

Six Pump Court Pupillage Brochure



Introduction

This guide is our answer to the question: **Why do you want to become a pupil at Six Pump Court?**

We want to show that Six Pump Court is a set of chambers where you can expect to undertake interesting and challenging work across a broad range of practice areas in a supportive and friendly environment. We know that to be able to explain why you want to come to Six Pump Court, one must have first-hand experience of working at Six Pump Court. As such, it is not a fair question to ask applicants; and we won't. We are looking for applicants who can demonstrate an understanding of the core values of Chambers, who are familiar with the way in which we work, and who have a genuine passion for our key practice areas.

By this guide we hope to provide transparency for applicants. We would like every application to Six Pump Court to be well informed and so we recognise that you need to understand why we consider pupillage at Six Pump Court is something we are proud of, how we will assess applicants, and how your practice is likely to develop during second-six and into tenancy.

We have set out this guide in three topics: 1. Why you should want to come to Six Pump Court for pupillage; 2. How to get pupillage at Six Pump Court; 3. What to expect if you get pupillage, including how to apply for tenancy. We acknowledge that for many applicants even getting to this stage in their legal careers has required significant financial outlay and so we have tried to be as open and honest about the earning potential of our junior tenants.

Why should you come to Six Pump Court for pupillage?

Pupillage at Six Pump Court in five points

1. Six Pump Court offers two twelve-month pupillages per year. These are currently financed by a £70,000 pupillage award some of which will take the form of guaranteed earnings in the second-six.
2. Pupils are supervised by three different barristers, one for each of three four-month periods, which gives exposure to a range of our practice areas.
3. Pupils receive regular feedback on their written work and on the advocacy sessions that are organised in Chambers, and Six Pump Court will fund all necessary courses during pupillage: we consider that our success is measured by the development of pupils during pupillage.
4. First-six pupils share the daily professional life of their pupil supervisor, which places them in Chambers to regularly meet other tenants and members of Chambers staff. Pupils shadow tenants in court, undertake drafting work for them, and research legal arguments among other things.
5. Second-six pupils enjoy daily court experience, typically in criminal law, and develop the type of practice they would wish to have as tenants. Working with the clerking team, pupils have a say in the way that they build their independent practices.

Head of Pupillage's view



Nicholas Ostrowski, Head of Pupillage

Six Pump Court seeks to attract applicants who have the skills and aptitude to succeed at the Bar and who contribute positively to life in Chambers. We operate an open-door policy and pride ourselves on the collaborative way our members assist one another with cases. We hope that you will find us to be a friendly and welcoming set of Chambers. We select tenants on the basis of merit, in accordance with our published tenancy criteria. Our pupils are therefore, not in competition with one another for a tenancy. We see the success of our pupils as essential to Six Pump Court's future success. Our objective is to ensure that our pupils observe and undertake a broad range of work across all our practice areas. Pupils always have the chance to discuss issues in their cases with their supervisor and other tenants to benefit from the experiences of others when working on their cases. Throughout pupillage, our pupils will also have the opportunity to undertake work with barristers at all levels of seniority, through attending court hearings and trials, conferences and by providing written advice and research. However, as well as developing your legal skills, we think pupillage should equip you with the business skills you need to grow your practice. There will be opportunities throughout pupillage to discuss your practice and career goals with your pupil supervisor, Head of Pupillage, and Chambers' practice manager. This means that in addition to making sure our pupils gain considerable experience in all our key practice areas, pupils will gain the practical skills they will need to practice and thrive at the independent Bar.

Funding

Our pupillages are fully funded with a current pupillage grant of £70,000, which is divided between a pupillage grant in the first-six and guaranteed earnings in the second-six. In the first-six, pupils are paid on a monthly basis. As with all pupillages, the pupillage grant in the first-six is tax-free. During the first-six, pupils are required to undertake a course at their Inn of Court, which we finance in addition to any other educational training made compulsory by the Bar Council. In the second-six, pupils keep all the money that they earn from their own cases and there is no upper limit to this sum nor do Chambers request payment for desk rent as is required of tenants. In each month, if a pupil's receipts are less than the guaranteed minimum amount (it is money received by the pupil rather than fees invoiced to clients) then Chambers will pay the difference.

