

## Entry 2: Starting Pupillage

On a particularly rainy day in Leeds, the day I had waited almost 18 months for had arrived and I was starting pupillage at Exchange Chambers. Being a Common Law pupil, I have various supervisors with whom I will work throughout both my first and second six, including one main supervisor, Andrew Ward, with whom I would be spending my first day in Chambers.

I had visited Chambers a month before starting to meet Chambers Director Ian Spencer, who gave me a tour, introducing me to the staff and barristers and answering all of the questions I had about starting pupillage. A week later I returned to meet my pupil supervisor over lunch so that we could get to know each other and discuss the types of things we would be doing as I started my first six of pupillage. These experiences were a great way to battle the first day nerves and made starting pupillage seem a lot less daunting as I had already met many of the people I would see as I arrived at chambers for the first time as a pupil.

On my first day I arrived early (of course) and was introduced to some of the juniors working in chambers and reacquainted with those who I had met previously. They all made sure to welcome me and let me know that I could ask them any questions at any time. They also made sure I knew where all of the important items were kept including the legal notebooks and coffee pot. This atmosphere was one of the reasons I chose Exchange and helped me to immediately settle in and put my best foot forward when it came to starting what will no doubt be a very challenging and rewarding first six months of pupillage.

My supervisor arrived and we settled into a room to go over case papers for the Conference and Joint Settlement Meeting that I would attend with him in Newcastle over the next 2 days. This was a great way to ease me in and allow me to ask all of my questions around Pupillage, Personal Injury work and more specifically Traumatic Brain Injury cases like the one we were covering. During the day, I sat alongside my supervisor during a discussion with a solicitor who had asked him to give a short talk on one of his cases which covered interesting issues of fundamental dishonesty and the duties of expert witnesses. Whilst being very interesting in itself, this talk led to a discussion about practice development and the various ways we as barristers can forge new working relationships outside of receiving instructions and attending events.

On Tuesday I returned to chambers in the morning, a great opportunity to meet more members and go over the papers that had been sent through by the Defendants the night before in preparation for the JSM. I then travelled with my supervisor to Newcastle and we met with leading counsel, Will Waldron KC, to discuss the case. We then attended a conference with the clients and instructing solicitor to prepare for the JSM. I was able to observe the relationship between leading and junior counsel as they explained the procedure of the day and the various arguments that would underpin discussions with the Defendants whilst remaining reassuring in preparing the client for a difficult day.

Throughout the JSM on Wednesday, I was able to attend the meetings with the Defendant's barrister, allowing me to experience the dynamics of negotiation and understand the discussions and calculations that contribute to the making of offers on both sides. The experience of both leading and junior counsel meant that the considerable bundle of expert evidence had been whittled down to the key issues, distilling very complex and lengthy arguments on both sides to the key areas of conflict and making the negotiation process much smoother. After various offers

were made on both sides, the Defendants made their final offer for the clients to consider. With help of their legal team, taking them through the various issues of litigation risk and advising them on both the advantages and disadvantages of settlement for them as individuals, they decided to accept and bring the case to a close. As a result, I was able to see the steps that are taken to confirm a settlement both in terms of the damages for the Claimant and the costs for the legal team, through the drafting of a Tomlin Order. Travelling back to Leeds, I was able to discuss the things I had observed with my supervisor and we planned some written exercises for me to complete so that I could apply my learning and gain the valuable opportunity for feedback.

On Thursday I was back in Chambers to go over papers for an Inquest starting the following Monday and a Conference the next day in Liverpool with another one of my supervisors, Chris Gutteridge, and Chris Barnes KC. This conference came relatively early in the case development process and gave me valuable insight into the ways early expert reports can be utilised to construct legal arguments in Clinical Negligence cases. Later that day I attended another conference on a Personal Injury case, gaining additional insight into the different approaches used in discussions with experts, family members and clients, when collating the key information necessary for the preparation of key documents such as Particulars of Claim and Schedules of Loss.

To tie off my week, I was given the opportunity to attend a Civil CPD Seminar in York on Saturday which covered various matters, most notably a talk on Inquests, to prepare me for the one I would be attending from Monday. This talk gave me valuable insight into the dynamics of an Inquest from start to finish, including how the relevant guidelines and statutes outline the necessary procedure. By attending this talk, I was able to more fully understand the aims and priorities of an Inquest from the perspective of a Senior Coroner, and am very interested to explore how this will colour my understanding of my experiences next week!

And that was it! Week 1 of Pupillage completed and I look forward to many more exciting weeks to come. My three main takeaways are as follows:

- 1) **Never trust the trains.** For me it's better to be an hour early than risk being late. The early mornings are always better than stressing over a delayed train.
- 2) **Bring snacks.** Whilst being busy with work commitments is exciting, sometimes dashing into a Coffee shop to grab the same sandwich you've eaten for the last 4 days is not the best way to fuel your brain.
- 3) **Trust the process.** Despite what it may look like, nobody enters pupillage as the finished article and you wouldn't want to. Learning is all part of the fun so make sure to ask questions and absorb every bit of knowledge you can from your experiences.

Amy Hemsley