



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

Sponsored by  **BPP**
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 / 24

A bar that represents also benefits society

Charity No: 1190369 | Blackstone House, Temple, London, EC4Y 9BW

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FOREWARD

Mass Ndow-Njie, Founder and Chairperson

I am delighted to present the fourth edition of our Annual Report, celebrating another year of significant progress and achievements by Bridging the Bar and our Academy Programme. This year has marked substantial growth in the Academy's offerings and the success of our graduates, who continue to lead the way as future leaders at the Bar.



The highlight of the 2023/24 cycle has undoubtedly been the graduation of the most recent Academy class, which has set a new standard for excellence. Witnessing the determination and development of each candidate has been inspiring, with many of the cohort already securing pupillage at leading Chambers across the country. The statistics are compelling: Academy graduates are two to three times more likely to secure pupillage, highlighting the profound impact of our programme - made possible by the generosity of our valued sponsors, partners, volunteers and other supporters. The graduation ceremony, held for the second consecutive year at the historic Middle Temple Hall, perfectly merged tradition with innovation as we celebrated our achievements and launched the Bridging the Bar Alumni Network, a new initiative aimed at providing ongoing support, opportunities, and a sense of community for our graduates as they progress in their careers.

In 2023, we were thrilled to commence working with BPP University Group as the headline sponsor of the Bridging the Bar Academy. Their support has been crucial in extending the Academy's reach and ensuring its sustainability. This partnership, renewed for a second year in early 2024, has provided a central base for hosting Academy events and further strengthened our capacity to empower aspiring barristers while broadening the programme's impact.

The latter half of 2024 saw the entire cohort complete mini-pupillages with 49 partner Chambers, allowing them to explore their areas of interest and gain valuable exposure to practice. Thanks to our Resilience Fund, which subsidises travel, accommodation, and caring expenses, financial barriers were removed, ensuring that candidates could fully engage with confidence.

Our partnership with Advocate was extended to provide an opportunity for three Bridging the Bar candidates to complete month-long, paid internships as caseworkers - an experience that proved influential in preparing them for the demands of the profession, as our candidate testimonials will show. This is in addition to our other internship programmes delivered in partnership with some of the most prestigious legal institutions in our land. The UK Supreme Court welcomed yet another cohort of Bridging the Bar interns for a paid week-long internship, as did the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the Law Commission. We are grateful to each of them for their continued trust and support.

Looking ahead, the progress we've made this year drives us to further our efforts in creating lasting change within the legal profession. The journey towards equality and diversity at the Bar is far from over, but Bridging the Bar remains resolute in its mission to break down barriers to access and open the doors to opportunity for all.

We are incredibly grateful to our partners, sponsors, and supporters for their ongoing belief in our vision. Your support is instrumental in helping us work towards a legal profession that truly represents and serves the society that it is meant to reflect.

Thank you for being part of this journey.





BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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THE TEAM

"Launching the Bridging the Bar Academy is the natural next step for our charity. We intend to take our activities to a new higher level."

- **Mass Ndow-Njie**, Founder and Chairperson

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THE TEAM

TRUSTEES



Mass Ndow-Njie, Chairperson



Aaron Mayers, Vice Chairperson



Matt Swallow, Treasurer

EXECUTIVE BOARD



Srishti Suresh



Sonia Masaun



Abdul Qadim



Emma Hughes



Ishan Kolhatkar



Anu Lal



Eleanor Tack

STAFF



Imogen Sherriff, Programmes Manager



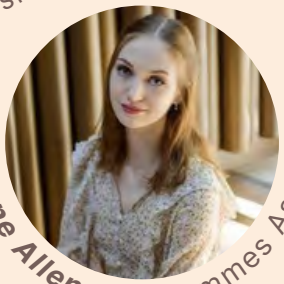
Ronnie Evans, Partnerships Manager



Fatima Ali, Programmes Assistant



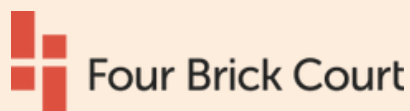
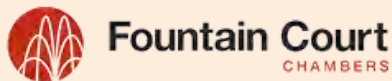
Adila Hilmi, Business Development Assistant



Marianne Allen, Programmes Assistant

OUR 23/24 SPONSORS

WITH THANKS TO...



WITH THANKS TO...

OUR FOUNDING PARTNERS

Blackstone
CHAMBERS

combar
The Commercial Bar Association

 **GATEHOUSE**
CHAMBERS

 **Three
Verulam
Buildings
Barristers**

KEATING
CHAMBERS

LITTLETON


Francis Taylor Building


Normanton
CHAMBERS

4 NEW SQUARE
CHAMBERS


PUMP COURT
CHAMBERS



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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INTRODUCTION

"The BTB scheme is fantastic. It is critically important that, as judges, we are involved in efforts to increase diversity within the legal professions and the judiciary."

- **Mr Justice Picken**, High Court Judge

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INTRODUCTION

Get to know us and our mission...

Bridging the Bar ('BTB') is a charitable organisation that exists to bridge the gap between students from non-traditional backgrounds and the skills, experience, and networks required to develop a career at the Bar. We believe that for the Bar to reach its full potential, it must reflect the diverse society in which we live.

Diversity and inclusion is a cornerstone issue for Bridging the Bar; founded with the mission of producing a bar that reflects society so that it may serve society, the issue of diversity and inclusion has guided every step the Charity has taken as we disrupt the status quo. However, this bold aim has not come without its challenges and setbacks. Bridging the Bar was a start up charity that had to carve the path for our successes to follow.

Whilst we recognise the positive work being carried out to establish greater equality of access to opportunities at the Bar, it is clear that gaps still exist. BTB works towards closing that gap by supporting aspiring barristers and those organisations and individuals already championing diversity at the Bar. We believe that by actively providing opportunities and resources to bridge the gap between traditional and non-traditional applicants, Bridging the Bar is helping to drive the kind of high-quality applications from diverse aspiring barristers that will eventually change the face of the profession.

Join over 4,000 Bridging the Bar Alumni, 70 sets of Chambers across the UK, 22 sponsorship partners and over 300 legal professionals in supporting BTB in achieving our vision for a society where the Bar is accessible for everyone regardless of race, sex, class or other characteristics.

Who we help



Low Income
Background



BAME



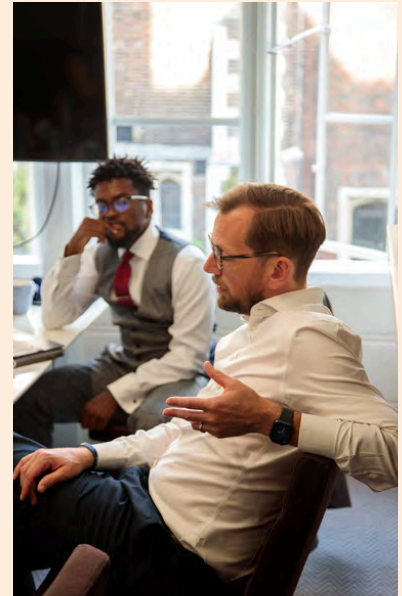
LGBTQ+



Disability



+ More



OUR VISION

At BTB, we believe that in order to truly serve society the bar must reflect society; without being able to pull from a wealth of differing perspectives and experience, we as practitioners will be less able to serve those who come from backgrounds that are dissimilar to our own.

BTB was founded to address this issue. We believe that the “bridge” between today’s Bar and the diverse Bar that our society needs can be built by achieving three core objectives:

EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

An integral part of equal access to opportunity at the Bar is to provide students from non-traditional backgrounds with the ability to gain practical work experience with barristers. The internship and mini-pupillage opportunities that candidates receive as part of the Academy provides students from all backgrounds with the opportunity to gain exposure to life at the Bar. This is the insight needed for students to understand what career options are available to them, and specifically, what a career at the Bar looks like.

OUR VISION

COLLABORATION

We welcome any dynamic support of our initiative, whether via the methods suggested, through tailored networking events, educational panels or entirely new ideas. There is an abundance of creative enterprises working to tackle many of the aims we share. BTB is continuously willing to discuss collaborating with organisations who share our aims. We recognise that in addition to helping people at a grassroots level, a pillar of what we do is forming strategic relationships with our regulators so that we can engage in conversations at a decision making level, provide feedback and create new schemes to help those who need and deserve it.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS

In order for diversity at the Bar to flourish, diversity in aspirations must be encouraged. At BTB we are dedicated to cultivating and sustaining the courage and belief it takes to opt for the Bar as a career path. Such cultivation runs through the heart of our Academy and can be seen most prominently in our personal development 'Pod' sessions, which focus on issues which typically undermine the aspirations of non-traditional applicants.





BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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THE BAR IN NUMBERS

"It is a privilege to see the next generation from all walks of life shine and be elevated. They are the future of the bar and what a bright future that will be."