Will earnings increase as a tenant?

Tenancy triggers several significant changes, which can have a significant impact upon the income of members of Six Pump Court.

Tenants are required to contribute financially to Chambers. This includes Chambers rent, which is currently payable at 9.5% of earnings as well as clerks fees, which are currently payable at 4% of earnings. In addition, there are fixed fees to pay to Chambers for a social entertainment fund to organise events within Chambers for its members, and a fee to rent a desk within Chambers (in the first year after pupillage this is £83.33 per month). Realistically, these costs run to several hundred pounds per month in the first year following pupillage and increase thereafter in line with earnings. These costs are more than matched by increased earning power of tenants. Simply put, with increased seniority comes better paid work. In addition, the acceptance of tenancy provides certainty for the clerking team, which means they can accept more complex (and hence better paid) cases that are booked some time in the future.

For all our junior tenants, irrespective of practice area, it is common to have multiple hearings at a single court on a single day. This means less time and money is spent travelling and so relative income is increased. Tenants will typically earn comfortably more than the pupillage award in their first year as a tenant (albeit junior tenants often have to deal with a lag between fees invoiced to clients and actually receiving the money) and their income will ordinarily rise significantly, sometimes very significantly, in the years that follow.

Pupil's View



Alex Crichton-Miller

Your first-six months of pupillage (known shorthand as your "first-six") is your opportunity to get an understanding of what practice is like before you go 'on your feet' in second-six. You will spend much of your time with two supervisors, who will specialise in different practice areas: in my case, one supervisor specialised in crime, and the other practiced in employment and family law. They will ask you to carry out research tasks and draft documents for their cases and give you feedback on that work. Alongside this, you will be set written work by other members of chambers and take part in advocacy training. First-six at Six Pump Court is also a very important time to experience the breadth of work that takes place in chambers. Your supervisors will encourage you to accompany other barristers to hearings in areas that interest you, and that is also a great way to get to know a broader group of barristers in chambers. Closer to the start of second-six, more junior members of chambers will invite you to shadow them in the types of case that you will be taking on yourself. First-six is a busy time but generally you won't be expected to work outside normal hours. Chambers' focus will be on building up your knowledge, your skills and also your confidence to ensure you can make a success of your second-six.



Nathaniel Bor

Criminal pupillage at Six Pump Court was an edifying and rewarding experience. From the very first day I felt supported by my supervisors, clerks, and tenants throughout Chambers. Criminal pupillage is structured slightly differently to mixed/common law pupillage. I was supervised by two senior members of Chambers, each for a period of six months. Inevitably, this meant I spent substantially more time with my first-six supervisor, as second-six involves predominantly working on your own caseload and attending court independently. That said, my second-six supervisor was always available whenever I needed assistance and made every effort to ensure I was supported. Throughout pupillage I was encouraged to undertake written work for all members of Chambers. Being proactive about this is important and will ensure that you are able to demonstrate your skillset to members who you may not organically cross paths with. The best way to do this is to be present and visible in Chambers. First-six involved spending every day in court working on criminal matters in which my supervisor was instructed. Tasks involved substantial legal research, drafting applications, defence statement, and even lines of cross-examination. I was fortunate enough to observe and contribute to the workload of a huge range of criminal trials, including murders, frauds, and RASSO cases. Second-six was an acclivitous learning experience. You will never forget your first trial! I have benefitted hugely from the relationships developed with professional clients, Judges, and court staff which were borne out of second-six engagements. Many of the important skills learned through observation in first-six will be deployed in second-six. Pupillage is a busy year – but I was always encouraged to schedule time for breaks where needed. Whilst you will notice this change in the early years of tenancy, working at weekends will be the exception, rather than the rule.

Tenant's View



Louis Adams - (Call 2024), Member since 2026

From day one at Six Pump Court, I was welcomed and made to feel like a future tenant in the making. During first-six, I was quickly exposed to a wide variety of criminal work and had the opportunity to observe various members of chambers, all with their own unique styles and approaches. Each is as approachable as the last and that is a real strength of chambers. I was quickly trusted to assist members in chambers with challenging but achievable drafting tasks which again, would come in a variety of forms, e.g., one day it could be a defence statement in a case of grievous bodily harm or the next day some advice to the Crown Prosecution Service in a dangerous driving case. There is always variety, which I really enjoyed. I was lucky enough to observe and assist on many Crown Court trials covering a range of offences; my most memorable relates to a prison officer who my supervisor prosecuted for misconduct in a public office.

