



Pupillage Guide

Parklane Plowden Chambers

www.parklaneplowden.co.uk

Welcome

This guide is to provide you, our future applicant, with an insight into what a pupillage is, what you can expect during the application process and from your time as a pupil with PLP.

We offer specialist pupillages based within either our Civil & Employment teams, our Family Team or our Commercial and Chancery teams. We also have pupillages based in Leeds or Newcastle, with the opportunity to spend time in each of our bases.

We believe that specialising within pupillage allows pupils to quickly develop the necessary skills to immediately start practice within one of our highly rated, expert teams and forge strong relationships with solicitors from the outset.

We are committed to equal opportunities for all no matter their background. We consistently promote and aim to improve diversity at the Bar and within PLP itself.

We particularly encourage applications from those in underrepresented groups and those with disabilities.

About Parklane Plowden

Parklane Plowden Chambers (PLP) is a vibrant and progressive chambers which is alive to the needs of both clients and colleagues. We have specialist teams in a number of different practice areas, all of whom have a reputation for excellence.

Our ethos is to make a positive difference in all that we do through expert advice and advocacy, excellent client care and by being the place where talented people want to be.

Formed in 2007 following the merger of Park Lane Chambers in Leeds and Plowden Chambers in Newcastle, PLP is currently home to over 100 barristers; many of whom are recognised and ranked within Chambers and Partners and Legal 500.

Our specialist teams are consistently ranked in Band 1 and are supported by a stellar cast of experienced, specialist and highly regarded clerks. In recent years several of our members have been appointed to judicial positions and appeared in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.

We are a forward thinking set, and have a unique structure that embraces modern business practices. Unlike other chambers,

PLP has an Executive Committee, which is responsible for driving growth, and a Service Company which is responsible for internal operations. This innovative approach to the structure of chambers enables us to adapt to the changing legal landscape and ensure our long-term growth.

In 2021, our premises in Leeds city center underwent a seven-figure refurbishment and now includes a barristers' lounge and study to support agile working, dedicated case rooms and phone booths for remote conferences and hearings and a communal roof top terrace.

In 2023, we moved out of our Lombard House premises into Portland House, a 2,000 sq ft newly refurbished Grade A office on the first floor of the Grade-II listed building on New Bridge Street.

As a client-led business, we are continuously growing and investing in the future. Every year we look for talented and motivated individuals to join us as pupils.

We firmly believe that by recruiting high quality pupils and providing high quality pupillages, and excellent support for junior tenants, PLP will continue to thrive.

Chambers of the Year 2023

Parklane Plowden was named Chambers of the Year at Yorkshire Legal Awards 2023.

The judges said: "The winner of Chambers of the Year stood out to the judges for the range of charity work they do across multiple areas. These chambers are making a tangible difference both within the legal sector and the local community.

Click [here](#) to browse awards.



Our Core Teams

Within PLP we have the following core teams:

Civil, Employment, Commercial, Chancery and Family.

Many of our members also sit in the above practice areas as part-time judges.

Civil

Our large number of civil barristers are highly acclaimed in the fields of clinical negligence, personal injury, credit hire, civil fraud, inquests and costs.

PLP is the only chambers ranked in the highest tiers for Clinical Negligence and Personal Injury in both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500 in the North East.

Several of our members are also recognised as leading juniors in inquest work and costs.

Our barristers are continually commended as approachable, forward thinking and leaders in their field of expertise. We have the largest group of specialist personal injury and clinical negligence barristers of any chambers on the North Eastern Circuit. Members routinely appear in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court on a broad range of injury law cases ranging from the most complex, high-value cases involving life-changing injuries to routine fast-track cases.

Members of PLP have been involved in leading cases, such as Barton -v- Wright Hassall LLP [2018] UKSC 12 and Edwards (on behalf of the estate of the Late Thomas Arthur Watkins) -v- Hugh James Ford Simey Solicitors [2019] UKSC 54.

We act on behalf of claimants, defendants, insurers and in large scale group litigation.

Employment

From KC to pupil, our team of specialist barristers is the largest on Circuit and handles all levels and areas of employment work.

Our barristers are routinely involved

in complex and high-profile litigation appearing in leading cases in areas such as whistleblowing, discrimination and equal pay. We are instructed by a wide range of clients including large and small private sector organisations, NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, Trade Unions and individual employees.

PLP is described as:

- “The set's barristers are frequently involved in high-profile and leading cases, and have experience appearing before both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.” (Chambers & Partners 2025).

“...the ‘strongest set for contentious probate in the North East...”, “...a stand-out chambers for clinical negligence litigation in the North East.” (Legal 500 2025).

Commercial

As well as providing litigation services, members of our commercial team deal with non-contentious commercial and intellectual property work including advisory work and the drafting of complex bespoke documentation.

Our team has particular expertise in relation to contractual, company, partnership, banking, sale of goods, insolvency, intellectual property and technological disputes, commercial property disputes as well as related professional negligence claims.

Members of PLP have also gone on to judicial appointments including a previous member who was recently appointed as the Specialist Civil Judge in the Property and Business Court in Newcastle.

