




BRIDGING THE BAR

Annual Report 24/25



A bar that represents also benefits society

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

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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



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



STAFF





INTRODUCTION

"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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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 barrister 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



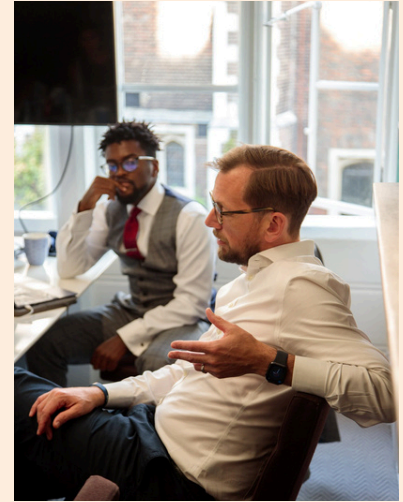
LGBTQ+



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, mentoring, POD, mini-pupillage, and other 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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UNIVERSITY

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 born from a desire to maximise BTB's impact on our candidates, both in terms of number 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 future generation of barristers who will become champions of diversity at the Bar in their own right.

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

In designing the Academy Programme, we identified five core objectives that would shape the structure, content, and delivery of the year:

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 most likely to meaningfully improve pupillage outcomes. They reflect the dual focus of the programme: enhancing technical competence while supporting candidates' personal development and sense of belonging at the Bar. Each component of the Academy is designed with these objectives in mind.

ACADEMY SELECTION

SELECTION PROCESS

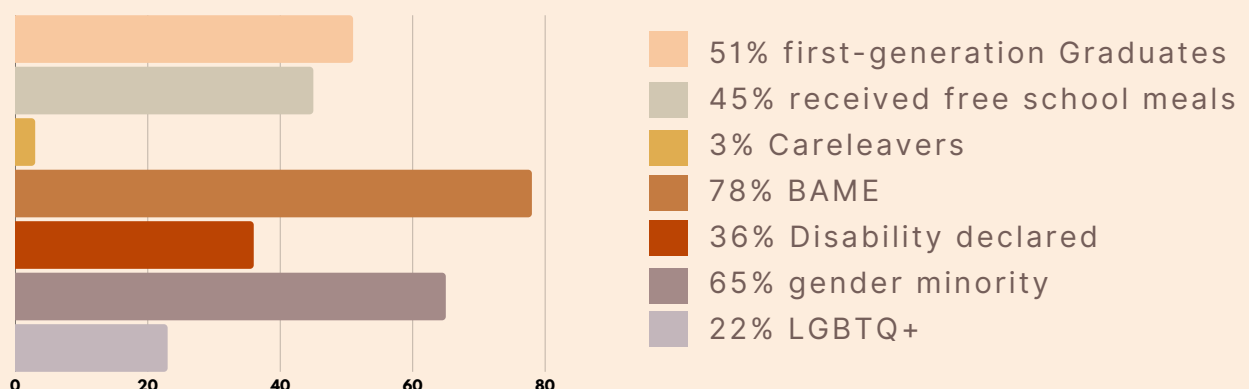
We utilised a volunteer force of legal professionals in our marking process, who each marked a single answer for all applications. By adopting this vertical marking process, we aimed to increase consistency during our application marking process.

The markers were asked to assess answers against seven criteria:

1. A commitment to academic excellence through achieving strong grades at university.
2. An understanding of what a career at the Bar entails.
3. Clear and persuasive written communication skills i.e., appropriate structure, use of language and sentence structure.
4. Clear, persuasive and engaging oral advocacy skills.
5. Understanding of issues faced by candidates and barristers from underrepresented backgrounds at the Bar and a commitment to remedying these issues.
6. Ability of a candidate to share their background and experiences in a way which will facilitate mutual learning with fellow candidates and stakeholders.
7. Likelihood to benefit from participating in BTB Academy.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

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



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 & Professional Development Sessions	Five sessions, led by legal professionals, covering topics such as confidence building, alongside practical workshops.	Interview Technique Mindset Championing Diversity
Mini-pupillages	Two rounds of mini-pupillages in a candidates area of interest.*	Content of Applications Written Applications
Internships	Selected candidates will intern at either the UK Supreme Court, High Court, Court of Appeal, Law Commission, Advocate, or Hallinan Blackburn Gittings & Nott.	Content of Applications Mindset Championing Diversity

* Candidates not shortlisted for an internship will complete 2 mini-pupillages. Shortlisted candidates will complete 1 mini-pupillage.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE


Event	Summary	Objectives
Mooting Competition	Candidates will have the opportunity to take part in Bridging the Bar's annual Mooting Competition, working in teams to compete against one another while developing their advocacy skills.	Content of Applications Mindset Written Applications
Mentoring	Candidates will be paired with a barrister in their preferred practice area for an 8-month mentoring relationship.	Written Applications Interview technique Mindset
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.	Content of Applications Written Applications
Essay Competition	Candidates will have the opportunity to participate in both the BTB Essay Competition and the Professor Jo Delahunty KC Neurodiversity Essay Competition.	Written Applications Content of Applications Championing Diversity



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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THE PROGRAMME



"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 WELCOME EVENT

The Academy year begins with a dedicated Welcome Event, designed to orient candidates and prepare them for the year ahead. It provides the foundation for their Academy experience, helping them to understand what to expect, what is expected of them, and how to make the most of the opportunities available.

