expected hours of work will be agreed between you and your pupil supervisor during your initial meeting and on an ongoing basis. If you have any specific requirements or limitations, these should be discussed as early as possible with your pupil supervisor or the pupillage co-ordinator.

If you are currently, or know that you will be unable to attend work or an event at a time when you would be expected, then you should report sickness, absence or a commitment that may affect your availability, to your pupil supervisor and nominated location manager or clerk. For generally availability, it is important that you keep your electronic diary on Chambers365 up to date at all times especially during your practising period.

In the unfortunate circumstances that you have to take a longer period of leave (for example due to illness or bereavement), you, your pupil supervisor and the pupillage co-ordinator will consider any impact this may have on your ability to meet the competences in the Professional Statement and whether or not this results in a need to extend the pupillage.

If a pupillage is extended, we must notify the BSB of the new completion date and the pupil and pupil supervisor will agree clear and measurable objectives for the expectations during the extended period so that the competencies in the Professional Statement can be developed and demonstrated.

If a substantial break from pupillage is necessary, then the BSB does not consider it appropriate for an extension to be agreed, and instead recommend an application is made for dispensation. This will be discussed, agreed and arranged between the pupil, pupil supervisor and pupil co-ordinator as necessary.

Parental leave arrangements should be made in accordance with The Barrister Group Parental Leave Policy which is located within The Barrister Group Operating Manual in [myclerksroom](#).

Absence of pupil supervisor

There is no prescribed period of time for an alternative supervisor to be registered in the event of absence. However, in order to ensure maximum support and the highest standards in relation to pupillage, we will ensure that:

- for planned absences of less than one month, that the supervisor makes suitable alternative arrangements which are agreed by all parties and notified to the Professional Standards Team;
- for unplanned absences of less than one month, a temporary alternative supervisor who is appropriately trained (whether this individual needs to be formally qualified will depend on the length of absence and the experience and stage of pupillage and will be assessed and decided by the Professional Standards Team) will be found by the Professional Standards Team and agreed by all parties; and

- for planned or unplanned absences greater than one month, a replacement supervisor who is appropriately trained will be agreed. In these circumstances, we will consider this to be a material change and notify the BSB by registering the replacement supervisor.

Flexible working

As set out in our Flexible Working and Learning Policy, The Barrister Group is committed to providing a flexible learning environment and offering students and pupils choice in how, what, when and where they learn.

The Barrister Group is constantly evaluating its approach to flexibility for training for students, pupils and pupil supervisors. Part of this strategy is to consult on an open basis with all stakeholders, particularly students, pupils and recent practising barristers. Another factor in our approach is to develop and promote technology to improve the learning experience which is naturally improved when the experience is eased through flexibility.

We automatically offer choice by involving you in the decision-making process and design of your pupillage and training programme as set out below. This is balanced against ensuring the development of the Competencies in the Professional Statement.

Naturally, one area where there is less flexibility, is court attendance and learning to balance these requirements will form part of the pupil's development.

Curriculum, development and progression

The curriculum has been designed and will be monitored and reviewed in accordance with the Professional Statement. This sets out the knowledge, skills and attributes that all barristers should have as soon as they commence practice.

Our curriculum is specifically designed to ensure that as a minimum, pupils meet the threshold standards in the Professional Statement. Naturally, as a consequence, we are required to assess pupils in line with the threshold standards and competencies set out in the Professional Statement. Prospective and current pupils experience transparency about how each competency is developed, assessed and how feedback is given.

There is also a strong focus on self-analysis and pupils play a very active role in developing and managing their training plan. In this way, pupils are developing the required skills at 1.5, 1.11, 2.5, 2.6, 4.2 and 4.3 of the Professional Statement. The Barrister Group's process promotes self-reflection in such a way that it instructs and encourages an appropriate balance, enabling pupils to develop skills effectively.

By following a clear process, pupils and pupil supervisors track and monitor development and achievement of the requirements in the Professional Statement whilst allowing a flexible and targeted approach so that there can be transparent focus on areas for development and matching training to the needs of the learner. This means that as pupils progress through their pupillage, any gaps in achievement of the competencies will become readily apparent and the pupil and pupil

supervisor can determine actions to ensure that these competencies are developed and that the pupil has the opportunity to demonstrate them.

