

GOUGH SQUARE CHAMBERS

PUPILLAGE

2026-2027

Number one in
consumer law and
consumer finance for
over 30 years.

Chambers and Partners

6/7, GOUGH SQUARE

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Overview

What to expect:

- A relaxed and collegiate atmosphere.
- A 12 month plan tailored to your development.
- The opportunity to satisfactorily explore all of Chambers' practice areas and to start building a specialism.
- Expert support from up to three supervisors together with the opportunity to learn from junior members during your first six to prepare you for getting on your feet.
- Bimonthly progress reviews to ensure you are on track for second six and tenancy.
- Chambers' highly anticipated work and social events including Chambers' annual summer conference in Italy, large seminars, Christmas and summer parties, networking events, ski trips, and 10k/half marathons.
- The opportunity to get involved in Chambers' publications and begin building a name for yourself.

Why choose us:

- We will invest in you. We only have one pupil each year (so there is no internal competition), the award is £100,000 and we have one of the best tenancy rates around with more than 15 years of taking on every pupil.
- You will become a part of the leading chambers in consumer and regulatory law.
- You will have the opportunity to develop a specialist practice and become a recognised expert, even in your early years.

A photograph of a man and a woman in business attire engaged in a conversation. The man, on the right, is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is looking towards the woman. The woman, on the left, is seen from the back of her head and shoulders, wearing a dark blazer over a white shirt. Her hair is styled in a bun with an orange clip. They are in a room with large, multi-paned windows that look out onto a street with brick buildings. A modern, metallic, dome-shaped pendant light hangs from the ceiling, and a lamp with a beige shade is visible on the right. A semi-transparent teal box with white text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Diversity & Inclusion Statement:
Gough Square Chambers operates an equality and diversity policy and abides by the Bar Standards Board's Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar.

Our Barristers

Head of Chambers Kevin De Haan KC	Call: 1976 Silk: 2000
Head of Chambers Jonathan Goulding	Call: 1984
David Travers KC	Call: 1981 Silk: 2010
Jonathan Kirk KC	Call: 1995 Silk: 2010
Fred Philpott	Call: 1974
Claire Andrews	Call: 1979
Jeremy Barnett	Call: 1980
Josephine Hayes	Call: 1980
Stephen Neville	Call: 1986
Julian Gun Cunninghame	Call: 1986
Bradley Say	Call: 1993
Ian Thomas	Call: 1993
Iain Macdonald	Call: 1996
Simon Popplewell	Call: 2000
Cameron Crowe	Call: 2002
Kate Urell	Call: 2002
Lee Reynolds	Call: 2002
Stuart Jessop	Call: 2002
Alison Lambert	Call: 2005
Richard Roberts	Call: 2006
James Ross	Call: 2006
Anna Medvinskaia	Call: 2008
Laura Phillips	Call: 2009
Lee Finch	Call: 2010
Daniel Brayley	Call: 2011
Michael Coley	Call: 2011
Alison Hollis	Call: 2012
Robin Kingham	Call: 2013
Sabrina Goodchild	Call: 2017
George Spence-Jones	Call: 2017
Ann-Marie O'Neil	Call: 2020
Jack Brady	Call: 2023
Door Tenant Sebastian Clegg	Call: 1994
Door Tenant Jonathan Spicer	Call: 1995
Door Tenant Alexander Greenwood	Call: 2002

About Chambers

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Gough Square Chambers is a small specialist set practising from chambers at 6 - 7 Gough Square, a pretty cobbled square situated between Fleet Street and Fetter Lane. Chambers traces its history to a set founded at 2 Harcourt Buildings by Leonard Caplan QC shortly after the Second World War.

In 1986, a number of people from 2 Harcourt Buildings set up at 9 Devereux Court. Due to continuing expansion, Chambers quickly outgrew 9 Devereux Court and moved to Gough Square in 1993.

From an early stage, Chambers has had a particular speciality in consumer and trading law. This is a wide ranging field that covers most types of transactions between businesses and members of the public. However, there has always been a particular emphasis on consumer credit and retail banking.