At this session, candidates are given a clear overview of the programme's structure, introduced to key Academy policies, and guided through the various strands of support available throughout the year. The event also provides practical insights into how the Academy aligns with the pupillage recruitment timeline and where different elements will support their development.

Beyond orientation, the event serves as a key moment for building early connections. Candidates are introduced to the core strands of our offer through engaging taster sessions and take part in structured icebreakers designed to lay the groundwork for a strong, supportive peer network. The event concludes with informal networking, giving candidates the chance to meet fellow cohort members, volunteers, and programme staff in a relaxed setting.



THE WELCOME EVENT



OSCAR MINTO

The welcome event was a great first start to the academy. It involved an opportunity to meet other pod members, to hear from the organisers and to reflect on the benefits of the programme. We also got to hear from academy alumni that got us excited about the sessions to come. It really helped me to understand the structure of the year and what to expect from the academy.

With the day being low-pressure, it felt like a very supportive and friendly environment to truly meet and bond with other aspiring barristers. Studying my Bar Course online, this was especially important for me and a rare chance to meet others in a similar position. Being busy, we often under-value opportunities like this. This event was a perfect introduction to friends that still form part of my support network to this day.

“ *The event captures the very essence of the academy.*

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So, in my opinion, the event captures the very essence of the academy. It was cemented by the speech that organisation founder Mass gave on the day. His story is about how simple ideas can come to fruition through hard work and collaboration. This really epitomises the journey ahead for each academy member. It was clear this introduction to Bridging the Bar is about supporting one another and building a sense of community above all else.

“ *This event was a perfect introduction to friends that still form part of my support network to this day.* ”



CANDIDATE VOICES

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The BTB welcome event was the perfect start to a very exciting year ahead for this year's candidates. From meeting likeminded people at similar points in their career, it really felt like I fit in and hearing from the speakers made me certain that I am going to get a lot out of this experience.

- Talia Webster

The event was truly inspiring. I often feel like the Bar is out of reach for me, but after the session, I felt it was actually achievable.

- Shemaiah Fenteng

My first session with BTB was friendly, welcoming and genuinely enjoyable. It was great to go into a totally non-judgemental environment, meet other likeminded individuals and to get a comprehensive overview of what to expect from the year.

- Holly Jensen

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PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Personal and Professional Development Programme, known in the Academy as “Pod” sessions, is a core part of the BTB model. It is designed to offer tailored, small-group support that blends personal growth with practical legal training, creating space for candidates to build confidence, community, and key professional skills.

This year, the cohort is divided into Pods of 10, grouped by shared areas of legal interest. Each Pod attends five in-person coaching days in London. These sessions are structured to maximise both peer support and sector-specific insight.



Each workshop day is split into two halves: one focusing on personal development, the other on practical skills. In the morning, half of each Pod engages in personal coaching led by a dedicated “Pod Leader” – a returning BTB alumnus or experienced facilitator. The other half joins practical sessions led by volunteer practitioners working in their chosen practice areas to focus on professional skill development. In the afternoon, the groups switch, ensuring each candidate benefits from both strands.

The Pod structure is designed not only to further personal and professional development, but also to build a deeper sense of belonging, create more opportunities for honest dialogue, and ensure that candidates feel supported as individuals, not just as applicants. It remains one of the most valued elements of the Academy experience.

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

SESSION OVERVIEW

POD A: Pod Icebreaker & CV-Building

An introductory session that sets the tone for Pod collaboration. Candidates build relationships within their group and attend a practical CV-building workshop, where practitioners offer guidance on strengthening CV's prior to pupillage applications.



POD B: Courage Before Confidence & Written Applications

A session exploring how courage can bridge confidence gaps for those from non-traditional backgrounds. This is followed by a workshop focused on written pupillage applications, with feedback from practitioners.

POD C: The Power of Professional Narrative & Written Interview Tasks

Candidates are encouraged to reframe their personal journeys as strengths, not setbacks. The following session addresses the written components of pupillage interviews, with support from sector specialists.



POD D: Being vs Doing & Interview Skills

This session challenges narratives around disadvantage and suitability for the Bar. The second half includes a workshop on interview techniques, including practice interviews with volunteers.