This approach means that pupils can clearly identify where they stand in relation to development of the competencies in the Professional Statement as well as have control over their own development. It also ensures that self-reflection becomes second nature as this will be required for ongoing competence as well as future career progression.

We have mapped each competence in the Professional Statement to ensure that we have all of the necessary resources, skills and processes in place to provide fully rounded achievement of the competencies. We also use the mapping to identify:

1. The relevant learning opportunities, such as:
 - a. Sitting with the pupil supervisor
 - b. Interaction with the clerks
 - c. Interaction with solicitors
 - d. Observation in Court
 - e. In-house training course
 - f. Online modules
 - g. Practising drafting
 - h. Completing work for the pupil supervisor and other barristers within The Barrister Group
 - i. Practising as a pupil
 - j. Secondment
2. How we assess the competencies, such as:
 - a. Oral and written feedback from solicitors, clients, clerks, pupil supervisors and other barristers
 - b. Assessment of in-house exercises
 - c. Assessment of online modules
 - d. Assessment of internal training

Training plan

Ahead of your first formal meeting with your pupil supervisor, you will be required to consider and undertake a first draft of our template Training Plan. You will receive guidance on undertaking this exercise as self-reflection and it will give you the opportunity to reflect upon your learning styles and needs, your personal circumstances and any specific accessibility support or reasonable adjustments you may need. The overall objective being to create a self-analysis against the competencies in the Professional Statement for you to discuss your specific training requirements with your pupil supervisor.

You will then meet with your pupil supervisor to discuss your draft and formalise your Training Plan. You will also agree the necessary timing of assessments and review of your Training Plan.

Your involvement in this decision-making process from the outset allows you to develop some of the skills required by the Professional Statement for Barristers, particularly Competencies 1.7, 1.9, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

Monitoring and evaluation

As part of our authorisation and to ensure that you have an effective learning experience, it is necessary for us to provide evidence of the application of fair and objective evaluation, assessment and appraisal methods that support the development and achievement of the competencies in the Professional Statement.

In order to effectively and consistently achieve this, we ensure that our pupil supervisors have the relevant skills, tools and support. This forms part of our suitability assessment and training of pupil supervisors, more detail of which can be found in our Pupil Supervisor Handbook.

Once you have reached the practising period of your pupillage and before doing a case of your own, as a pupil, you should consult your pupil supervisor for advice and guidance and your pupil supervisor will provide an opportunity for discussion after your first experience. Pupil supervisors will make time available to observe their pupils' performance in court. This will assist both supervisor and pupil to identify strengths and weaknesses in their competences.

In addition, as part of the monitoring, evaluation and assessment processes, the pupil supervisor, pupillage co-ordinator and any others involved in the process will be alive to any matters which arise which need to be considered under the misconduct/complaints procedures. Such matters will be reported to the pupillage co-ordinator who will make appropriate arrangements to ensure the matter is investigated and dealt with appropriately.

Assessment/appraisal

Ongoing assessment and appraisal, both in a formal format as well as regular informal feedback and monitoring, help to ensure that your development in meeting the competencies in the Professional Statement is progressing appropriately and that your learning experience is supportive. This provides clarity on progress made and areas for development.

You will be invited to formal appraisal meetings every three months. This gives both you and your pupil supervisor a structured way of reviewing performance, providing objective feedback, identifying strengths and areas for development, as well as setting objectives to develop skills and competencies. As set out above, any gaps in competencies will be identified and steps put in place to ensure that the pupil has the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the specific competencies. If necessary, the pupil and pupil supervisor can reach out to the Professional Standards Team for assistance in opportunities to 'plug' any gaps. The appraisal meetings will also give you an opportunity to provide feedback on your progress, the work you have undertaken and the impact of supervision.

The process and documents for undertaking and recording these appraisals are designed to ensure that appraisals are conducted in a fair and consistent manner.

As well as the formal appraisal system, as set out above, at the beginning of the pupillage, you and your pupil supervisor will have discussed and agreed your Training Plan which will govern your pupillage. One of the factors which will have been discussed and agreed is how constructive feedback and effective appraisals would be conducted including the frequency over and above the requirements set out above. This allows you to take an element of responsibility for this aspect of your development as well as ensuring that the feedback and assessment takes place in a way that is most conducive to your learning style and needs.