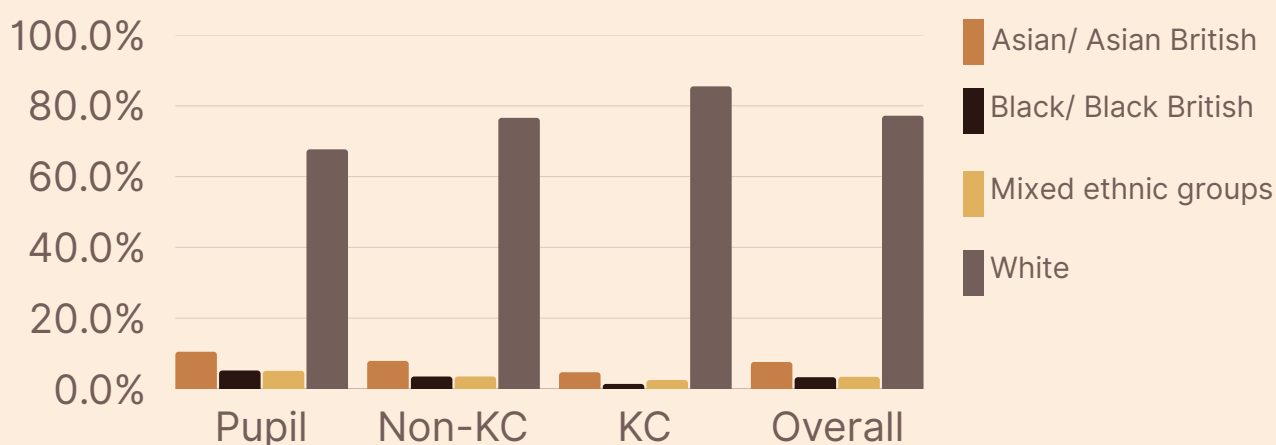
- **Emma Hughes**, Board of Directors

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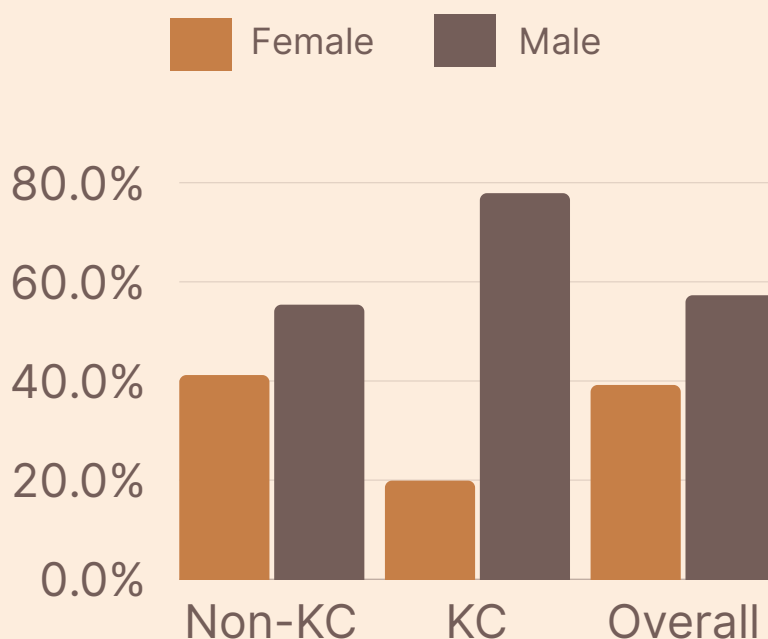
NUMBERS & STATISTICS

ETHNICITY AT THE BAR (BSB REPORT ON DIVERSITY AT THE BAR, 2023)

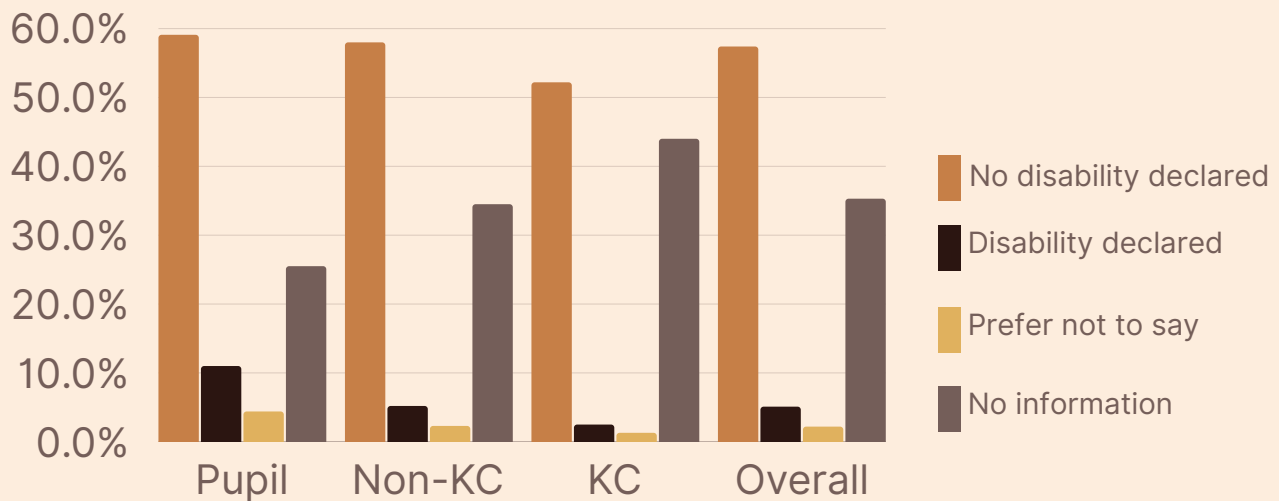


GENDER AT THE BAR (BSB REPORT ON DIVERSITY AT THE BAR, 2023)

588
Pupil Barristers
15,739
Non-KC Barristers
2,045
King's Counsel



DISABILITY DECLARED AT THE BAR (BSB REPORT ON DIVERSITY AT THE BAR, 2023)



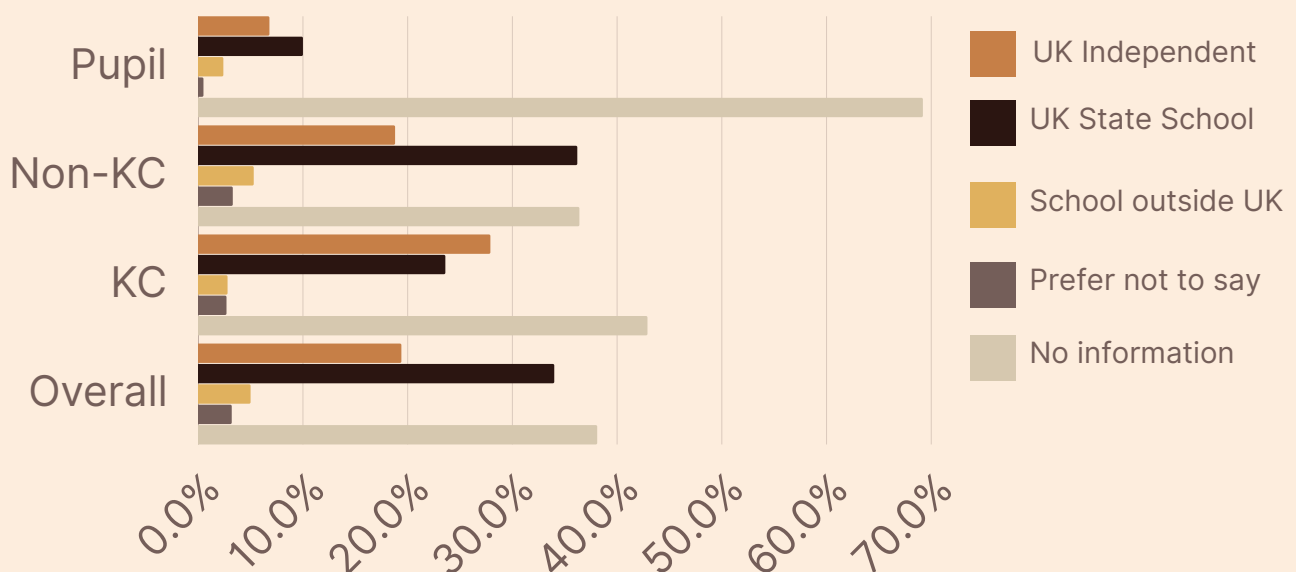
19.4%

of respondents attended
a UK Independent School

6.5%

of UK children attend
Independent Schools

TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED (BSB REPORT ON DIVERSITY AT THE BAR, 2023)





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THE ACADEMY

"Thank you again for your trust, time, and dedication to providing equal opportunities in the legal profession. Together, we can create a Bar that represents society, and in turn, benefits society."

– **Mass Ndow-Njje**, Founder and Chairperson

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ACADEMY OVERVIEW

THE IDEA

The Academy was borne from a desire to maximise BTB's impact on our candidates, both in terms of numbers and in terms of outcomes.

This led to the idea of a comprehensive programme, which would provide not only tangible experience and skills to those who traditionally may suffer from a lack of access to the profession, but also assist candidates in obtaining the mindset needed to succeed in such a competitive field.

From one application process, 100 candidates are provided access to internships, mentoring, mini-pupillage schemes, professional development workshops, interview advocacy training, application feedback, and networking opportunities.

In running such a comprehensive Academy programme, we hope to both assist our candidates in securing pupillage, while also creating a generation of barristers who we hope will become champions of diversity at the Bar in their own right.

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

In designing the Academy programme, we adopted five objectives:

- 1.To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- 2.To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
- 3.To improve the quality of each candidate's pupillage interview technique.
- 4.To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
- 5.To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.



These objectives were selected as those that best assisted with our more general aim of helping our candidates to improve their pupillage prospects. These objectives guided the structure of each event, in addition to the programme as a whole, and gave us metrics by which to measure our successes.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE

DESIGN

The overall structure of the Academy mimics the academic year with events running from September until June. The design of the programme has been undertaken with our overall aims in mind, and so each Academy event has been tailored to both address a specific issue that candidates from non-traditional backgrounds face, while also targeting at least one of our stated objectives.

