

Pupillage Diary – Tenancy

I was waiting for Preston's Court 7 to re-open after lunch when I noticed a missed call from my Supervisor. I had about 15 minutes until my Sentence was due to start and so I returned the call. The reason for the call: I was officially a member of Exchange Chambers! I was excited, relieved, proud, grateful – a real pinch myself moment. I relished these feelings for a few minutes before focusing on the task in hand!

This exemplifies that in the immediate, very little changes. I mitigated on behalf of my client, a form of advocacy I had been doing for a number of months, only now as a tenant. Of course, more broadly, much has shifted, not least my mindset: the education, the training, the work experience, the applications, the interviews, the (multiple) rejections were all stepping stones to this point and so I feel a real sense of excitement to build my career at Exchange from this foundation.

I have really enjoyed second-six (and I am not just saying that!). I have undertaken such a variety of work, including a £5 million contested Proceeds of Crime hearing, a witness deposition in attempted murder proceedings and multiple defence sentences in cases of serious violence (amongst many other things).

It has had its difficult moments, but I doubt any pupil has experienced pupillage without them. I was told prior to starting on my feet that second-six would be a roller coaster, and despite racking my brains to see if I can reference a better analogy, it is the perfect description. It is fast moving with consistent adrenaline rushes. It is nerve-wrecking, and terrifying, but simultaneously stimulating, exciting and rewarding. It has low points that are swiftly followed by high points.

There has been one constant throughout: the support of my Chambers and the camaraderie of the Bar. I made a point in my first pupillage diary of highlighting the welcoming, supportive atmosphere that I entered upon starting. This has not changed. I have been comprehensively supported by my Supervisor throughout, by members of Chambers, by Chambers staff and by colleagues at the Bar, both junior and senior. On my first day as a qualified barrister, HHJ Prowse, sitting in Burnley, welcomed me to the self-employed Bar with a short address. He stated that I have today joined a family, and one which cares for its own. This, it is clear, is spot-on.