Chancery

PLP has one of the largest specialist probate, inheritance and trusts teams outside of London.

Our chancery team is consistently ranked in Band 1 (Chambers and Partners 2025) and in Tier 1 (Legal 500 2025), and is held in high regard as a set with “many excellent advocates who will often go above and beyond to assist both the instructing solicitor and the client” (Chambers and Partners 2025).

Many of our barristers are also individually recognised by the legal directories.

Members deal with both contentious and non-contentious work at all levels of seniority and complexity. This includes probate claims, inheritance issues, trusts, property, tax matters and Court of Protection applications.

Family

Members of our family team deal with both public and private family matters.

PLP has more than 40 specialist family law practitioners, including five much sought after KCs. Members appear at every level of the family courts, including regular appearances in the High Court and Court of Appeal.

The family team is “...well-known for its ‘strength and depth of family barristers’, with an established track record in handling a broad spectrum of private and public children law cases.” (Legal 500 2025).

"Parklane Plowden's team are prompt to reply and approachable, run great training events, and are an all-round fabulous set." (Chambers & Partners 2025).

The application

Applications are made through Chambers' Application Forms which will be available on our website prior to the applications window opening and can be found here: www.parklaneplowden.co.uk/pupillages

Depending on which pupillage you are applying for, the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form should be sent as a separate attachment to: pupillagecivil@parklaneplowden.co.uk With "Civil Pupillage Application" in the subject line.

pupillagefamily@parklaneplowden.co.uk with "Family Pupillage Application" in the subject line.

pupillagecommercial@parklaneplowden.co.uk

with "Commercial/Chancery Pupillage Application" in the subject line.

It is mandatory for all Chambers to comply with the Pupillage Gateway timetable. The closing date for applications to PLP will therefore be the last day permitted under the Gateway Timetable each year.

Each application form is anonymised before it is reviewed by at least two members of Chambers.

We are looking to recruit exceptional candidates and consider each application based upon the following criteria:

- Oral Advocacy/Communication Skills;
- Written Communication Skills;
- Interpersonal skills;
- Analytical Thinking;
- Drive and Determination;
- Sound Judgment;
- Resilience and the ability to work under pressure;
- Dedication to our core practice areas and commitment to being based on the North East.
- Academic Background (we generally expect candidates to have, or be predicted to have a 2:1 university degree. However we will consider all applications on their merits, particularly if there are exceptional circumstances).

Further details of our selection criteria, and how we assess them, can be found on our website. There is no bar to applicants who have applied previously.

The interviews

First round interviews will be shorter than second round interviews and do not usually last more than 30 minutes. At the first interview you will meet between 3-6 members of chambers. You may be given a legal problem question to consider in advance of the interview or on the day of interview. The aim during the first interview is to find out about you as a candidate and assess the extent to which you meet our selection criteria.

Only a limited number of candidates will be interviewed at longer second round interviews. The second round interview usually involves an advocacy exercise and/or a legal problem question.

We know that some candidates are often at different stages of their careers. Some are still at university and have no real experience of our practice areas. Others have had experience of working as an advocate in the relevant area. Allowance is made for this. We aim to assess potential. Our problem questions are designed to be solved by analytical skills and intuition rather than pre-existing knowledge.

We are generally unable to give feedback to candidates who are not offered an interview but do give feedback to candidates unsuccessful at interview. We are very conscious of the levels of preparation and effort that go into attending pupillage interviews.

Tenancy decision

Before the end of the 12-month pupillage, our Pupillage Committee liaises with each pupil supervisor and undertakes a review of all feedback and makes a recommendation to the Head of Chambers. The Head of Chambers then seeks the views of members in accordance with our Constitution.

What to expect during pupillage

Full details of our Pupillage Programme can be found on our website.

In the first six months, pupils will have an opportunity to undertake work in their specific practice area.

Pupils will predominantly spend time with their pupil supervisors but will also shadow different members of the team during cases which may be particularly interesting and or useful for the pupil to see. We believe that this allows the pupil to see a variety of work and working styles.

By the end of the 'first-six', each pupil will have been assessed against the standards set out in the Professional Statement such that they can pass into their 'second-six' and begin undertaking their own cases. However, pupils are not then on their own. We ensure support continues throughout second six via the pupil supervisor, a junior tenant mentor, a group of very supportive juniors all available to help at a moment's notice via the junior's Whatsapp group and, of course, members of the Pupillage Committee.

We offer a friendly, progressive and 'open door' working environment. Pupils will frequently encounter members of all levels of seniority and from all teams within PLP.

All of our pupillages are funded by an overall package worth at least £35,000 over the 12 months made up as follows:

- An award of £15,000 for the first six months to be paid pro rata at the end of each month;
- Guaranteed receipts of at least £20,000 for the second six months.

In fact, we expect our pupils to generate income significantly in excess of the guaranteed receipts in their 2nd six. Based on past experience, we anticipate billing in the first full year of fee generating practice to comfortably exceed £50,000.