The formal assessments are reviewed by an independent party (which may be the Pupillage Co-ordinator, Chambers Director or another member of the team) to ensure that high standards are maintained, that a consistent approach is being taken and for the purpose of continuous improvement. Any matters arising from the independent review are discussed with the affected parties as well as by the Pupillage Team.

In addition to the formal appraisal system and informal feedback system agreed in the Training Plan, we will ensure that there is the opportunity for others who you have interacted with to provide feedback in line with transparent assessment criteria which is based on the competencies in the Professional Statement. Such feedback could be from clerks, solicitors, clients and members of the judiciary.

Consistency of assessment

We recognise that your learning experience is improved when a consistent approach is taken, particularly in relation to the assessment of the competencies in the Professional Statement. This would be especially important in circumstances where you have more than one pupil supervisor over the course of your pupillage, or you undertake a period of secondment.

Our processes ensure that a structured approach is taken with good quality record-keeping and monitoring providing a consistent and transparent framework for assessment.

Feedback

Appraisal and feedback mechanisms should be a two-way process that provide you with the opportunity to flag any difficulties or concerns with your progress, your work, the supervision you are getting or relationships with others in the organisation. We will ensure that you have the opportunity for you and the pupillage team to work together to address them. You will meet with the pupillage co-ordinator on a quarterly basis (depending on the length of your pupillage. However, if at any time you feel you need to bring one of these 'check-ins' forward, please just reach out to the pupillage co-ordinator. At all times, you will have a safe environment to provide feedback about training.

Compulsory courses

During pupillage, all pupils must attend certain compulsory courses and pass certain assessments to build on training received during the vocational component and to supplement work-based learning during pupillage so that you can meet the competencies in the Professional Statement.

Depending on the route you have taken to bar and pupillage and whether you have waivers, the compulsory courses you are required to take may differ.

i. Compulsory advocacy course

This must be completed in the non-practising period and this portion of pupillage cannot be signed off until the pupil has successfully completed this course.

The course is provided by the Inns of Court or Circuits.

The course consists of a minimum of 12 hours of advocacy training in the following compulsory elements: skeleton arguments; oral submissions; examination-in-chief; cross-examination; and preparation.

ii. Examination on Professional Ethics

Students starting a vocational Bar training course from 2020 onwards will sit this as a provider – set assessment as part of their course.

Otherwise, the pupillage stage examination is an open book examination set and marked centrally by the BSB for individuals who commenced Bar Training from 2020 onwards or who completed the Bar Transfer Test (BTT) from August 2021 onwards.

Other individuals will be exempt from the requirement to undertake this assessment.

The pupillage must be registered with the BSB before the Ethics exam be booked and for 12 month pupillages, at least three months pupillage must have been completed. Transferring lawyers who have been granted a reduced pupillage, do not need to have completed three months of pupillage before undertaking the assessment.

The examination usually takes place in January, April or July.

The practising period of pupillage cannot be signed off until this assessment has been successfully completed.

The Inns of Court College of Advocacy will make available study materials at no extra cost via their Virtual Learning Environment

iii. Examination on Negotiation Skills

This requirement is expected to come into effect for pupils starting on or after 1 September 2023.

This must be completed in the non-practising period and this portion of pupillage cannot be signed off until the pupil has successfully completed the course.

Further details of the required courses are set out in the BSB Curriculum and Assessment Strategy which can be found [here](#) and in the [Bar Qualification Manual](#).

If a pupil fails to satisfactorily complete a compulsory course or to pass an exam, it will be for The Barrister Group to decide whether the funded pupillage will be extended. Should The Barrister Group decide that it is appropriate for the funded pupillage to continue, only the second resit will be funded by Clerks The Barrister Group room with the first being funded by the practising certificate fees.

Public access training

Pupils who intend to provide public access services once qualified will have this supported during their pupillage. As set out above, The Barrister Group will fund pupils to attend public access training so that pupils can apply for accreditation for public access work promptly upon full qualification.

Technology and communication

On a day-to-day basis, The Barrister Group virtual platform allows pupils to easily access the Chambers 356 system and **myclerksroom** intranet which contains all of the tools and resources they need, along with 24/7 access to IT support.