Event	Summary	Objectives
Personal Development Sessions	Five sessions led by legal professionals covering topics that include 'courage before confidence' and 'collective community success'	Interview technique Mindset Tools Championing Diversity
Mini-pupillages	Two rounds of mini-pupillages in candidates' area/s of interest	Content of Applications Written Applications
Access to the Bar, Culture Change, Retention & Progression Lecture	Candidates will participate in a lecture which focuses on issues surrounding non-traditional legal professionals	Content of Applications Mindset Tools Championing Diversity

ACADEMY STRUCTURE

CONTINUED...

Event	Summary	Objectives
Internships	Selected candidates will spend a week shadowing at either the UK Supreme Court, High Court/Court of Appeal, Law Commission or Advocate	<p>Content of Applications</p> <p>Mindset Tools</p> <p>Championing Diversity</p>
Mentoring	Candidates will be paired with a barrister in their preferred practice area for a year long mentoring relationship	<p>Written Applications</p> <p>Interview technique</p> <p>Mindset Tools</p> <p>Championing Diversity</p>
Advocacy Training	Candidates will participate in an online advocacy course and also spend time in Chambers, working to improve their responses to specific interview advocacy questions	<p>Content of Applications</p> <p>Written Applications</p>

OUR HEADLINE SPONSOR



In 2023, the BPP University Group became the headline sponsor for the BTB Academy, and in early 2024, the partnership was renewed for a second year. BPP has also supported the BTB Academy by hosting events on their campuses, including the All-Interns Workshop, which provided candidates with pre-training on what to expect from their internships in a legal education environment, as well as our Personal Development Sessions.



Jo-Anne Pugh

Dean of BPP University Law School

"It is a mission of ours at BPP, alongside our partners like Bridging the Bar, to change the composition of the profession, so that it more accurately reflects the society in which we live. So, at BPP, we are proud to be supporting initiatives like the BTB Academy, because it is important for all of us in the profession to make more of a collective effort to tackle the inequality which still sadly persists."

BPP University Law School is delighted to be renewing our partnership with Bridging the Bar for a second year. As Bridging the Bar's exclusive partner of the BTB Academy, this year, we will, again, be supporting the Academy both with financial resources and by offering our facilities at BPP centres. We have committed to continue supporting BTB because in its first few years, it has already started to develop a reliable track record of delivering life-changing opportunities to so many aspiring barristers from a wide range of backgrounds. This year, again, there will be another 100+ BTB candidates passing through the Academy's ground-breaking programme of training, seminars and workshops, which I know will enhance significantly the employability of every candidate."



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CLOSING ACADEMY 23/24

"What is the best way to increase the chances of our candidates securing pupillage, whilst also preparing them for professional life at the Bar? The BTB Academy is the answer."

- **Aaron Mayers**, Vice-Chairperson

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THE COHORT

SELECTION PROCESS

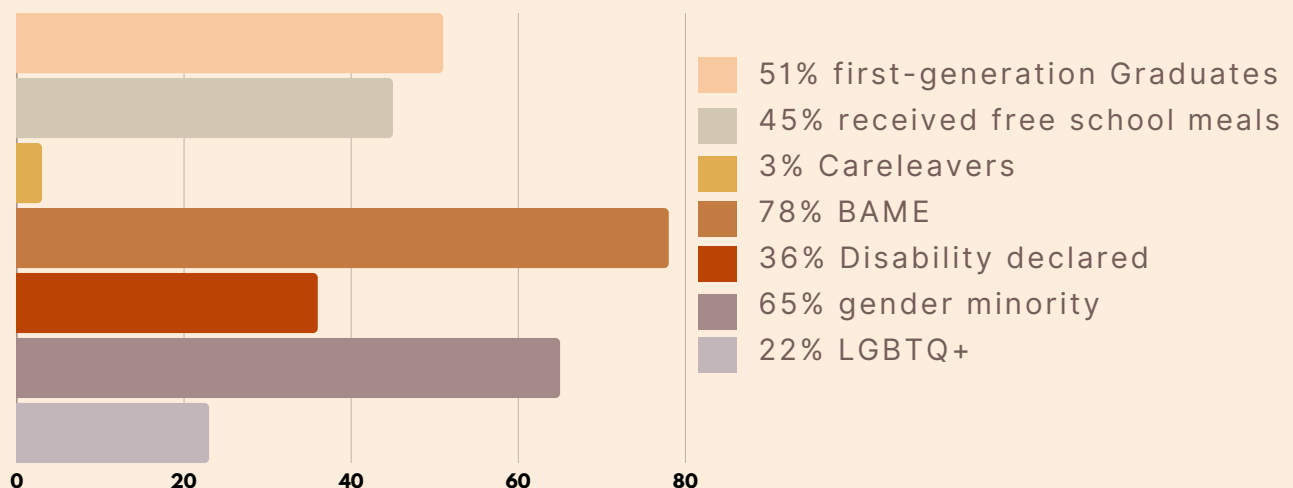
We utilised a volunteer force of legal professionals in our marking process, who each marked a single answer for all applications. By adopting this vertical marking process, we aimed to increase consistency during our application marking process.

The markers were asked to assess answers against seven key criteria:

- A commitment to academic excellence through achieving strong grades at university.
- An understanding of what a career at the Bar entails.
- Clear and persuasive written communication skills.
- Clear, persuasive and engaging oral advocacy skills.
- Understanding of issues faced by candidates and barristers from underrepresented backgrounds at the Bar and a commitment to remedying these issues.
- Ability of a candidate to share their background and experiences in a way which will facilitate mutual learning with fellow candidates and stakeholders.
- Likelihood of benefiting from participating in BTB Academy.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

We are pleased to report that this method resulted in a pool of candidates whose diversity characteristics closely mirror that of the applicant pool.



MINI-PUPILLAGE CYCLE 2

Candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have existing legal connections from which they can secure mini-pupillages.

Additionally, they are less likely to have the time to complete multiple applications because of other pressures such as work or caring responsibilities. By providing a guaranteed mini-pupillage for our candidates we hope to expose them to life at the Bar.



Therefore, we have partnered with various Chambers to provide all of our candidates with at least 1 mini-pupillage during the academic year. Our two cycle mini-pupillage process ensures that all our candidates who have not secured an internship are matched with a set of chambers in their practice area of interest to undertake a mini-pupillage between November and January 2023 (Cycle 1). Our second cycle of the programme allows all our candidates to be assigned a mini-pupillage with a Chamber in their practice area of interest to be undertaken between February and June 2024.

The continuation of the mini-pupillage programme targeted two of our Academy objectives:

- To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.

Our candidates have found this approach very beneficial as it allows them to undertake at least one mini-pupillage before the Pupillage Gateway opens so that they are able to discuss their experience and the lessons they have learnt in their applications.

WITH THANKS TO THE CHAMBERS THAT SUPPORTED OUR MINI-PUPILLAGE PROGRAMME THIS YEAR

Fountain Court Chambers	4 New Square	25 Bedford Row
15NBS Chambers	39 Essex Chambers	One Essex Court
4-5 Gray's Inn Square	Littleton	Garden Court Chambers
1GC Family Law	Deans Court Chambers	Pump Court Tax Chambers
Matrix Chambers	Hailsham Chambers	Parklane Plowden Chambers
Landmark Chambers	Coram Chambers	Outer Temple Chambers
Francis Taylor Building	Atlantic Chambers	3 Verulam Buildings
College Chambers	Keating Chambers	4 Stone Buildings
Brick Court Chambers	Temple Garden Chambers	7KBW
Three Raymond Buildings	Spire Barristers	2 Temple Gardens
New Court Chambers	8 New Square Chambers	3DJB
11KBW	Two Harcourt Buildings	Ten Old Square
Mountford Chambers	The 36 Group	Essex Court Chambers

ADVOCATE INTERNSHIP

This internship saw three candidates undertake one month of paid work as caseworkers at Advocate. During this period, interns were able to engage with live work, undertaking written tasks using real case papers and discussing these cases with other caseworkers at Advocate. Interns were also given the opportunity to write advice, draft documents for court/tribunal representation, and even write case summaries that were then logged and transferred to available barristers working on these cases.

The internship programme meets three objectives:

- To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
- To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.



This experience allowed our interns to gain further insight into the inner workings of pro-bono cases and the steps practitioners take during this process. You can hear directly from one of our 2024 interns, Grace Ada Okafor, on page 32 about the impact this internship has had on our candidates.

We are delighted to offer this opportunity to our next cohort of candidates to ensure they are also able to benefit from this experience.

GRADUATION CONFERENCE

On the 21st of June, at the end of the Academy year, we held our annual graduation conference at the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple to celebrate the candidates who successfully completed the 2023/24 Academy Programme. This event was a commemorative occasion to recognise and honour their achievements throughout the year.

Graduates received a certificate of completion, are now verifiable as graduates of the Bridging the Bar Academy by chambers, and were granted access to our Alumni Network for ongoing support and professional development. They also had the opportunity to network with BTB Partners and Stakeholders at the event. Graduates then reunited with their Pod Coaching groups and Pod Leaders one final time, bringing their Academy journey to a close with a strong sense of camaraderie and accomplishment!





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RESILIENCE FUND

"In its first few years, it has already started to develop a reliable track record of delivering life-changing opportunities to so many aspiring barristers from a wide range of backgrounds."