Chambers has been at the vanguard of the development of this area of law for over 30 years, including in landmark cases such as *Royal Bank of Scotland v Etridge* (No. 2) [2001] UKHL 44 and *Beavis v ParkingEye* [2015] UKSC 67.

Despite its success, Chambers has remained a small and approachable set. We hope that you will find this brochure helpful in applying for pupillage.

We look forward to welcoming you to Gough Square Chambers.



Areas of Practice

Introduction

Chambers specialises in all aspects of consumer law. This is a diverse field that encompasses almost any interaction between retail businesses and the public. Whilst there are relatively few true consumer law specialists at the Bar, it is difficult to exaggerate the scope and day-to-day impact of consumer law on businesses and members of the public.

Chambers has long been considered the country's leading set in consumer law and is ranked as the sole top tier set for consumer law by both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500. As the Legal 500 2017 put it, 'Gough Square Chambers is, "without doubt, the leading set for consumer law matters" with "eminent KCs, heavy-hitting mid to senior juniors and some brilliant rising stars".

'Consumer law' is really a hybrid of many different substantive areas of law. Pupils in Chambers see the full spectrum of consumer law, from technical civil credit and banking cases on the one hand to criminal trading standards jury trials on the other. Once in tenancy, members have the option of focussing on their chosen areas – although many continue to do the full range of consumer law work.

In addition to consumer law, Chambers is ranked as a leading set in financial services and banking. Members of Chambers also practise in a number of fields related to consumer law, with individual members ranked as leading practitioners in travel, licensing, and product liability.

Members also practice in areas away from consumer law and are ranked in areas such as: Environment, health and safety, inquests and inquiries and local government.

A few short summaries of Chambers' main areas of practice are set out here. This list is by no means exhaustive and further details may be found on Chambers' website.



Consumer Credit

The consumer credit field covers most retail lending. Chambers usually acts for banks and lenders (such as Lloyds, HSBC, Bank of Scotland, RBS, Santander, American Express, and MBNA), although some members also act for borrowers. Members of Chambers are also instructed by regulatory and enforcement authorities.

Following the global credit 'crunch', there has been a great amount of litigation and Chambers has been instructed in some of the key consumer credit cases of the last decade. These include *Office of Fair Trading v Lloyds TSB* [2007] UKHL 48, *Carey v HSBC plc* [2009] EWHC 3417, *Harrison v Black Horse Ltd* [2011] EWCA Civ 1128, *JP Morgan v Northern Rock plc* [2014] EWHC 291, *Grace & George v Black Horse Ltd* [2014] EWCA Civ 1413, *Kerrigan v Elevate Credit International* [2020] EWHC 2169 (Comm), and *CFL Finance Limited v Gertner* [2021] EWCA Civ 228.

Financial Services

Beyond consumer credit, Chambers undertakes a variety of other financial services work. This often relates to compliance with the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and the regulation of firms by the Financial Conduct Authority. Notable cases in this area include *Hurstanger v Wilson* [2007] EWCA Civ 299, *Helden v Strathmore Ltd* [2011] EWCA Civ 542, *Conlon v Black Horse Ltd* [2013] EWCA Civ 1658, *Nationwide Debt Consultants Ltd v Financial Conduct Authority* [2017] UKUT 0142 TCC, *Fortwell Finance Limited v Halstead* [2018] EWCA Civ 676, *MFS Portfolio Ltd v Phelan* [2019] GCCR 17149, and *Jackson v Ayles* [2021] EWHC 995 (Ch).

Consumer Contracts

Members of Chambers regularly represent businesses in proceedings involving consumer contracts, including contracts for the sale and supply of goods and services. In the past, this often involved the application of the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1974, the Sale of Goods Act 1979, and the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999. Although those statutes remain relevant, many of these cases are now governed instead by the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

In 2015, Jonathan Kirk KC and Thomas Samuels successfully persuaded the Supreme Court to fundamentally alter the doctrine of penalties at common law (*Beavis v ParkingEye Ltd* [2015] UKSC 67). Other notable cases include *Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills v PLT Anti-Marketing Ltd* [2015] EWCA Civ 76, *Purely Creative Ltd v Office of Fair Trading* (CJEU Case C-428/11), and *Kaye v Nu Skin UK Ltd* [2012] EWHC 958.