Innovative and bespoke integration with Microsoft 365 creating Chambers 365 provides easy access to programmes to support service delivery as well as facilities to make communication more accessible. It allows a flexible approach with regards to communication throughout pupillage for pupils, pupil supervisors, members and staff at Chambers. A combination of formal and informal methods is used to achieve this, the use of technology is a key factor in ensuring reliable and appropriate contact is maintained with individuals throughout pupillage.

Preferred methods of contact between pupils and pupil supervisors will be agreed from the outset of pupillage in the formal Training Plan which set the tone for how they will work and contact each other over the course of the 12 months. This includes the use of applications such as Chambers 365, the intranet, video call platforms, emails, SMS etc. as well as face to face meetings and court attendances.

- **Formal Settings**

Training Plan

From the outset of pupillage, the pupil and pupil supervisor will discuss and agree a training plan for the course of the pupillage which will ensure feedback and assessments take place in the most conducive way to suit learning styles. Timings and the level and preferred methods of contact will be discussed in the training plan, this may include a mixture of:

- Phone calls
- Emails
- Teams or Zoom video calls
- Face to face meetings
- SMS e.g., WhatsApp

Formal Appraisals

Formal appraisals are conducted every three months; this is an opportunity for the pupil and their supervisor to review performance, discuss strengths and areas for development, set objectives to develop skills and competencies.

This setting allows the pupil to also reflect on the work they have undertaken and the level and nature of supervision and opens the floor for feedback on progress which has been made. There is

flexibility for this to be conducted via video call or in person, the decision will be down to the pupil supervisor and the pupil to determine which method works best for them.

- **Technology and communication resources**

Contact time between pupils and supervisors is vital in the development of pupils; this should be structured but not overly prescriptive to ensure the correct level of support can be provided. Due to the virtual nature of The Barrister Group, successful communication is facilitated through the use of different technology and methods to support pupils in the most effective way that suits all parties involved.

Chambers 365

Chambers 365 is an online platform used by The Barrister Group and serves as a vital instrument for managing and organising work and activities. Its calendar sharing functionality facilitates the ability for pupils and supervisors to view and book in contact time in advance or where availability permits. This is an extremely useful tool for both pupils and supervisors to plan ahead and ensure consistent contact is maintained.

Chambers 365 links to case information and Office 365 - pupils can visually see outstanding tasks and when they are in court which allows them to manage their time effectively. The pupil is also able to input their preferences with regards to areas of law and different courts through the 'preferences system'; this informs the type of work they are put forward for and ensures this is done in a swift, efficient manner.

MyClerksoom Intranet Site

All pupils have access to the **MyClerksoom** intranet site from the day they start pupillage. This acts as a central hub for all information relating to The Barrister Group and includes access to the Operating Manual, policies, out of hours information, contacts for additional support, the organisational chart and many other useful documents and resources.

It is an easy to navigate website which allows the pupil to self-serve administrative questions and find out more about the policies and procedures in place.

As an innovator in technology, The Barrister Group provides 24/7 access to IT support, easy access to support service delivery as well as facilities to make communication more accessible. This information can all be found via the intranet site.

Microsoft Teams

A Microsoft Teams channel dedicated to pupillage is available to all pupils. Membership in the channel includes clerks, location managers, experienced barristers, new practicing barristers, pupils and compliance officers. The teams channel provides a platform for individuals to contact each other, post resources and other useful information and acts as a hub for informal methods of contact.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a commonly used messaging application which has been used by former pupil groups to contact and support each other in an informal way, they can openly have discussions and ask questions here. Whilst this is a particularly informal method of contact, it is important that pupils feel that they can reach out to others in similar positions to build their own support network and community.

Group Sessions

Groups sessions and collaboration amongst fellow pupils has previously served to be incredibly valuable during pupillage. Therefore, group sessions are held via video conferences, often set up by the Pupillage Co-ordinator which provide a space for pupils to learn from staff and members within The Barrister Group as well as each other. The format of these sessions are informal, but generally involves a member, staff or pupil offering to give a presentation to their peers on a topic of their choice which includes Q&A sessions either during or after the presentation.