Again, across the various transition periods from first-six to second-six, and indeed second-six to tenancy, I have felt incredibly supported and there is always help a phone call or WhatsApp message away. This extends from members of chambers, to the clerks, as well as the wider administration team. Speaking of which, the clerks will ensure that you are busy (!) and are a fantastic team to work with. On that, another key strength of Six Pump Court in my view lies in its regional connections in the South East, particularly in Kent. The result of this is you can take on more senior work faster, and in turn, have more opportunities to improve, refine and build both your advocacy skills and your practice. Whilst a work/life balance at the Bar is never a perfect equation, the approach in chambers to achieving this and the ability to achieve a healthy balance at Six Pump Court is what it should be.

Finally, as Six Pump Court is a common law set, there is always variety and room for expansion/diversification within your practice, which is a massive strength. Indeed, I have ended up undertaking work for a wide variety of other agencies outside of the CPS or criminal defence firms that I very much enjoy and find that the cross-application of skills learned in one area to another often pays dividends.

I would highly recommend a pupillage at Six Pump Court.



Victoria Kaye - Call (2022), Member since 2025

As a junior tenant, you can expect a busy and varied caseload across Chambers' main practice areas: crime, regulatory, and planning and environmental. A mixed practice keeps the work interesting. It is also one of the best ways for a junior barrister to build strong oral and written advocacy skills.

There is no such thing as a "typical" week. As I write this, I am preparing for a planning inquiry into the proposed re-opening of an immigration removal centre, alongside a Crown Court trial involving allegations of animal neglect.

Day to day, the work ranges from licensing appeals in the Magistrates' Court and the First-tier Tribunal to police work, including Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) proceedings and inquests.

Above all, I have benefited enormously from the collegiate atmosphere in Chambers. Members are always willing to share their knowledge and experience, and that support has been invaluable in my early years of practice.



James Harrison - Call (2021), Member since 2022

Since completing pupillage I have chosen to focus almost exclusively on general criminal work. I am in the Crown Court – at Canterbury or Maidstone – on an almost daily basis, prosecuting and defending. Appearing in the same court centres regularly is a real positive for several reasons. First, there is almost always another member of Chambers in the robing room to discuss a case with. Second, you can quickly build strong professional relationships with solicitors, judges, and opponents. Third, you are exposed to interesting and complex work beyond your Call. Fourth, there is the chance to complete multiple cases a day and minimise travel costs. Outside of criminal work, I act for the Care Quality Commission regulating care homes, and also for local authorities dealing with regulatory work in their area. At the moment, I don't have a settled view on how I wish to develop my practice; I am enjoying the general criminal work that I do, but it is great to know that if I wanted to explore different work with the same procedure and rules of evidence that is something that is available to me. I love that in Chambers I am well supported in the work that I do by the other tenants and the clerks, but that I have the scope to develop my practice as I want, building from the varied caseload I enjoy as a member of a common law set.



Amy Taylor - Call (2022), Member since 2023

Shortly after commencing my tenancy, my practice began slowly narrowing into two main areas. However, given the breadth of expertise in Chambers, there is always the opportunity to get involved with a range of different practice areas as a junior tenant. An example of this variety is evidenced in the work I have been instructed in this year alone, which include: representing an employee who was dismissed in circumstances where he made an allegation of furlough fraud against his employer; prosecuting a landlord for unlawful eviction and harassment of a family of five in the Crown Court and appearing on behalf of the Appellant in a judicial review claim concerning the principle and level of delegation permitted by an Inspector tasked with conducting a planning appeal. There is a genuinely collegiate atmosphere in Chambers, which makes for a very welcoming and supportive pupillage experience. Not to mention, there is always someone available for advice and guidance – whether that be after a long day in Court or last-minute instructions that have come through the morning before a hearing – regardless of how many years into tenancy you may be.