Trading Standards

Members of Chambers both prosecute (on behalf of enforcement authorities) and regularly defend major supermarkets and other nationwide retailers in the criminal courts for trading standards offences. These cases often involve unfair and aggressive commercial practices, food safety and hygiene, product safety, product labelling, counterfeiting and trademarks, or money laundering.

Notable cases: *DEFRA v ASDA Stores Ltd* [2003] UKHL 71, *Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd v HM Courts Service* [2006] EWHC 1749 (Admin), *R v Scottish & Southern Energy plc* [2012] EWCA Crim 539, *R v X Ltd* [2013] EWCA Crim 818, and *Torfaen CBC v Douglas Willis Ltd* [2013] UKSC 59.

“They are the leaders in relation to consumer finance.”

Legal 500 2022



Ann Marie-O'Neil | Call: 2020

I completed my undergraduate degree with the Open University while working full time as a project manager in the construction industry. During my second year of study, I competed in my first moot competition. I went on to win, with the final being held at the Supreme Court before Lady Hale. That experience was the catalyst for pursuing the Bar. After that, I undertook a series of mini-pupillages to get a flavour of barrister life and narrow down the kind of chambers that I was looking for. I continued mooting to bolster my pupillage applications and won two further international mooting competitions.

After I completed my Bar Course, I spent a year as a County Court advocate – which I highly recommend. In addition, Lincoln's Inn was an incredible resource. One of the most valuable opportunities was a scholarship which included a three-month internship at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The pupillage application process takes considerable time and effort to stand out, and my Inn of Court was invaluable in helping me refine my applications: I would encourage everyone to ask for a pupillage application mentor.

I had two rounds at Gough Square, both during the height of the COVID pandemic. As such, both of my interviews took place remotely. The first was a short 15-minute interview with three Members. The second round was far more in-depth and included a problem question which was received half an hour in advance. Both rounds were challenging but the panel were approachable and encouraging, an experience that continued throughout my pupillage.

The pupillage experience

I chose to apply to Gough Square for three reasons. First, because the culture of Gough Square was attractive. I was looking for a Chambers with a focus on collegiality and mutual success instead of internal competition.

Secondly, I wanted a Chambers that was medium sized. I disliked the idea of being in a Chambers so vast that Members may never meet each other, and I didn't want to be just a face on the Members' website page to any of my colleagues.

Finally, looking at the Members' profiles, I found like-minded individuals. For example, Alison Lambert graduated through the Open University as I had. Having been rejected from a Chambers previously with the reason cited being 'it's where your degree is from', I felt confident that Gough Square would focus on my performance and ability instead of more superficial elements. In addition, I saw that many of

the newer Members had similar extra-curricular experiences as me, such as County Court advocacy, and all had gone on to have flourishing practices.

Gough Square only takes on one pupil at a time with an expectation that they will obtain tenancy. As such, there is a Chambers-wide focus that every opportunity is a confidence building exercise, setting the pupil up for success.

My pupillage was split into three segments. The first four months was spent shadowing Iain MacDonald whose practice spans civil and criminal. There was a good mix of court attendance, conferences and paperwork to see. Towards the end of my time with Iain, I would draft paperwork alongside him and then compare the finished product. It was exciting to work on live cases and satisfying to see a noticeable improvement in my work in such a short space of time.

The next two months were spent shadowing Lee Finch who has a solely civil practice. The biggest milestone for me was within these two months. Just before my second six was due to start, we conducted an advocacy assessment to make sure I was ready to be on my feet. It took the form of a mock trial and other Members of Chambers played the Judge, opposing counsel and witness. One of my favourite memories during my pupillage was completing the BSB forms with Lee to approve the start of my second six.

The entirety of my pupillage was peppered with opportunities to assist in research for other Members of Chambers as well as shadowing them on interesting cases. These helped me gain exposure to the kind of work I might expect at differing levels of seniority as well as getting to know my fellow Members.

Interview continued...