- **Jo-Anne Pugh**, Dean of BPP University Law School

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THE RESILIENCE FUND

Within the Academy budget, we reserved £10,000 to provide financial assistance to candidates during the 2023/24 Academy cycle. The Resilience Fund is specifically designed to support candidates facing financial difficulties that might otherwise prevent them from fully participating in Academy events or accessing the opportunities provided.

In addition to travel and accommodation costs, it also addresses needs unique to individual candidates, such as hiring carers for those with caregiving responsibilities while they attend programme elements. This initiative ensures that candidates can engage with the Academy without financial or logistical barriers.

Megha Banerjee,
Academy 23/24 Candidate

"Coming from a working class background and living in the North-West whilst working part time and completing the Bar Course, finance has been a barrier for me for travelling to London frequently and partaking in important programmes. However, with the assistance received, I have been able to complete such programmes ranging from interview advocacy training, the lecture series and mini-pupillages- all which are crucial to my future at the Bar. I thank Bridging the Bar for this assistance, without which I would be on an unequal playing field to my peers."



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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ACADEMY IMPACT

"Focus on the best version of yourself. By being your best self, you can take back that power because the truth is, a barrister looks like all of you."

- **Mass Ndow-Njie**, Founder and Chairperson.

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ACADEMY FIGURES

2023/24



100

CANDIDATES

Selected for the Academy Programme



160

MINI PUPILLAGES

Undertaken by
Bridging the Bar candidates



36

INTERNSHIPS

With the UK Supreme Court,
Court of Appeal, High Court,
Advocate, and the Law
Commission.

ACADEMY FIGURES

2023/24



19

SPONSORSHIP PARTNERS

Supporting
Bridging the Bar



199

PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERS

Assigned as mentors,
Pod Leaders, or Consultancy
Panel contributors



49

PARTNER CHAMBERS

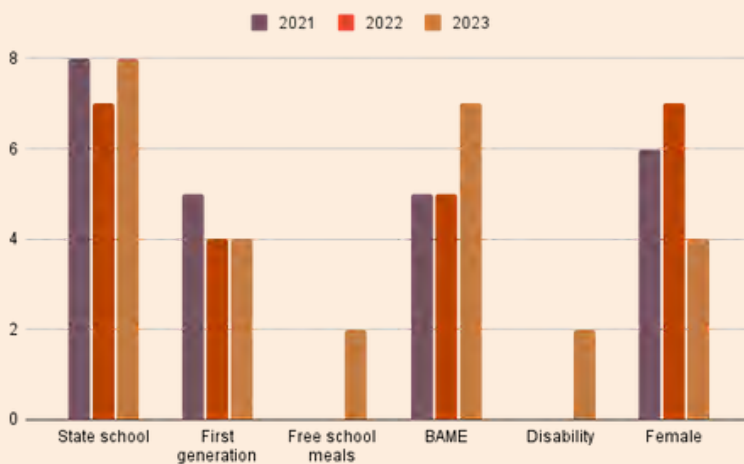
Offering mini-pupillages or
interview advocacy
training to BTB candidates

THE UKSC INTERNSHIP

In February 2021 BTB made a pitch to the UK Supreme Court (UKSC) who subsequently agreed to collaborate with us and create an internship programme.

We're happy to report that November 2023 saw our third cohort of candidates participate in this yearly internship programme.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNS BY INTERNSHIP YEAR



"It was a privilege to welcome the eight Bridging the Bar interns to the Court. They were a thoughtful and engaging group of people, who enriched our discussions about the appeals being heard in the Supreme Court that week. The Judicial Assistants were delighted to have them as colleagues."

- **Rebecca Fry**, UKSC Head JA

3

*UKSC internship
cycles completed*

24

UKSC internships
undertaken

85%

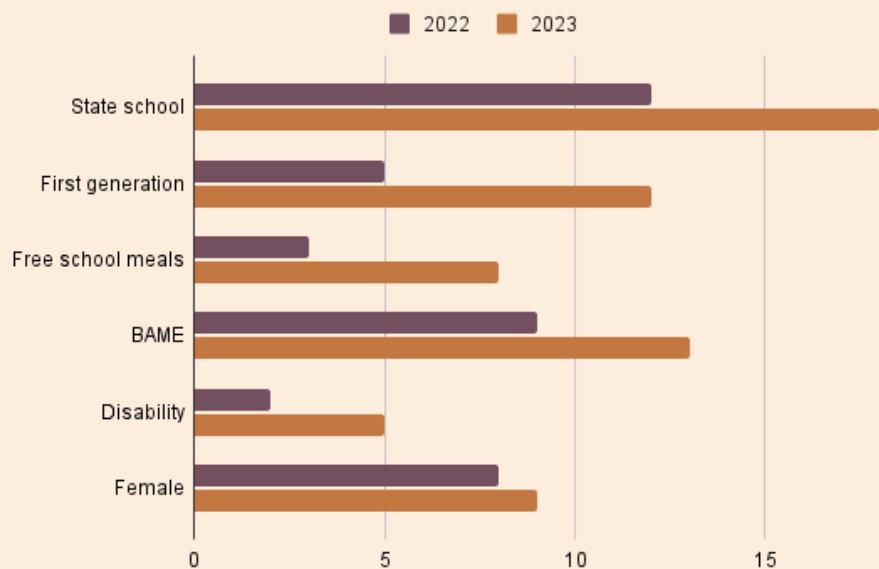
Of 2021 UKSC
Interns Secured
Pupillage

HIGH COURT & COURT OF APPEAL INTERNSHIPS

In March 2022, BTB, the High Court & Court of Appeal agreed to collaborate on a pilot internship for aspiring barristers from statistically under-represented backgrounds at the Bar.

The design of the internship sees successful candidates assigned to a judge and supported by their Judicial Assistant(s) in the High Court / Court of Appeal.

18 Interns



We are delighted to report that, due to the success of last year's pilot internship, it was agreed between BTB and the High Court / Court of Appeal (HC/COA) to increase the number of interns for this year's intake to 18. This allowed us to expand this opportunity to more candidates from this year's cohort, exposing them to new experiences.

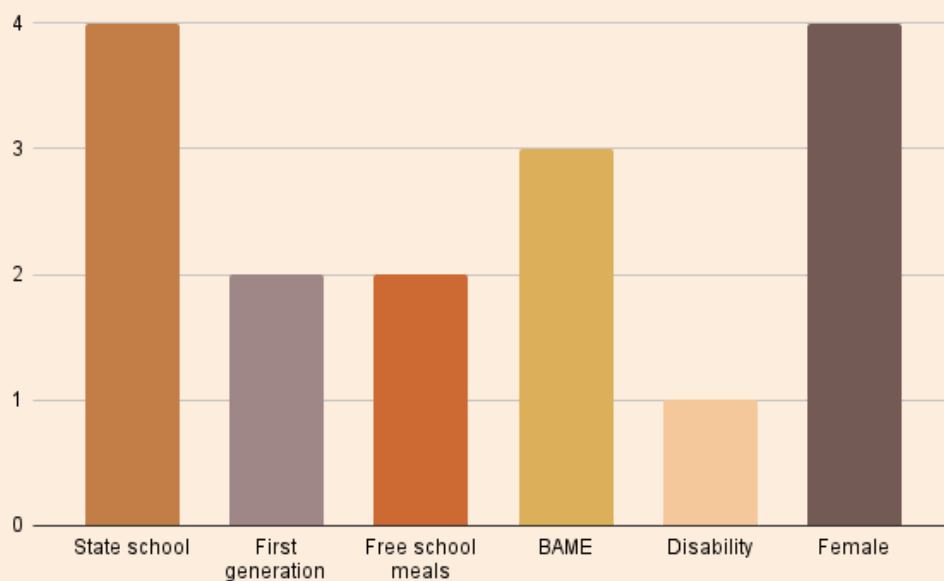
"The BTB scheme is fantastic. My intern was clearly destined for great things. It was a pleasure to get to know her and to discuss her plans for the future. It is critically important that, as judges, we are involved in efforts to increase diversity within the legal professions and the judiciary. Those efforts include trying to demystify what to somebody with no connection with the law can appear both obscure and, worse still, unwelcoming. I look forward to taking further part in the scheme in the future."

- Mr Justice Picken, High Court Judge

THE LAW COMMISSION INTERNSHIP

This year, we are delighted to introduce the Law Commission internship which saw four aspiring barristers from non-traditional backgrounds undertake paid work with the Law Commission.

This internship gave candidates an opportunity to be immersed within an organisation that reforms some of the most challenging areas of law.



Each intern was paired with a Law Commission research assistant to get an insight in to the day-to-day of Law Commission work. Alongside this, candidates were given a research task into a potential project of law reform suitable for the Law

Commission, related to the work of their allocated team. Throughout the internship, interns were able to speak with Commissioners, lawyers, and research assistants about their legal journeys and being a non-traditional candidate within the legal field.

'I've always been fascinated by the work of the Law Commission and was really excited when I found out I was chosen to do the internship. The internship was a fantastic experience. From day one I felt as though I was a part of the team. I met with different staff members and had meaningful conversations with the lawyers in my team. The research presentation was my favourite part of the internship. I was asked to present reform proposals on the topic I was given. I felt really confident and supported throughout. The Law Commission was everything I imagined and more!'

- **Latanya Gordon**, Law Commission Intern 2023



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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TESTIMONIALS

"In this new normal, there will be no such thing as the 'conventional' image of a barrister. Instead, barristers will be as diverse as the society that we live in and diverse as the clients that we represent."

- **Mass Ndow-Njie**, Founder and Chairperson

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“

The opportunity to gain insight from a leading advocate such as Bibi has been invaluable.