Group sessions serve multiple purposes, not only can pupils connect and learn from each other, but they are able to enhance and develop their competence in relation to the Professional Statement in a 'safe' environment such as: 1.9 exercising good communication skills through any appropriate medium and with any audience as required in their work.

Group sessions can be held in different formats such as via video, telephone or in person and can be adapted and flexed where it needs to be. These group sessions are recorded and used as training resources for the benefit of all current and future pupils.

The technology selected by The Barrister Group takes into consideration accessibility and availability so that all pupils are able to benefit from the available resources. Cloud based products or browser applications are preferred due to the ability to access it securely from any remote location with an internet connection. State of the art security and back up is assured by the use of the Microsoft platform as well as ISO27001 accredited IT contractors.

Guarantees about high levels of security and confidentiality are a prerequisite of any technology employed by The Barrister Group and an expectation of all pupils is that they will comply with their obligations of confidentiality and data privacy. In accordance with competence 4.5, pupils are required to maintain the confidentiality of their clients' affairs, adopting secure technology where appropriate. This competence should be applied to all work undertaken during pupillage.

Wellbeing

The Barrister Group understands how stressful and isolating it can be searching for, securing and starting a pupillage. We ensure that we communicate effectively and provide all the information you will need as far in advance as possible. We also provide methods to establish an open line of communication to ensure that you can have a smooth and effective transition into pupillage.

Our induction process as set out above is structured to provide you with the information needed for you to settle in quickly and build effective working relationships. The process will introduce you to key people in the organisation, explain how it operates, the type of work undertaken, how training is organised and how pupils are assessed.

Stage two of the induction process will entail a discussion with your supervisor establishing and negotiating the design of your Training Plan as set out above.

The Barrister Group's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and subsidiary policies together with The Barrister Group Behaviour Policy and Culture Policy contain valuable information which sets out our commitment to all of these principles, as well as the principles of fair and equal access to opportunities. It would be useful for you to read these policies which can be found in The Barrister Group Operating Manual on the [myclerksroom](#) intranet and on The Barrister Group's website [here](#).

Pupillage has a clear and defined framework which allows development and demonstration of the competencies to the threshold standard in the Professional Statement. A Training Plan will have been discussed, designed and agreed with your input. The Barrister Group is a collaborative environment, and everyone will undertake differing tasks at times and contribute to the good of all. However, you should not experience the imposition of excessive unskilled work to the detriment of focus on meeting the competencies in the Professional Statement as this would undermine the purpose of pupillage.

In such circumstances, where you are comfortable, you should discuss this with your pupil supervisor. If you are not comfortable to do so, you can discuss matters with your buddy, pupillage co-ordinator, senior clerk, chambers director or head of chambers. If you wish to discuss matters with someone outside of the organisation, there are many sources of help available to pupils as well as the opportunity to report a concern about your training to the BSB. The sources of help are all signposted on the dashboard of the [myclerksroom](#) intranet.

As mentioned above, you will have 'check in' meetings with the pupillage co-ordinator on a quarterly basis (depending on the length of your pupillage). These check-in meetings will be between the pupillage co-ordinator and the pupil and completely independent of any meetings, appraisals or assessments that the pupil and pupil supervisor hold. The aim is to make sure the pupil is generally happy with their ongoing pupillage, if at any time, you feel you need to bring one of these 'check-ins' forward, please just reach out to the pupillage co-ordinator. You can find more information in the Pupillage Check in Process which can be found in the Operating Manual on [myclerksroom](#).

In addition, the use of available technology allows us to monitor stress levels and the wellbeing of all users to "flag up" potential concerns. Our bank of willing supporters will be on hand to help with additional telephone support, 1-1 video support and confidential, anonymous support. Our helpline will provide immediate support throughout the process.

Misconduct and grievances

We hope that most problems can be resolved informally to everyone's satisfaction. However, in circumstances where you have not been able to resolve any concerns informally, you are entitled to invoke the complaints procedure which can be found within the [myclerksroom](#) intranet.