POD E: Fear of Failure & Next Steps Panel

A reflective session aimed at reframing comparison as collaboration. The day ends with a "Next Steps" session featuring a panel of speakers who help candidates focus on planning the final stages of their pupillage journey.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

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.* ”

PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

MILES JANES

Throughout the entire academy, I found the practical sessions with barristers to be by far the most useful. We had several of these sessions, usually straight after meeting with our Pod group. They covered aspects such as a CV check, an advocacy-based session and questions that arise on pupillage applications. However, there were also wider sessions around applications and interviews. These practical's were immensely helpful during what was a very heavy pupillage application round for me. At the time I was applying for work and wider opportunities. I believe these sessions helped me to focus my CV and answers in my interviews which eventually landed me work and a pupillage.

Often barristers in these sessions were able to give us 1-1 support during these sessions. It was reassuring to talk to and hear from people who have reviewed pupillage applications during these sessions and alleviated some of my worries. Perhaps the most useful of all the practical's was the pupillage gateway questions session. We were always assigned groups with barristers from our preferred area of practice. During this session, I was able to ask several questions of a chancery-set barrister around my applications but also wider skillset that gave me a new perspective and approach. Overall, these sessions kept me motivated and were perfect trial-runs before the application window opened.

“ *These sessions kept me motivated and were perfect trial-runs before the application window opened* ”



“ *It was reassuring to talk to and hear from people who have reviewed pupillage applications during these sessions and alleviated some of my worries.* ”



COMMUNITY BUILDING AT PODS



Applying for pupillage is a notoriously gruelling and often isolating process. What makes the BTB academy special is its ability to ease this pressure - not only with workshops and group sessions, but also by creating a supporting, non-judgmental community of staff, volunteers and candidates. The structure of the BTB Academy is unique, the sessions encourage candidates to bond with each other - not just as aspiring barristers, but as talented individuals with distinct backgrounds, values, and personalities.

The Pod Sessions is where this community truly develops - the topics discussed allow candidates to share their vulnerabilities and thoughts, in a judgement-free, safe environment. It is during these candid conversations that a foundation of trust, respect, and mutual understanding is built amongst all. As a candidate, it has been incredible to see how these relationships develop throughout the Academy. In just nine months, my Pod Group evolved from strangers to close friends—supporting each other through mock interviews, assessments, and even hosting sleepovers the night before graduation.

These connections are not artificial; they're rooted in a shared belief - that we will all succeed in our careers at the Bar. This community formed organically over the Programme as we grew to acknowledge and appreciate our differences.

“

These connections are not artificial; they're rooted in a shared belief - that we will all succeed in our careers at the Bar.

”



CHLOE GABRIEL

The BTB Academy creates more than a network of likeminded individuals - it creates a community of ambitious young professionals who are bonded by their experience on the Academy. The best thing is that this community doesn't dissolve after the BTB Graduation; these friendships will last throughout our careers, whatever they shall be!

“

The sessions encourage candidates to bond with each other - not just as aspiring barristers, but as talented individuals with distinct backgrounds, values, and personalities.

”

CANDIDATE VOICES

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The pod sessions create a supportive environment where leaders and candidates share their personal experiences honestly, helping us challenge negative self-talk and build confidence. Through honest self-reflection and learning from others' experiences, I'm becoming more mindful of how I can evolve both personally and professionally.

- Cynthia Garba

It's great to have a community of people in the same boat, going through the same things, who you can talk to frankly, feel like you're not alone, and learn from.

- Eilidh Rowan

My pod leader shared constructive stories of professional failure and how those experiences ultimately made them a better barrister. It was reassuring and inspiring to see vulnerability framed as strength, and it reinforced the idea that growth often comes through challenge. This honesty helped normalise setbacks and offered practical insight into how to learn from them.

- Holly Jensen

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MINI-PUPILLAGE PROGRAMME

Mini-pupillages remain one of the most impactful elements of the Academy. Delivered in partnership with a wide range of chambers, the programme ensures that every candidate gains meaningful, practice-area-specific experience within a professional legal environment.

We run two mini-pupillage rounds across the Academy year. The first sees all 100 candidates placed, while the second is offered to non-internship candidates. These placements provide vital early experience and support candidates in strengthening their pupillage applications.



This direct exposure not only deepens candidates' understanding of their chosen area but also strengthens their pupillage applications and interview responses. By guaranteeing placements to all candidates, the programme removes the access barriers that disproportionately affect those without existing legal networks, and ensures that everyone can speak from experience when applying to join the profession.

MINI-PUPILLAGE PROGRAMME

SUPPORTED BY THE BEST OF THE BAR

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

MINI-PUPILLAGE PROGRAMME

“

Connecting with people from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives was both fascinating and inspiring.