”



FUNDAMENTALS OF ADVOCACY CALLAN WITHERS

The Bridging The Bar 2023/24 Academy had the great fortune to receive advocacy training from The Advocacy Coach and Barrister, Bibi Badejo. This initiative proved valuable in developing candidates skills and understandings of the importance of effective advocacy within proceedings.

The cohort were provided with online teaching components which aimed to build upon the fundamental techniques needed when advocating in court and focused on enhancing those abilities. The modules explored a variety of elements, including how best to approach case analysis thoroughly, effective witness handling, and delivering oral addresses with confidence and substance. The teachings and resources of this training provided both dynamic and forensic approaches to these areas and will be of considerable benefit to all participants going forward in our training. The curriculum also contained a number of practical exercises which proved to be of great benefit in consolidating the learnings, and I believe that these exercises will be of great use especially when first starting out in practice.

The opportunity to gain insight from a leading advocate such as Bibi has been invaluable.

The offering concluded with a live event, in which all participants were given the opportunity to advocate in front of a large audience, in the form of a simulated court with trained actors. This was a truly rewarding experience, as it allowed for the cohort to practice the teachings from the online training, and to exercise the skills needed to deliver a high-level of advocacy. Each participant chose to deliver either an examination in chief, a cross examination or a closing speech. I believe that this was a highlight for many on the programme; for those at the start of their legal studies this provided them their first advocacy experience, and for those further on in their studies, it helped to develop skills required when at the bar.

In all, I believe that this offering delivered an immeasurable amount of value to all members of the cohort in our development as advocates. I believe I speak for the whole cohort in relaying our deepest gratitude to Bibi Badejo and the BTB team for providing us with this training experience.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

OLUWAKAYODE EMMANUEL ASEWEJE



Of the fantastic array of programmes offered by the Bridging the Bar Academy, my most memorable were the Personal Development Workshops, known as 'Pod' sessions.

It goes without saying, that the journey to the bar of England and Wales is quite unlike any other, requiring a great degree of fortitude and resilience to weather the storms of competition and rejection and the consequent self-doubt. It is heartening that the Bar is beginning to recognise this, and several mentoring and access schemes now exist, providing useful avenues of support to assist aspiring barristers into the profession.

Where Bridging the Bar excels is the recognition that the beyond the now well-articulated barriers to accessing the Bar, the biggest barrier is perhaps the one in the mind. This certainly resonates with me. As a Black African man, who was born and raised abroad before pursuing a legal education and thereafter the Bar of England and Wales, imposter/trespasser syndrome is always crouching at my door. It advocates flimsy reason after reason why I surely do not belong in this profession.

With dismal statistics and monochromatic chambers' members' profiles, it relentlessly reinforces its false pitch and eats away at my confidence.

The Pod sessions were a safe space where I got to meet my peers. Hailing from wonderfully different backgrounds, we were united in our susceptibility to the struggle for our minds and our confidence. We worked through exercises that prompted intense self-reflection and

required a courageous vulnerability. At the Pod sessions I questioned my negative thought patterns. I learned to sit with my with fear of failure. I learned that courage comes before confidence. As my late Father would say, 'Courage is simply fear that has said its prayers'. Most of all, I learned to recognise the uniqueness of my atypical history, and not hide it, like a lamp under a bushel, but appreciate the attributes I have obtained by it and let them shine.

The saying goes 'If you want to go fast go alone but if you want to go far, travel with others.' I would like to give credit to every member of my Pod group. Nothing builds a sense of community more than sharing one's journey with others. I commend their unselfishness in sharing their stories, their highs and lows. It was a privilege to genuinely rejoice with those who obtained success in the form of scholarships or pupillage and encourage others who had to endure disappointment and rejection. Every trip I had to make from South Wales to Central London, on weekends following long working weeks, while exhausting at the time, has been most certainly worth it.

I conclude with a statement by one of my pod leaders which will always resonate strongly:

“ If you ever find yourself the exception in the room, it is because you are exceptional. ”



“
One of the best parts of the Interview Advocacy Sessions was receiving live, constructive feedback that was personal to each Candidate.
 ”

INTERVIEW ADVOCACY TRAINING

JAYA SUDERA

The Interview Advocacy Training element of the Academy was an enriching and informative way to practise our approach to legal interview problems in an environment that is very close to the real thing – in Chambers!

I was paired with One Essex Court with four other members of the BTB Academy. Around a week before the first session, we were emailed a legal interview question and instructions as to what to prepare before arriving in Chambers. To keep it as close to what a real interview for Pupillage would be like, I was reasonable but not overly generous with the time I gave myself to prepare. The problem wanted each Candidate to prepare submissions to extend a freezing injunction, or to argue the alternative. Arriving at Chambers for the first session was exciting. I was looking forward to having the opportunity to practise my interview technique before a tenant at One Essex Court. The Barrister was approachable, welcoming and took the time to get to know a little bit about all of us. Each BTB Candidate went in turn to present their part of the legal problem. Alongside presenting our cases, we also had the odd judicial intervention which, although surprising in the moment, allowed us all to practise delivering confident responses on the spot. It also tested us on how familiar we were with the case papers. One of the best parts of

the Interview Advocacy Sessions was receiving live, constructive feedback that was personal to each Candidate. As individual feedback is often hard to come by in the Pupillage Application Process, this feedback was highly appreciated.

In the second and final advocacy session with One Essex Court, I had to prepare submissions stating that the refusal of my “client’s” fictitious application was refused incorrectly. I used statutory interpretation to the advantage of the client. The feedback I received from the second barrister in Chambers was very positive and he gave me constructive feedback that I was able to take away and apply to real interviews during the most recent Pupillage Application Round. Another beneficial part of having the Interview Advocacy Sessions structured this way was being able to watch other BTB Candidates deliver their submissions. Learning from each other was a really positive opportunity to explore different techniques that we saw in each other.

I appreciated that both sessions were conducted in a space where I was comfortable to make mistakes and try new techniques. This is the most important thing necessary to improve and increase my confidence in my abilities. These sessions were incredibly valuable and enabled me to get an insight into some of the finer elements of advocacy that barristers are looking for in a prospective Pupil Barrister.

ADVOCATE INTERNSHIP

GRACE ADA OKAFOR

“ *As a barrister I know I will donate my time for this organisation.* ”

Advocate is a charity that finds free legal assistance from volunteer barristers. They are the Bar's national charity that makes it possible for barristers to balance their practice with making a significant contribution to the community. As a caseworker intern, I have had an insightful, eye-opening, and valuable experience. During my role, I learned how Advocate is filling the gap where individuals lack access to justice by providing legal support to those who do not have the means. I am very passionate about Advocate's work and grateful to complete this internship, as a barrister I know I will donate my time for this organisation.

As part of my role, I had the opportunity to engage with live work and contribute to discussions with Advocate's caseworkers, further undertaking written work using real case papers. I had to go through the applicant's case information where they were seeking help which varied from advice, drafting documents and/or representation at court/tribunal. From this, I had to draft case summaries which would later be logged and transferred to an available barrister to work on. Drafting the summaries I identified the area of law, what type of help they were seeking, executive summary, procedural history, eligibility criteria and missing documents. Next, I emailed the applicant requesting what was outstanding to have a better understanding of the case. I learned how to refine my time efficiently by swiftly shifting through all the documents, making sure I have included a clear factual background, a chronology/procedural history, court date and checking if there is any further information that is needed. I really enjoyed completing the summary as this was intellectually challenging and stimulating having to identify



legal and factual issues in complex areas of the law and understand what the applicant was seeking. I enjoyed later sharing ideas with my supervisors and learning effectively on how to tackle the case. I gained a unique and interesting insight into how Advocate operates and the scope of work that Advocate's caseworkers conduct at the organisation.

At the start of each day, I really enjoyed having morning briefings with the other caseworkers discussing our plans for the day and finding out which cases we were working on. I had exposure to work in different legal areas such as commercial chancery, employment, landlord and tenant. I enjoyed working through these areas and gaining new knowledge in new areas such as family and public law, where I had little experience. I really felt from this role I became more neutral in drafting the case summaries and just focused on what documents are needed from the applicant, especially in the more sensitive areas of the law such as family cases. I also enjoyed having afternoon briefings with the caseworkers, having that time to share our day and the opportunity to offload if we had a difficult day dealing with triggering and sensitive cases. From this internship, I felt supported by my supervisors and that I have developed the necessary skillset to succeed at the bar.

LECTURE SERIES

MEGAN CHOONG JIEH YUE



The Bridging the Bar lecture series by Elaine Banton was a profound experience, encompassing the critical issues of "Access & Culture Change" and "Retention & Progression at the Bar." As a participant, this series was instrumental in highlighting the systemic challenges and actionable strategies to foster a more inclusive and equitable legal profession.

Banton's first lecture, "Access & Culture Change," emphasised the intricate relationship between access to the Bar and the need for cultural transformation within the profession. It underscored that while significant strides have been made in improving diversity at the entry level, much work remains to ensure these changes are sustainable and pervasive throughout a barrister's career. Banton highlighted various initiatives aimed at enhancing access, such as the 1 Crown Office Row's assessed mini pupillage scheme and Bridging the Bar's mentorship and conversion programme. I also found the lecture to be incredibly useful in guiding me to various resources. It highlighted initiatives that can support my career and introduced me to a community of individuals who share my background as an Asian woman.