In addition, any complaints, allegations or grievances against you will be handled in accordance with this procedure. As mentioned above, during the pupillage and the monitoring, evaluation,

assessment and check in processes, the pupil supervisor, pupillage co-ordinator and any others involved in the processes will be alive to any matters which arise which need to be considered under the misconduct/complaints procedures. Such matters will be reported to the pupillage co-ordinator who will make appropriate arrangements to ensure the matter is investigated and dealt with appropriately in accordance with the procedure.

There may also be a need for the matter to be reported to the BSB or appropriate Inn of Court, the pupillage co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring this occurs in the appropriate manner.

- **Reports and investigations**

In accordance with the BSB Handbook, anyone who has a concern about the conduct of a pupil who has been called to the Bar can make a report to the BSB.

If a pupil has been called to the Bar, the pupil's Inn of Court plays no formal part in the disciplinary system, except via the Council of the Inns of Court which arranges tribunals. An individual Inn would have a role in pronouncing any findings of a Disciplinary Tribunal.

Any concern about a pupil who has not been called to the Bar will be reported to the pupil's Inn of Court. In such cases, reference will be made to the Memorandum of Understanding between the BSB and the Inns.⁷

In other circumstances, a decision will be made following discussion between the pupil supervisor and Professional Standards Team whether a report should be made to the Supervision Team at the BSB and if considered necessary, the matter will be investigated under The Barrister Group's Complaints Procedure as set out above.

The BSB has information on its website for pupils facing an investigation into a concern reported about them to the BSB which can be viewed in the Bar Qualification Manual [here](#).

If such circumstances arise during your pupillage with The Barrister Group you will be signposted information and given any appropriate support from either your buddy, pupil supervisor or pupillage co-ordinator.

You should be aware that plagiarism or cheating will be properly investigated and reported to the BSB if you have been called to the Bar and also to your Inn. It may be a reason for disciplinary action.

Transfer of pupillage

The Barrister Group will do everything it can to enable you to complete your pupillage. However, if circumstances arise which mean this is not possible, we will do everything we can to support you in achieving the competencies in the Professional Statement. We will also ensure that we liaise with the Supervision team at the BSB.

⁷ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/uploads/assets/9f90d3b5-7dc3-41ef-928e4844c8104f86/7926f2c5-ff28-4c7b-b4c8fa1e6dc41c34/memorandumofunderstanding-signed27march2019.pdf>

If it becomes necessary for you to transfer from The Barrister Group to another AETO or vice versa at any stage of the pupillage, it is likely that the new AETO will need to make applications to the BSB for waivers in relation to the advertising requirements and pupil funding requirements.

The former AETO must make available copies of their training records to date to both the pupil and the new AETO. This ensures that the pupil supervisor at the new AETO can ascertain the skills and experience gained so far allowing them to plan the remainder of the pupillage accordingly.

Secondments

In the event that The Barrister Group intends or agrees to second you to another organisation for part of your pupillage, we will ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place and that the BSB have been informed.

The circumstances where we may consider secondments are where this gives flexibility in the delivery of pupillage allowing the pupils to get a wider range of experience in order to demonstrate the requirements of the Professional Statement.

During secondment, The Barrister Group remain ultimately responsible for your training and as such we will consider and document respective responsibilities in an agreement with the organisation delivering the secondment. Such considerations may include:

- what the objectives of the secondment are and specifically what training will be delivered to meet those objectives;
- what arrangements are in place to monitor the quality of training received by pupils whilst on secondment or where training is delivered by another organisation;
- opportunities for pupils to provide feedback about the standard of training;
- how pupils will be assessed while on secondment, particularly in relation to the competences in the Professional Statement, and how that will be communicated to the pupil and The Barrister Group;
- funding arrangements;
- insurance arrangements; and
- information given to clients of the host organisation about the pupil's status.

If there is any risk of conflicts of interest between The Barrister Group and the secondment organisation, the agreement will ensure that the following steps are taken in order to mitigate the risk, or the perception of risk, that the secondment pupil's obligations have been affected. In particular the pupil must act independently and, in the client's, best interests:

- whilst seconded, the pupil barrister owes all relevant duties to the host organisation and the client;
- responsibility for assessing performance during the secondment lies solely with the host supervisor;
- information that the host organisation has that might create a conflict of interest within The Barrister Group is not shared; and

whilst seconded, the pupil barrister will not be able to access The Barrister Group digital systems or confidential information.