

## Pupillage Offer

I will remember Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for the rest of my life. After a sleepless night, I was sat at my laptop with my family when, at exactly 10am, an email popped up from Exchange Chambers with the subject line, 'Pupillage Offer'. Thereafter followed lots of tears, hugs and celebrations. It really was one of the best days of my life so far.

Turning back slightly to the end of my final year studying Law at university. By this time, I knew I wanted to pursue a career at the Criminal Bar but I was worried about my lack of practical legal experience. I did not have any mini-pupillages or anything of the sort, largely due to the Pandemic and so, I took what I understood to be a huge decision at the time and took a year out to work as a paralegal. I worked as a Personal Injury paralegal for 18 months and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I experienced law in practice whilst using my annual leave to do mini-pupillages, one of which was with Peter Killen and John Jones KC at Exchange Chambers, Liverpool.

I was then fortunate enough to receive a scholarship from Inner Temple to study the BPC LLM at The University of Law, Liverpool. My BPC year was the busiest and most fun year of my journey to the Bar so far. Yes, the work can be stressful and there is always a lot to do but getting to do what you enjoy and are passionate about every day was incredibly rewarding for me. Pupillage season was intense and challenging but I was determined and ready to put in the work to get to where I wanted to be.

I was fortunate enough to receive an offer of Pupillage with Exchange and accepted the offer in a heartbeat. It was an easy decision. I remember coming out of both first and second round interviews with Exchange feeling like I would fit right in and hoping my interviewers felt the same. If I were to name every person at Exchange who has helped me along my journey to the Bar, this diary entry would be at least five pages long. From my first experience of law in practice with Chloe Fordham, the kindness of both Peter Killen and John Jones KC during my mini-pupillage, to bombarding Eve Salter with emails and texts for application and interview advice, I simply would not be where I am today without the generosity, and excellence, of those at Exchange.

I am currently working for The University of Law as the Future Pupil Programme Coordinator. My role, in summary, is to help other students to get to the Bar, through delivering talks and workshops at undergraduate universities across the country. It has been incredibly fun, rewarding and refreshing being in a position to give advice to others. It would, however, be dishonest and frankly not helpful, for me to say I have not felt nervous about starting Pupillage.

When I accepted the initial offer in May 2023, my start date of September 2024 seemed so far in the future that it was almost impossible to envisage. In the past couple of months, my days have been alternating between giddy excitement and anxiety at the prospect of starting Pupillage. I have now come to learn that I am not alone in this and that these feelings are very common, which I have taken comfort in.

Having said that, a couple of weeks ago, I received an email with my start date and Pupillage supervisor, Peter Killen. Immediately, upon receiving that email, I felt a sudden relief. I could instantly see a clearer picture of what my Pupillage would look like day-to-day and I knew I would be in safe hands. I met with Peter recently to discuss the practicalities, logistics (and all the fun parts) of starting Pupillage. I immediately felt reassured that I would be both supported

and learning from the best at Exchange. I cannot put into words how excited I am for that first day to come around.

All in all, I would say I have three key pieces of advice to give, at this very early stage of my career, for those wanting to pursue the Bar:

1. Take your time: your journey to the Bar is a marathon, not a sprint.
2. Ask for help when you need it: there really are no stupid questions and those willing to offer help will be happy to do so.
3. Feeling nervous is normal: accept it, prepare well and, where possible, channel those nerves into excitement.