Additionally, it provided crucial information about reporting mechanisms, such as Talk to Spot for anonymous reporting of inappropriate behaviour and the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office, which addresses these issues effectively. These initiatives have been pivotal in providing opportunities for underrepresented groups, but Banton stressed the importance of a sustained cultural shift to support these changes. This requires a strategic and multifaceted approach that addresses various dimensions of diversity and inclusion. The critical factors are:

- Leadership commitment: Leaders must consistently demonstrate their dedication to fostering an inclusive environment. For instance, the *Bar Council's Race Action Plan* sets a precedent by outlining specific goals and actions to improve racial diversity.
- Comprehensive and ongoing training programs: To educate all members on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias are essential.
- Open dialogue and continuous learning: Regular forums, workshops, and discussions on diversity and inclusion topics can help maintain momentum and keep these issues at the forefront of the Bar's agenda.



“

This series was instrumental in highlighting the systemic challenges and actionable strategies to foster a more inclusive and equitable legal profession.

”

LECTURE SERIES

MEGAN CHOONG JIEH YUE

While entry-level diversity has improved, retention and progression of diverse groups remain significant challenges. This was the focus of Elaine Banton's second lecture. Barristers from ethnic minority backgrounds and women face greater obstacles in advancing to senior positions such as King's Counsel (silk) and higher judicial appointments. Effective retention strategies are crucial for progression to these senior roles.



The first seven years are critical for barristers, with financial stress and demographic intersections (such as sex, race, and disability) significantly impacting their career trajectories. Factors such as legal aid, debt, access to credit, fees, and financial support significantly impact retention. Reports from the Bar Standards Board (BSB) and other surveys illustrate the struggles faced by junior barristers, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds and women.

This statistic resonated deeply with me and my peers, prompting in-depth discussions during our mini pupillage. It was encouraging to hear the practice manager and various barristers share how the chambers assist them. For instance, one barrister who aimed to take the New York Bar was able to adjust his workload during revision and exam periods.

“

We can build a legal profession that supports all its members and reflects the diversity of the society it serves.

”

What stood out to me most were the calls to action Elaine Banton mentioned:

- **Data-Driven Approaches:** Continued use of data to track progress and identify areas needing attention is vital. Regularly publishing diversity statistics, conducting surveys, and analysing trends can help inform and shape effective diversity strategies. Ensuring transparency and accountability through data-driven approaches can lead to more targeted and impactful interventions.
- **Intersectionality Considerations:** Addressing the unique challenges faced by individuals who belong to multiple underrepresented groups (e.g., women of colour, disabled individuals from minority backgrounds) requires an intersectional approach. Tailored initiatives that consider the overlapping aspects of identity can help address the compounded barriers these individuals face.

It is not enough that people enter the profession when they end up leaving due to systemic barriers and inequities.

Ensuring that talented individuals not only join but also thrive and advance within the legal profession requires a holistic approach that addresses financial stability, support systems, and a culture of inclusion. Retention and progression must be prioritised through targeted interventions, continuous support, and policy reforms that promote equity and diversity. By doing so, we can build a legal profession that supports all its members and reflects the diversity of the society it serves.



MENTORING PROGRAMME

ABBAS HUSSAIN

“

Bridging The Bar's Mentoring Programme extends beyond mere application assistance; it provides continuous support and realistic advice throughout one's journey to the Bar.

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Bridging The Bars Mentoring Programme has been an instrumental part of my journey toward a career at the Bar. Through this programme, I was fortunate to be mentored by an experienced King's Counsel (KC), whose guidance was invaluable in navigating the complex and competitive process of securing a pupillage. The mentorship was comprehensive and tailored to my needs. My mentor shared his extensive experience and insights on various aspects of the pupillage application process. He highlighted the importance of crafting a compelling application, stressing the need to present a well-rounded profile that showcases both legal expertise and unique personal attributes.

My mentor taught me how to effectively showcase my skills, experiences, and motivations in my applications. He stressed the importance of clarity, coherence, and conciseness, ensuring that each application was meticulously tailored to the specific chambers to which I was applying. To distinguish myself from other applicants, my mentor advised me to focus on my unique experiences and achievements, such as my involvement in extracurricular activities and any relevant legal work experience. He encouraged me to articulate my passion for law and my long-term career aspirations convincingly.

Another critical component of the mentoring programme was the mock interviews. These sessions were designed to simulate the real interview environment, providing me with an opportunity to practice and refine my responses. Through these mock interviews, I received constructive feedback on my performance, including my communication skills, body language, and ability to think on my feet. This practice was crucial in building my confidence and honing my interview technique, which are essential for success in the highly competitive pupillage selection process.

Beyond the application process, my mentor provided sage advice regarding my career path. He emphasised the importance of pursuing an area of law that I am passionate about, cautioning against following a path solely for its perceived prestige or financial reward. Taking his advice to heart, I explored various areas of law beyond my initial interest in family law. This exploration led me to develop a keen interest in commercial, insurance, and sports law. Although I received around seven first-round interviews primarily for family pupillages, this experience made me realise that family law might not be the right fit for me.

Bridging The Bar's Mentoring Programme extends beyond mere application assistance; it provides continuous support and realistic advice throughout one's journey to the Bar. My mentor was always available to provide guidance and support, whether it was advice on career choices or navigating challenges during my training. This ongoing support was crucial in maintaining my motivation and focus. Perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of the programme was the honest and realistic advice I received. My mentor did not shy away from giving me the tough truths that I needed to hear, which helped me make informed decisions about my career path.

Bridging The Bars Mentoring Programme has had a profound impact on my professional development. The guidance and support from my KC mentor were pivotal in shaping my approach to the pupillage application process, refining my interview skills, and ultimately helping me to identify the area of law that truly interests me. This programme is not only about helping aspiring barristers secure pupillage but also about providing them with the tools and insights necessary to build a fulfilling and successful career at the Bar.

MINI-PUPILLAGE PROGRAMME

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Bridging the Bar's mini-pupillage scheme gave me invaluable insight into a barrister's daily life, diverse practice areas, the court environment, and Chambers' culture.

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Mini-pupillages provide crucial insight into barristers' daily lives and are a necessary step for anyone who is considering a career at the Bar. They can confirm your aspirations or completely dissuade you from a legal area in the span of a week. Conscious of this impact, Bridging the Bar included two in its program.

Many benefits can be extracted from mini-pupillages. Shadowing barristers generates captivating conversations, and mini-pupils are often met with honesty and genuine interest. Barristers will happily discuss their struggles with last-minute bundles or difficult clients, as well as the successes that make up for it.

Secondly, I found that while some mini-pupillages solely focus on court attendance, it is beneficial to visit the enigmatic building itself. It allows applicants to de-mystify less discussed parts of the profession, such as the role of clerks, and to develop a well-rounded perspective of practicing at the Bar. During my mini-pupillage at Three Raymond Buildings, I was taken on a tour of Chambers. I met barristers, staff members, and benefited from the kind guidance of the Chambers Administrative Officer, Donna Garner. Meeting the Chambers' staff and barristers without the urgency of court favours more casual interactions and empowers applicants to make informed choices regarding their pupillage and tenancy.

Thirdly, mini-pupillages are an excellent chance to get a taste of a wide diversity of practice areas. I once attended the family, immigration and criminal courts in a week. I had never studied family law before, and this experience later led me to start a position as a paralegal in care proceedings.

Finally, mini-pupillages are also the opportunity to develop helpful skills. 4-5 Gray's Inn took an original approach to



CLARA CHABERLOT

mini-pupillages and focused on advocacy experience rather than court attendance. Mini-pupils met in small groups with barristers, practiced advocacy exercises such as cross-examination, and discussed advocacy styles and court etiquette, which was enriching and did wonders for my confidence.

There are a few tips for mini-pupillage applicants. Refrain from overapplying; select wisely which chambers could provide you with the insight you need at your stage. In your application, clarify why you specifically would benefit from this opportunity. A friend in Law School told me she thought her prospects were low because "I don't have that much legal experience because I was so busy working alongside my studies". I responded, "Tell them exactly that. That is why you, among all the others, could use the experience". She obtained three mini-pupillages in the span of six months.

In conclusion, Bridging the Bar's mini-pupillages scheme gave me invaluable insight into a barrister's daily life, diverse practice areas, the court environment, and Chambers' culture. It also amplified my confidence in advocacy. Mini-pupillages have a meaningful influence on aspiring barristers, and they have assisted me in defining my interests and confirming my dedication to a career at the Bar. A lovely thanks to Bridging the Bar!



“
This experience engrossed me in the world of research and reform, forcing me to become comfortable with my thoughts and opinions while perfecting the intricacies of my research.
”

MARY AMARA AZUBUIKE

LAW COMMISSION INTERNSHIP

I was fortunate enough to land the Law Commission internship, which I believed would marry my love of literature with my interest in the social implications of the law to explore how the law is reformed and created. I knew this immersion would provide an eye-opening window into an aspect of law rarely examined at the undergraduate level, and I was not disappointed.

The Law Commission separates itself into four specialised teams: public law, commercial law, criminal law, and property and trust. I was on the incredibly dynamic public law team, amongst passionate researchers and lawyers propelled by the desire to make reform to suit greater society. At the time, the public law team was conducting research into autonomy in aviation, compulsory purchase, and disabled children's social care. To really get stuck into the work of a Law Commission research assistant, each intern was assigned a research task, of varying degrees of scope, that would be presented to a team of research assistants on the final day. I was assigned a case (the GPE Hannover Square dispute) relating to the calculation of compensation regarding the compulsory purchase of commercial property for the benefit of creating entrances to the new Elizabeth Line. Not only was I able to delve into the intricacies of compulsory purchase compensation rules (which disregard the consequence of compulsory purchase on the price of land), but I was given a conversive environment to express my opinions on the case, the implications of the ruling, and discuss where reform could be made. I had numerous legal professionals at my disposal, willing to take time out of their very busy workloads to discuss the case and my ideas openly with me, making me feel like a valued member of the team, despite only being there for three days.