How to get pupillage at Six Pump Court

Application Process

Applications for pupillage at Six Pump Court should be made via the Pupillage Gateway. Each written application we receive is anonymised.

All applications are reviewed by three tenants. Each tenant will independently score the application against our pupillage selection criteria (set out below). The three scores for each application are added together to give a total score. The applications are then ranked. We select the 25 highest-scoring applications and invite those applicants to first-round interview. In circumstances where scores are tied we may invite more candidates to first-round interview.

First-round interviews are held in Chambers (it may be possible to make alternative arrangements if extenuating circumstances apply) and are conducted by a panel of three tenants.

The interview will typically last ten minutes. Each candidate is asked the same questions.

Pupils are evaluated against Chambers' pupillage selection criteria and on their presentational and interpersonal skills.

We select the ten best performing interviewees and invite those applicants to second-round interview. In circumstances where scores are tied we may invite more candidates to second-round interview.

Second-round interviews are held in Chambers (it may be possible to make alternative arrangements if extenuating circumstances apply) and are conducted by a panel of three tenants. We try to ensure that the panel is different to that which conducted the first-round interview and does not consist of members of Chambers from the open evening,

Second-round interviews last approximately 30 minutes. The interview will include a legal problem that is designed to test legal aptitude rather than any specific legal knowledge.

When selecting pupils and recruiting tenants, Chambers adheres to the principles of Equality and Diversity set out in the BSB Handbook.

Table of Key Dates

23 November 2026	Pupillage Gateway listing goes online
4 January 2027	Pupillage Gateway opens
28 January 2027	Pupillage Gateway closes
March 2027	First-round interviews
April 2027	Second-round interviews
7 May 2027	Offers of pupillage are sent
October 2028	**Pupillage begins**



What we look for

We apply the following selection criteria when selecting candidates for pupillage:

(a) Proven intellectual ability

We look for an ability to absorb complex information rapidly and to identify essentials from which an argument can be constructed.

- This can be demonstrated by performance in undergraduate exams (if you did not achieve an upper second-class honours degree then please address this in your application).
- We do look beyond academic results in seeking to identify candidates with potential or flair, which can be demonstrated by performance at interview or other experiences.
- Appropriate weight will be given to any other matters appearing on the Pupillage Gateway form or arising from interview which demonstrate high intellectual ability.

(b) Interests and achievements going beyond the academic subjects studied

We recognise that demonstrating excellence alongside academic performance shows a capacity to balance competing interests and marshal time and effort effectively. We want applicants with an ability to work under pressure, to cope with stress, and to remain calm but confident.

- This may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including by learning skills or instruments, by high-level sporting performance, by holding committee positions or similar, or by studying for a degree at the same time as working or bringing up a family.
- We look for drive and passion; a desire to work hard in multiple fields in which you are interested.
- We want to know a little more about you and how you spend your spare time as we are ultimately recruiting a member of Chambers, which is someone who can contribute as more than just a lawyer.

(c) Ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively

This relates to expression both in writing and orally. Sometimes this will require concision but at other times it will be appropriate to include further detail to express complex concepts.

- We look for an articulate and confident response to questions and how you assimilate new information that may be given in response to your initial answer.
- We also consider the quality of your written application form both in terms of grammar, spelling, and linguistic choices.

(d) Ability to think on your feet

We look for applicants who are willing and able to assess new information as it comes to light and adapt their arguments accordingly (or not if they determine that the information is irrelevant).

- This may be demonstrated by the performance at interview.
- This may also be shown by proven achievement in mooting or debating.

(e) Commitment to becoming a barrister and ability to pursue a career at the Bar

We seek to recruit those who can demonstrate drive, determination, leadership skills and an ability to see things through to a successful conclusion.

- This could be demonstrated by the completion of work experience or other engagement with the Bar.
- This may be demonstrated by achievement in non-academic fields or by overcoming adversity.

(f) An interest in more than one of the areas of law within our key practice areas

We want candidates who understand the areas of law in which we act and the realities of building and maintaining such a practice. We want to know that applicants understand that our junior tenants have a predominantly criminal practice.

- This could be demonstrated by previous placements with us, other Chambers, or other employers in the same practice area.
- This could also be demonstrated by academic or extra-curricular study relating to one of our practice areas.