Recent Pupillage

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The transition from pupil to tenant

The anticipation of the transition was the worst part. I had expected to feel a big change from being supervised to on my own, but this was far from reality. The bigger transition was moving from first six to practising second six when I started to have my own clients and became responsible for a caseload. I had a busy second six and was in court more often than not. That cadence continued through to my tenancy with the first day feeling no different, other than being a cause for celebration. It's important to remember that the year of pupillage is intended to gear you up for tenancy. My supervisors and clerks did an amazing job making me feel confident and comfortable during my pupillage so that when the training wheels came off, I already had momentum.

What is your practice like now?

My practice is an extremely busy and varied one which straddles civil and criminal. I have to remind myself that this is a nice problem to have because it can occasionally feel overwhelming. I am in court most days with a mix of applications and trials. When I am not in court, I am usually busy with paperwork and preparation for upcoming hearings. My work/life balance has to have a bit of flex to it. If I'm in person on a Monday morning, it is often the case that I need to cut my Sunday short so I can travel to where I need to be the next day. This is balanced out on days when I have remote hearings which is around 50% of the time. The travel can be a good opportunity to complete other paperwork. For example, I am writing this interview on the 5.30am train to Leicester. In terms of the future, I would like to keep my practice as broad as possible for the next 3-5 years and say yes to every opportunity that comes my way.

What is the culture of chambers?

Gough Square has a pervasive sense of collegiality which is punctuated by an expectation that everyone works hard and to an extremely high standard. I have friends in other Chambers who are surprised when I talk about the camaraderie at Gough Square. Barristers are usually self-employed which can lead to an inherent sense of competition and Members becoming siloed. Fred Philpott, the founder of Chambers, wanted to move away from this more old-fashioned style of operating to one of active support and mutual success.

The foundations of Gough Square are the incredible staff. The clerks, headed up by Bob Weekes, weave magic distributing the work around Chambers and dealing with the myriad issues that arise on a daily basis. The marketing team, consisting of John Clements and Mehak Hussain, push the profile of Chambers in ever-creative ways, most recently booking out the entirety of St Paul's Cathedral for our summer party.

Top tips for those wanting to become a barrister/secure a pupillage at your chambers

Make sure you check out Gough Square's pupillage page on our website. It sets out the criteria that we look for when we are marking application forms. We put a lot of effort into making sure we compare applicants as objectively as possible, so helping us to tick off those criteria is the best way to get your foot in the door for a first round. During the interview rounds, we try to make candidates feel comfortable and relaxed as we want to see you perform at your best. I remember leaving both interview rounds at Gough Square having enjoyed the lively debate.



“Undoubtedly the best set for consumer work.”

Legal 500 2022



Development

Chambers is proud to be the leader in its chosen fields. This success is due in large measure to the quality of instruction and mentoring that its members receive during pupillage. This results in junior tenants who have real expertise in consumer and regulatory law from very early on. As Chambers & Partners 2015 noted, 'The number of bodies it can throw at the sector is unmatched by any other set, and its capabilities at the junior end are there for all to see. Solicitors view it as a top pick: "This chambers is at the very top of its game"'.

Quality of Work

As a pupil at Gough Square Chambers you will be exposed to a wide variety of high quality work. Pupils in Chambers are given a great deal of real responsibility and make substantive contributions to live cases from day one. The variety of civil, commercial, and regulatory criminal work presents a steep learning curve but also keeps the pupillage year exciting and engaging.

The variety of work provides a great grounding for practice in many different areas. However, should you choose to do so, you will be able to specialise further as a tenant once you know what you enjoy.

Atmosphere

By the standards of most sets of chambers, Gough Square is very informal and closely knit. Work conversations are just as likely to take place over a coffee or drinks as they are around a conference table. Members regularly socialise outside of work, both in the evenings and on trips further afield (e.g. Chambers' annual conference in Italy, regular ski trips, and 10k/half marathons).

Pupils are invited to all of Chambers' events as soon as they arrive, both organised (e.g. Chambers' annual summer cricket match, Christmas party, and fantasy football dinner) and impromptu (e.g. lunches out of Chambers). Working hours are 8:30AM to 6:00PM on weekdays and pupils are only occasionally permitted to work outside those times. In addition, since Chambers only takes one pupil at a time there's no chance that you will be pitted against someone else in a year-long competition for tenancy.