This experience engrossed me in the world of research and reform, forcing me to become comfortable with my thoughts and opinions while perfecting the intricacies of

my research. It also opened me up to the world of public law and practice. Prior to this internship, I believed I only wanted to practice in commercial law, but researching and learning about public law, while talking to passionate public law practitioners, showed me the type of career and change I could wield within my profession. From the internship, I became more open-minded about the type of law I want to practice.

The research project was not the only highlight. A notable aspect of my experience was the diverse talks organised by the Commission. Chief Executive Stephanie Hack provided a comprehensive overview of the Commission's objectives, and Ingrid Morgan from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel shared the intricacy of drafting legislation. However, for me, the most impactful moment was the talk with Sir Nicholas Green, the Law Commission's Chair. A conversation I'm sure my fellow colleagues can agree we did not want to leave. Discussing legal reform with someone so senior demonstrated the humility needed to excel in legal reform and how our diverse life experiences shaped different perspectives on the impact of certain laws. This diversity of thought highlighted the need for inclusivity in legal reform discussions. It became clear to me that a broad range of perspectives is essential for ensuring the law remains responsive to the multifaceted needs of society.

From this immersive experience, I had three key takeaways: first, legal practice should be explorative, as you never truly know what you like until you try different areas. Second, legal reform is transformative, offering a deeper understanding of the law's impact. Finally, the Law Commission provides a supportive environment for intellectual growth and self-reflection. I will be applying for the Law Commission's research assistant role in the coming months and would encourage anyone interested in the social benefits of law to do the same. It's an experience I'll never regret.

COURT OF APPEAL INTERNSHIP

NEIL WILLIAMS

“

With a genuine interest in my journey to the Bar and openly inviting questions, Lord Justice Birss showed me that the highest members of the judiciary are just normal people who are very good at what they do.

”

The Bridging the Bar internship at the Court of Appeal was an experience I will never forget. Based inside the Royal Courts of Justice in London, the closest I had ever come to setting foot inside these magnificent buildings was passing by on an ‘open top’ bus while sightseeing with family.

When I first received the phone call in September notifying me that I was successful in my application, I had to pinch myself. I would be working for a week alongside the Judicial Assistants in one of the highest courts in the country. I was going to be spending time with the highest members of the judiciary and actually speaking with them!

I arrived at the Royal Courts of Justice and met my assigned Judicial Assistant, Georgina, where we went straight into preparation for the day’s hearing. This hearing involved the Denton principle and imposed sanctions. With less than 30 minutes, I quickly familiarised myself with the facts of the case and then proceeded to meet Lord Justice Birss and Lord Justice Nugee. With a genuine interest in my journey to the Bar and openly inviting questions, Lord Justice Birss showed me that the highest members of the judiciary are just normal people who are very good at what they do.

All three of us attended a pre-court meeting with the other Justices, and I observed a discussion of the facts of the upcoming case and how the expected submissions would affect any potential judgment before heading into court for the hearing. Submissions for both sides of the case continued until the afternoon hearing,



when the Justices retired to their chambers to discuss their judgment. I was surprised to hear that, due to the high workload, it can often be a number of weeks before a judgment has been sent across to the relevant parties.

I especially enjoyed when we headed across to the Rolls Building, where the interns each made a presentation to a panel of Justices and Judicial Assistants, discussing their journey to the Bar and what they had taken from the week. I learned so much about my fellow Bridging the Bar interns in this short time that I hadn’t realised from our previous interactions. I was humbled, and the presentations gave me great admiration for my colleagues. The stories and obstacles that our interns had overcome, and how they articulated them, were truly admirable.

The week at the Court of Appeal has taught me so much, and I will always be grateful to Bridging the Bar and the Judiciary for facilitating this. However, my key takeaways from the week are:

- There is a huge amount of hard work that goes into each case, which is not always evident from the outside looking in. Before the internship, I only really appreciated the hearing and the judgment that would appear a few weeks following.
- The Judicial Assistants did an excellent job and were outstanding in their support, answering all the questions that the interns and I had throughout the week.
- Finally, it is excellent to hear about the work that is being undertaken by the Judiciary to improve diversity. However, there is an acknowledgement that this has to start at the Bar.

ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE HIGH COURT INTERNSHIP



“

*It is comforting
knowing that change
is coming...*

*I have started to feel
like I deserve to be
here.*

”

The Internship Programme has helped me take a step forward in my legal career. I had the opportunity to work closely with judges and judicial assistants at the High Court, discussing cases in depth and gaining valuable insight into witness evidence.

I engaged in roundtable discussions on enhancing diversity within the judiciary and had the opportunity to deliver a presentation to judges, sharing my personal journey to the Bar. My Judicial Assistant really helped with my presentation. In fact, we had a discussion at the end of every day leading up to the presentation and brainstormed ideas. I think this is a good opportunity to see what is being done at the judiciary and how they are actively trying to combat the lack of diversity. It is comforting knowing that change is coming.

The most useful aspect of the internship was learning about Judicial Assistants. I had never come across this position before, and now that I have met a JA and remained in contact with her, it's inspired me to

apply for the position if I don't get pupillage.

This week of experience has been eye-opening and will allow me to develop skills that are crucial for a career at the Bar. I think the Bar feels a lot more reachable. I felt appreciated for being where I am despite my adversities and background. I have started to feel like I deserve to be here.

SAJINI SRIDARAN



UK SUPREME COURT INTERNSHIP



“

The internship was an unforgettable experience. I learned so much and will cherish it for years to come.

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It was a privilege to discuss such important and often sensitive topics with the Justices, and I felt a deep sense of responsibility as one of only eight interns selected for the program to bring these issues forward. These challenges affect so many aspiring barristers, and having the opportunity to address them directly with such senior figures was immensely rewarding.

Walking to the back entrance of the Supreme Court on the third day was interesting. There was a sea of journalists and camera crews setting up, ready to document the results of the Rwanda judgment as soon as it was given by Lord Reed. Sitting in Courtroom 1 was an unforgettable experience in that moment. The room was full of counsel, legal teams, and journalists. Throughout all the judgments and reasoning behind the Rwanda judgment, you could hear a pin drop. I found myself not even wanting to take a breath. Lord Reed explained the main points leading to the judgment very clearly and in a way that could easily be understood by all members of the public. It was only when he said that the Rwanda policy was unlawful and that the Home Secretary's appeal was dismissed that there was an audible release of the breath those in court had been holding, and suddenly the room burst back to life!

The internship was an unforgettable experience. I learned so much and will cherish it for years to come. I met incredible people, and I'm committed to staying in touch with them. To my fellow interns, you were all brilliant, and working alongside you made the experience truly special. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Vicky Fox, Rebecca Fry, Bridging the Bar, and the UK Supreme Court, with a special mention to Mannat Malhi and Lord Hamblen for making this internship possible and so memorable. A big thank you to all of you for making us feel like we truly belong at the Bar.

JAYA SUDERA

When I received the phone call saying, "We want to send you to the Supreme Court," I could hardly believe it. After a long string of rejections, a common experience for many aspiring barristers, the sense of accomplishment and happiness was indescribable.

I was to meet the other interns at the back door of the Supreme Court to avoid the crowds of guests attending the swearing-in ceremony for the newest Justice, Lady Simler. Due to the large number of people expected, we watched from Courtroom 2, alongside many of Lady Simler's former colleagues from Devereux Chambers. Witnessing Lady Simler receive her robes and take her seat with the other Justices was unexpectedly emotional. Seeing another Lady Justice join Lady Rose was so inspiring and truly tugged at my heartstrings.

The session I was most eager to participate in was the roundtable discussion with Vicky, Lord Lloyd-Jones, Lord Leggatt, and Lord Burrows. We were split into smaller sub-groups, each assigned to a different Justice. Along with two other interns, I was assigned to Lord Leggatt. We had an in-depth conversation about our individual journeys to the Bar and the struggles we had encountered along the way. We discussed issues of diversity, equality, and inclusion, sharing personal experiences about barriers such as fairness in pupillage and mini-pupillage applications. We also explored the term "luck," a common word used in connection with applications, and questioned whether the lack of transparency, paired with the use of this term, might serve to mask discrimination. Lord Leggatt's responses were incredibly insightful and open.