(g) Capacity to understand and to show understanding of the needs and problems of those for whom and with whom they work

We want to recruit only those who will be a positive member of Chambers in the sense that they are able to professionally assist their colleagues or instructing solicitors, empathise with their lay client, or be able to personally support other members of Chambers.

- This could be demonstrated through work experience or by references provided to support your application.
- This may be shown in the way in which candidates answer written or oral questions.
- At interview, this will also include a consideration of an applicant's temperament.

(h) Good Interpersonal Skills

We look for candidates who will be able to build long-lasting, collaborative relationships with clients and within chambers.

- This may be demonstrated by proof of sustained professional relationships with colleagues and others over time.
- At interview, this will also include a consideration of an applicant's temperament.



Disability

Applicants with a disability are encouraged to contact Nicholas Ostrowski, Head of Pupillage, in confidence by email Nicholas.ostrowski@6pumpcourt.co.uk if there are any reasonable adjustments that may be made in relation to their applications.

Equality and diversity

At Six Pump Court, we are committed to promoting and achieving equality and diversity in all areas but we are conscious that, like many chambers, we do not fully reflect the diversity which we see in society as a whole. We are taking steps to improve Chambers' equality and diversity and attract and retain the very best candidates.

We want to receive applications from anyone who has the qualities and skills we are looking for, no matter what university or school they have attended, no matter what age, race, gender, or sexual orientation.
Our pupillage application process is "blind" to ensure fairness.

We also believe that the Bar needs to make better progress in encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to enter the profession. Members of Chambers accept this as a responsibility we can all commit to. In recognising this, we have taken the following steps:

- Regularly monitoring diversity data. In accordance with the Bar Standards Board Handbook, we collect and publish the results of our diversity data monitoring exercises.
- We have adopted an Anti-Racism statement.
- Members of chambers have visited state schools with high ethnic diversity to give career talks to students who may be interested in a career at the Bar.
- We have run open days in Chambers to give students the opportunity to meet members of Chambers and take part in a mock trial.
- We set up a Steering Group to consider under representation in recruitment and through career progression.
- We maintain a wellbeing and assistance programme for all members and staff which provides independent support if ever needed.

More information can be found on our website under Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Change of career

We are very happy to receive pupillage applications from those who have come to the Bar from another career. We are also happy to consider those transferring from another legal profession, whether within the British Isles or the Commonwealth or beyond.

What to expect from pupillage at Six Pump Court

Pupillage at Six Pump Court should be such that at the end of the year pupils will know and have experienced what life is like as a member of Chambers. This ultimately guides what happens during pupillage. Each day is different. Pupils will sometimes spend a day working on a skeleton argument in Chambers alongside their supervisor and sometimes they will travel further afield for a morning in court followed by an afternoon in our annex helping to prepare a trial. Pupils are encouraged to undertake work for as many members of Chambers as possible to expose them to all our practice areas and so they may learn from advocates of varying seniority and different styles.

It is hoped pupils will have the opportunity to experience many of the different types of hearings first-hand so they are prepared for their own advocacy. From the outset of second-six, pupils have their own clients and conduct of their own cases. Initially, the clerks are careful to ensure that pupils are not overloaded and that they remain able to observe interesting hearings being undertaken by others. Supervisors and other members of Chambers are always on hand to discuss cases.

Pupillage is an invaluable learning opportunity. During the year there are constant opportunities to have informal discussions with tenants and clerks about the realities of life at the Bar. In the past we have organised talks from some of our direct access practitioners to discuss how they successfully built their practices, and from our clerks to explain how to cultivate a good working relationship and how to seek instructions in specific areas of law.

In addition, there may be opportunities to be led or to undertake devilling work, which enables pupils to gain exposure to more complex cases.



Structure

Pupillage is divided into three four-month periods that reflect the transition of our pupils from non-practising work during the first-six to becoming a fully-fledged barrister at the end of second-six.

1. Our pupils' first supervisors are typically based in Chambers and the expectation is that they share their office with their pupil who assists them with their work, learn the basics of life in practice, and accompany them when they attend court. Pupils are not limited to working for their supervisor; rather, efforts are made to ensure that they work on the most interesting and educational cases being handled in Chambers.