Chambers will pay for each pupil's reasonable travel and accommodation expenses incurred during the course of pupillage when accompanying members of Chambers, the cost of all compulsory training courses and travel expenses to attend such courses and the costs of attending Mess on Circuit.

At the start of the first six months, Chambers will provide each pupil with an advance to cover anticipated expenses in the month ahead.

Help, support and mentoring

We offer help, support and advice at all levels in PLP.

Not only is there an 'open-door' policy for ensure that PLP is as collegiate and all but we have a formal mentoring scheme throughout all practice areas and levels of tenants at all levels, chambers directors, seniority in chambers. This ensures that help and support does not cease once pupillage does.

We appreciate that life as a barrister (and working within Chambers) can be challenging at times. We therefore try and supportive as possible. This includes fellow clerks and staff.

Pupil Supervisors

Pupil Supervisors are picked by the Pupillage Committee once successful candidates have accepted their offer of pupillage at PLP.

This enables us to match candidates with suitable members of Chambers in practice areas in which candidates have a particular interest.

Our pupil supervisors will provide each pupil with a training programme which will ensure they meet the competencies in the Professional Statement.

Pupil supervisors provide informal, ongoing feedback throughout pupillage. Pupils will

also have regular contact with the Head of Pupillage with each team. This ensures that the pupil has another familiar point of contact within Chambers and means that in the unlikely event of a problem arising, this can be addressed as swiftly as possible.

Periodic formal appraisal meetings with the pupils are undertaken with a member of the Pupillage Committee to ensure that every pupil is on track to meet the standard required for a Provisional Practising Certificate at the end of first-six, and to complete pupillage.

Pupil Insight #1

Former civil pupil May Martin gives her take on pupillage at PLP

My pupillage was a civil pupillage split between two supervisors, one who specialised in PI & Clin Neg, and the other in Employment.

The pupillage experience was slightly strange as COVID-19 meant that Chambers was much quieter than usual. I was keen to spend time actually with my supervisor, as opposed to working remotely, and both of my supervisors were happy to come in so we had that face-to-face contact.

During First Six, a typical day would involve observing a hearing or working on papers, drafting Particulars of Claim or advices. For hearings, I would receive the papers in advance and I was encouraged by my supervisors to treat the case as if it was my own and to think about how I would prepare it. My supervisors would set tasks such as preparing a cross-examination, and then we would sit down and compare our approaches.

Second Six was a bit of a whirlwind. Chambers tries to make sure that you are only in court three days each week so that you still have chance to spend time with your supervisor. I loved being in court but I actually found it really helpful to have time with my supervisors each week to discuss things about my own cases and continue to

learn by watching my supervisors conduct hearings.

The overwhelming feeling that I had during my pupillage year was support. People went out of their way to introduce themselves and to let me know that I could come to them if I had questions about anything.

Pupillage is a year full of asking questions, so it was brilliant to know that I could ask anybody in Chambers, no matter how senior, and that they would be more than happy to help. Chambers really is a collegiate place, everybody has each other's back, and that was so important to me during pupillage.



Pupil Insight #2

Former family pupil Patric Hulley gives his take on pupillage at PLP

A specialist family pupillage at Parklane Plowden involves exposure to all areas of children work, both public and private, alongside matrimonial finance work.

During first six most days will be spent attending court hearings with your pupillage supervisor, or other members of Chambers. On average, throughout my first six I spent 4 or 5 days a week attending court hearings. Alongside hearings there is time spent reviewing papers and drafting documents such as orders, position statements, skeleton arguments, and attendance notes. It is an intensive period, with a steep learning curve, but I found it enjoyable and rewarding.

On average during second six I would have 3 matters of my own per week and would spend the additional time preparing for upcoming hearings or continuing to attend hearings alongside other members of Chambers. As second six progressed I took on an increasing case load, to include 4- and 5-day trials.

Chambers encourages a close and intensive working relationship between pupils and supervisors. During first six this will involve regular meetings, post hearing de-briefs and discussions about upcoming hearings.

During second six, supervisors take a more overseeing role, but remain available for discussions about issues within cases, advice on approaches to take and a sounding board for any issues that you may be experiencing.

In addition to supervisors, Parklane Plowden fosters a very supportive and

collaborative working culture, with other members of Chambers of all seniority willing to give their time and advice at short notice as and when required. At no time during a pupillage at Parklane Plowden will you feel that you are out on your own. This feeling has continued through into tenancy.

Pupillage at Parklane Plowden is a thoroughly enjoyable experience. It is intense, you will have long weeks at times, dependant on the workload of your supervisor or your own diary, and it requires commitment from you as the pupil, but the reward comes in completing a specialist pupillage in a highly regarded set that will lay the foundations for a successful future career at the Bar.

Gaining tenancy in Chambers will allow you to work alongside a friendly and supportive team of excellent barristers.



Pupil Insight #3

Former chancery and commercial pupil Holly Challenger gives her take on pupillage at PLP

We are here for you

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch via our website www.parklaneplowden.co.uk

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