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

Sponsored by  **BPP**
UNIVERSITY

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A bar that represents also benefits society

Charity No: 1190369 | Blackstone House, Temple, London, EC4Y 9BW

**ANNUAL REPORTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024**

BRIDGING THE BAR

(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

CHARITY REGISTRATION No: 1190369

Castle View Accounting Ltd
Ground Floor Offices
53 High Street
Arundel
West Sussex
BN18 9AJ

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

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BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

CHARITY NUMBER	1190369
DATE OF REGISTRATION	13th July 2020
START OF FINANCIAL YEAR	2nd April 2023
END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	1st April 2024
TRUSTEES AT 1ST APRIL 2024	Aaron Mayers Mass Ndow-Njie Matheu Armel Swallow
LEGAL STATUS	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
GOVERNING INSTRUMENT	CIO - Foundation Registered 13th July 2020

OBJECTS

The promotion of equality and diversity and the promotion of social inclusion amongst those who socially excluded due to being members of socially and economically deprived community, at The Bar of England and Wales by: **a)** The elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion. **b)** Advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity. **c)** Promotion activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds. **d)** Cultivating a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS	Blackstone Chambers Ltd Blackstone House 3 Garden Court Temple London EC4Y 9BW
PRIMARY BANKERS	Cashplus Bank 6th Floor One London Wall London EC2Y 5EB
INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS	Castle View Accounting Ltd Ground Floor Offices 53 High Street Arundel West Sussex BN18 9AJ

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024**


Trustees' Responsibilities

The Charities Act 2011 requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the CIO and of the surplus of the CIO for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the CIO will continue in existence.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the CIO. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the CIO and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees on 31 January 2025

Signed on their behalf by Trustee 

Printed Name: Mass Ndow-Njie

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023/24 £	TOTAL 2022/23 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds					
Donations, Grants & Legacies	3a	131,690	-	131,690	83,455
Investment Income	3b	66	-	66	-
Other Incoming Resources	3c	1,671	-	1,671	-
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		133,427	-	133,427	83,455
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of Generating Funds					
Cost of Charitable Activities	4a	92,749	-	92,749	102,028
Governance Costs	4b	1,350	-	1,350	900
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		94,099	-	94,099	102,928
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		39,328	-	39,328	(19,473)
Funds Brought Forward		52,622	-	52,622	72,095
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		91,950	-	91,950	52,622

Movements on all reserves and all recognised gains and losses are shown above. All of the organisation's operations are classed as continuing.


The notes on pages 57 to 62 form part of these financial statements.

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 1ST APRIL 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 01-Apr-24 £	Total 01-Apr-23 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	2	-	-	-	-
Investments	6	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-
Current Assets					
Debtors & Prepayments	8	-	-	-	-
Cash at Bank and in Hand	7	93,990	-	93,990	53,522
Total Current Assets		93,990	-	93,990	53,522
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	9	2,040	-	2,040	900
NET CURRENT ASSETS		91,950	-	91,950	52,622
TOTAL ASSETS less current liabilities		91,950	-	91,950	52,622
Creditors: Amounts falling due in more than one year	10	-	-	-	-
NET ASSETS		91,950	-	91,950	52,622
Funds of the Charity					
General Funds		91,950	-	91,950	52,622
Restricted Funds	5	-	-	-	-
Total Funds		91,950	-	91,950	52,622

Approved by the Trustees on 31 January 2025

Signed on their behalf by Trustee 

Printed Name: Mass Ndow-Njie

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Preparation & Assessment of Going Concern

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015) (Second Edition, effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Assessment of Going Concern

Preparation of the accounts is on a going concern basis. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Incoming Resources

Recognition of Incoming Resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- the trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability

Incoming Resources with Related Expenditure

Where incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) the incoming resource and related expenditure are reported gross in the SOFA.

Grants and Donations

Grants and Donations are only included in the SOFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

Tax Reclaims on Donations and Gifts

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the SOFA at the same time as the gift to which they relate.

Contractual Income and Performance Related Grants

This is only included in the SOFA once the related goods or services have been delivered.

Gifts in Kind

Gifts in kind are accounted for at a reasonable estimate of their value to the charity or the amount actually realised. Gifts in kind for sale or distribution are included in the accounts as gifts only when sold or distributed by the charity. Gifts in kind for use by the charity are included in the SOFA as incoming resources when receivable.

Donated Services and Facilities

These are only included in incoming resources (with an equivalent amount in resources expended) where the benefit to the charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material. The value placed on these resources is the estimated value to the charity of the service or facility received.

Volunteer Help

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts.

Investment Income

This is included in the accounts when receivable.

Investment Gains and Losses

This included any gain or loss on the sale of investments and any gain or loss resulting from revaluing investments to market value at the end of the year.

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Expenditure and Liabilities

Liability Recognition

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

Governance Costs

Include costs of the preparation and examination of statutory accounts, the costs of the trustees meetings and cost of any legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.

Grants with Performance Conditions

Where the charity gives a grant with conditions for its payment being a specific level of service or output to be provided, such grants are only recognised in the SOFA once the recipient of the grant has provided the specified service or output.

Grants Payable without Performance Conditions

These are only recognised in the accounts when a commitment has been made and there are no conditions to be met relating to a grant which remain in control of the charity.

Investments

Investments quoted on a recognised stock exchange are valued at market value at the year end. Other investment assets are included at trustees' best estimate of market value.

Unrestricted funds

These funds can be used for the general objectives of the charity as set out in the trustees report. The movements of the unrestricted funds are given in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Restricted funds

These funds are where the donor has specified a purpose for the donation made. These restrictions often arise as a result of appeals for special offerings for specific purposes.

Designated funds

These funds are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for particular purposes or projects.

Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £1,500. They are valued at cost or, if gifted, at the value to the charity on receipt.

Depreciation Expense

Depreciation is calculated at a rate to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets over their estimated useful lives. The rates applied are as follows:

Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment	25% - Straight Line Basis
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2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

The CIO held no fixed assets during this or the previous financial period.

The annual commitments under non-cancelling operating leases and capital commitments are as follows:

1st April 2024:None
1st April 2023:None

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024

3. INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023/24 £	TOTAL 2022/23 £
a) Donations, Grants & Legacies				
Gifts & Donations	131,690	-	131,690	83,455
	131,690	-	131,690	83,455
b) Investment Income				
Interest	66	-	66	-
	66	-	66	-
c) Other Incoming Resources				
Sundry Income	1,671	-	1,671	-
	1,671	-	1,671	-

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024

4. RESOURCES EXPENDED

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2023/24 £	TOTAL 2022/23 £
a) Cost of Charitable Activities				
Academy Programme Costs	12,106	-	12,106	24,692
Administrative Expenses	2,160	-	2,160	-
Advertising & Publicity	1,246	-	1,246	1,438
Award & Prizes	860	-	860	-
Bank Charges	98	-	98	52
Gifts & Donations	2,328	-	2,328	-
Insurance Costs	266	-	266	266
Lecture Series	1,000	-	1,000	-
Photography Costs	1,650	-	1,650	885
Staff Costs	58,095	-	58,095	52,050
Staff Expenses	3,700	-	3,700	-
Sundry Expenses	2,367	-	2,367	1,652
Venue Hire	4,240	-	4,240	-
Website Costs	2,633	-	2,633	20,991
	92,749	-	92,749	102,028

b) Governance Costs

Independent Examiners Fees	9	1,140	-	1,140	900
Legal & Professional Fees		210	-	210	-
		1,350	-	1,350	900

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024

5. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The CIO held no restricted funds during this or the previous financial period.

6. INVESTMENTS

The CIO held no fixed assets investments during this or the previous financial period.

7. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 01-Apr-24 £	Total 01-Apr-23 £
Cash at Bank & in Hand	93,990	-	93,990	53,522
	93,990	-	93,990	53,522

8. DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 01-Apr-24 £	Total 01-Apr-23 £
Sundry Debtors	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 01-Apr-24 £	Total 01-Apr-23 £
Independent Examiners Fees	1,140	-	1,140	900
Sundry Creditors	900	-	900	-
	2,040	-	2,040	900

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE IN MORE THAN ONE YEAR

The CIO held no long term liabilities during this or the previous financial period.

11. NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 01-Apr-24 £	Total 01-Apr-23 £
Fixed Asset Investments	-	-	-	-
Net Current Assets	91,950	-	91,950	52,622
Long Term Liabilities	-	-	-	-
	91,950	-	91,950	52,622

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2024

12. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS

	TOTAL 2023/24	TOTAL 2022/23
	£	£
Gross Wages, Salaries & Fees	53,845	52,050
Employer's National Insurance Costs	4,250	-
Pension Contributions	-	-
	<u>58,095</u>	<u>52,050</u>

Employees who were engaged in each of the following activities:

	TOTAL 2023/24	TOTAL 2022/23
Charitable Activities	3	3

The Charity engages with staff on a Self-employed basis and is therefore not liable to Income Tax and National Insurance Costs and no employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

13. TRUSTEES AND OTHER RELATED PARTIES

No payments were made to trustees or any persons connected with them during this financial period. No material transaction took place between the organisation and a trustee or any person connected with them.

14. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Trustees actively review the major risks which the charity faces on a regular basis and believe that maintaining the free reserves stated, combined with the annual review of the controls over key financial systems carried out on an annual basis will provide sufficient resources in the event of adverse conditions. The Trustees have also examined other operational and business risks which they face and confirm that they have established systems to mitigate the significant risks.

15. RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves they wish to retain, appropriate to the CIO's needs. This is based on the CIO's size and the level of financial commitments held. The Trustees aim to ensure the CIO will be able to continue to fulfil its charitable objectives even if there is a temporary shortfall in income or unexpected expenditure. The Trustees will endeavour not to set aside funds unnecessarily.

16. PUBLIC BENEFIT

The CIO acknowledges its requirement to demonstrate clearly that it must have charitable purposes or 'aims' that are for the public benefit. Details of how the CIO has achieved this are provided in the Trustees report. The Trustees confirm that they have paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit before deciding what activities the CIO should undertake.

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS

Report to the trustees/ members of Bridging the Bar on the accounts for year ended 1st April 2024 set out on pages 55 to 62.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

K. Collaku MAAT
Castle View Accounting Ltd
Ground Floor Offices
53 High Street
Arundel
West Sussex
BN18 9AJ



Date: 31st January 2025