Tenancy Rates

Over the last 15 years, all of Chambers' pupils have stayed on as tenants. This is due to the care taken to select the right individuals from the start. Tenancy is never guaranteed, and pupils will have to demonstrate that they possess the skills required to succeed at the Bar in order to receive an offer, but a pupil at Gough Square is always viewed as a future tenant from his or her first day in Chambers.

Structure of Pupillage

A year of pupillage

Pupils in Chambers typically spend four months with three different supervisors. The first four months will be spent conducting legal research, observing courtroom advocacy, and learning the basics of life in practice from your supervisor. However, you won't be limited to working for your supervisor; rather, an effort will be made to ensure that you work on the most interesting and educational cases being handled in Chambers.

The second period of four months covers the transition from observation to practice and is spent with one supervisor. This timing allows you some time with your new supervisor before the inevitably daunting first appearance in court. In addition to the pupillage courses run by the Bar Council (paid for by Chambers), you'll also complete in-house advocacy training prior to starting your second six.

During the third period of four months, you'll start to adapt to life in practice and hopefully begin to see yourself as a future tenant in Chambers. You should expect to be in court on a regular basis in your own right. In addition, there are often opportunities to be led or to undertake devilling work – both of which will enable you to gain exposure to more complex cases.

Assessment

All work undertaken by a pupil is constructively appraised by his or her pupil supervisor. Every month, pupils are provided with an assessment of their work by their supervisor and formal reviews are held with Head of Pupillage every quarter. Dialogue during pupillage is important, and pupils are encouraged to ask questions and seek help if uncertain about any aspect of their work.

In addition to these regular assessments, two further formal assessments are conducted in the first six months. The advocacy assessment will most likely consist of a mock summary judgment application before a small panel consisting of no more than five members of Chambers. For the written assessment, the pupil will be expected to produce an opinion on a question of law relevant to Chambers' main areas of practice.

Tenancy decision

Every pupillage is offered with a view to tenancy. However, a final decision on whether to offer tenancy is taken by all members of Chambers. That decision is usually made in July of the pupillage year, but in any event Chambers will ensure that you are notified of the decision at least two months before the end of pupillage so that alternative arrangements can be made in the event of a negative decision.

Thankfully, however, this is not usually required as every pupil who has started in Chambers over the last 15 years has gone on to become a tenant.

Finances

The current pupillage award is £100,000. This is split between a £60,000 cash grant and £40,000 of guaranteed earnings. Pupils are also entitled to keep any earnings above the guaranteed amount subject to paying Chambers' rent and clerks fees.

In addition, Chambers pays for all travel costs incurred in connection with work outside London (other than work undertaken in your own name).

Application Process

What are we looking for?

Chambers looks for six key traits in potential pupils, as set out in our recruitment criteria (available on Chambers' website):

1. **Intellectual ability** - including, but not limited to, academic achievement
2. **Advocacy skills** - the ability to express yourself both orally and in writing.
3. **Analytical Ability** - the ability to quickly assimilate and analyse information under pressure.
4. **Interpersonal skills and temperament** - including emotional intelligence and integrity
5. **Initiative** - evidence of motivation and determination, including your commitment to the Bar
6. **Interest in and suitability** - although prior experience of consumer law is not required, a genuine interest in the field is important

Mini-pupillages

We offer up to six mini-pupillages per year, with two mini-pupillages in each legal term. Each mini-pupillage will last for two days. The deadlines for applications are as follows:

- Mini-pupillages in December, applications must be received between 2 June and 1 November.
- Mini-pupillages in April, applications must be received between 2 November and 1 March.
- Mini-pupillages in July, applications must be received between 2 March and 1 June.

Applications will normally only be considered for the legal term to which they relate.

Mini-pupillage is not a pre-requisite for applying for pupillage at Gough Square. We only offer limited places due to the small size of Chambers and the nature of our practice.

Mini-pupillages are available to those who have a keen interest in applying for pupillage at Gough Square and wish to spend a few days with Chambers. Applicants should have spent at least 6 months studying law at undergraduate level, or have commenced a law conversion course. All applications will be considered in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

Applications are made via our website.

“Gough Square Chambers is the best set for consumer law. Every barrister is a genuine expert in the field.”

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