2. The second supervisor will help with the transition from supporting members of Chambers to getting our pupils on their feet undertaking their own cases. Second supervisors typically will have a practice that lends itself to regularly spending time in court, which familiarises pupils with court processes before they begin their own advocacy.

3. Finally, a pupil's third supervisor will continue to provide them with support. Doing work for other members of Chambers or for their supervisor remains a part of the lives of our pupils. Whilst it is usual for pupils near the end of their pupillage to spend most of their time in court, there remains an expectation that they will continue to produce written work or assist with research, albeit to a lesser degree.

Will you be assessed?

Pupils regularly do pieces of written work for members of Chambers and receive feedback albeit this is primarily intended to be educational (although examples of positive feedback have been exhibited by recent tenants in their applications to join Chambers). There will also be several opportunities to complete advocacy in front of members of Chambers who will then offer you advice on how to improve your submissions. Again, this is intended to be a learning opportunity. There is a formal written assessment conducted towards the end of your first-six months which is assessed and graded in accordance with a long-established marking system which is intended fairly to assess pupils who may have different levels of experience or exposure to particular areas. Pupils may also be given other formal assessments which are taken into account by their supervisors when considering their tenancy applications.

During appraisals with their supervisors, which occur at the end of each of the three four-month 'seats', pupils discuss the feedback that they have been given for recent work and for their most recent piece(s) of advocacy. It is intended that when pupils come to apply for tenancy they have a personal record of feedback received. In this way, they can demonstrate their growth and improvement. These comments from established practitioners will be supplemented by summaries provided by supervisors and any comments that members of Chambers make during the Annual General Meeting at which tenancy decisions are made.

Advisors

Covid-19 has changed the working practices of many members of Chambers and so where previously it was the norm for 10-20 people to be working within the building on a daily basis, working from home has become more popular. As a Chambers we have embraced this shift in several ways. With respect to pupillage the change is manifest in our creation of the role of 'Advisors' who work with our pupil supervisors. Our pupils continue to have a single supervisor for each of their three four-month 'seats' but we now ensure that one or two other members of Chambers are selected to work alongside them. This means that pupils can expect at least one of these people to be in Chambers every time that they are, they can expect to be able to rapidly contact a supervisor/advisor, there is greater scope to observe interesting cases in an area they are interested in, and it enables the building of stronger relationships with more members of Chambers.

Buddies

We have been described as having a friendly, supportive atmosphere, and junior tenants enjoy the help and guidance of the more established members of Chambers. We replicate this during pupillage through a buddying scheme. Pupils are assigned a buddy at the start of their pupillage who will answer any queries or questions our pupils wish to raise. We hope that pupils can address any issues through their supervisor but we recognise the potential difficulty in expressing concerns or raising a problem with the person who will undertake their appraisal. Therefore, we pair pupils with a junior tenant who makes themselves available for meetings or calls as and when needed. We hope that these discussions are simply opportunities to discuss the realities of the job and talk about recent cases. However, we also understand the importance of having the chance to raise problems or concerns in confidence with someone who was recently a pupil themselves.

How do you get tenancy?

At the end of pupillage, pupils who wish to be considered for tenancy must make a written application to Chambers. Any applications are discussed at the Chambers' Annual General Meeting. During the meeting, written applications will be considered as will remarks made by Head of Pupillage, Nicholas Ostrowski, each of the pupil's supervisors, and any members of Chambers who have a view on the application. At that AGM, all members of Chambers will have a right to vote as to whether tenancy is offered; to be successful, applicants need to secure 75% of votes.

We aim to reach a decision about tenancy after approximately 11 months of pupillage. All pupils, whether they are offered a tenancy, are entitled to remain with us for the remainder of their pupillage on a full pupillage award. Thereafter, those who did not apply for or were not offered tenancy may remain in Chambers at the conclusion of their pupillage for a reasonable period, or until such time as they are able to make alternative arrangements, for example by securing a Third Six pupillage elsewhere.

Every reasonable effort is made to assist such pupils to find a further pupillage, a tenancy or employment elsewhere and during this time pupils will retain their own cases.