”

I spent five days shadowing a criminal barrister from 33 Bedford Row during a Crown Court drug trial. The case was a retrial involving complex EncroChat evidence, with a large volume of material for both sides to navigate.

From the outset I was struck by the pace of proceedings and the need for rapid, strategic thinking. One of the most memorable moments came during the closing speech, which was meticulously argued yet deeply human, centring on the relationship between a father and son. It was a powerful reminder that even in cases built on technical digital evidence, the human story lies at the heart of advocacy.

Midway through the trial, a logistical issue forced a complete change of plan when a key witness could not attend due to a shortage of prison vans. Instead, his evidence from the previous trial was read aloud. This demonstrated the adaptability required in criminal law, where unexpected changes can occur without warning. It was equally fascinating to hear the procedural exchanges between counsel and the judge when the jury was absent, offering insight into the tactical decisions shaping the trial.



JADE WRAY

Having completed mini-pupillages across criminal and other practice areas, I recommend taking five minutes at the end of each day to jot down what you have learnt. This is important so you can follow the trial as it unfolds, as the days move quickly. In criminal law especially, be prepared for last-minute changes to courtrooms, travel outside London, and shifting timetables. Most importantly, enjoy the process, this experience truly shaped the practice area I want to pursue.

At appropriate times, I also took the opportunity to speak with barristers about their journey to the Bar. Connecting with people from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives was both fascinating and inspiring.

CANDIDATE VOICES

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At Reading County Court, I observed a two day final hearing where competing care arrangements were assessed. This enhanced my understanding of evidence, including hair strand tests, and the importance of analysing expert reports holistically. Observing precise cross examinations by 4 counsels for three hours highlighted the skill required to challenge expert evidence effectively.

- Jahangir Khan

The mini pupillage was a real game changer. The skills were invaluable, comprehensive and delivered in a warm and friendly manner.

-Maxine Quintyne-Kolaru

I was in chambers with Robbie Stern looking at live cases for two days and attended the Supreme Court with other members. It was really useful to see what a "non-court" day looked like and Robbie was great as he fully immersed me in all emails coming in and showed me how he juggled various cases in the one day.

-Helena Nugent

”

INTERNSHIPS

BTB's internship offer connects candidates with exceptional opportunities across the legal sector. Each placement is carefully designed to expose participants to high-level legal environments while building the confidence, insight, and credibility needed to take the next step in their careers.

In 2024/25, we partnered with the UK Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the Law Commission, Advocate, and Hallinan Blackburn Gittings & Nott to deliver a series of paid internships for 39 Academy candidates. These placements provided behind-the-scenes access to some of the most influential legal institutions in the country, from shadowing judges and sitting in on live hearings, to contributing to policy research and legal writing.



For many, these were once-in-a-career experiences that left a lasting impression. They offered candidates the chance to see themselves in these spaces, and to begin imagining futures within them. Internships were co-designed with our hosts to ensure they were intellectually demanding, meaningful, and genuinely valuable, both for the organisations involved and the candidates they welcomed.

The internships continue to be one of the most sought-after aspects of the Academy and remain central to our mission of levelling the playing field at the highest levels of the profession.

UK SUPREME COURT INTERNSHIP



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

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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.

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

COURT OF APPEAL INTERNSHIP

NEIL WILLIAMS

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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.

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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.

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



“ *I felt appreciated for being
where I am despite my
adversities and background.*

”



“

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.

HALLINAN BLACKBURN GITTINGS & NOTT INTERNSHIP



DOMINIC LIVESEY

“ *The internship was entirely transformative to both my approach and my abilities as I apply for pupillage, providing me with knowledge, challenges, experiences and a fantastic network that has been continually invaluable.* ”

Through Bridging the Bar I had the immense fortune of being granted their Paralegal Scholarship. This meant I had the opportunity to take on a 6-month long internship working full-time as a paralegal and Hallinan Blackburn Gittings & Nott, a Criminal Defence solicitors firm, based in London.

This was transformative experience for me and a wonderful insight into the real working world of criminal law. As a paralegal I was entrusted with full responsibility from the start, meaning that knowledge of the law and the legal system, understanding of how to handle clients, and confidence in my own abilities were tested and developed every day. I was working on a vast array of tasks a criminal firm faces including taking notes in conferences and at court, writing client letters, handling the phones, taking on new clients, writing case summaries and evidence bundles, as well as contacting the courts, police, prosecution and counsel, among much, much more.

Through this fast-paced and hands-on environment I developed crucial skills for any kind of lawyer faster than I could have anticipated.



I am far more intimately aware of how the justice system works, how to communicate with clients in times of stress and difficulty, my written and oral advocacy developed rapidly, and I am overall far more confident in myself as a prospective barrister. The opportunity to work in a real criminal law environment was also an eye-opening glimpse into the true importance of such work in real people's lives, and a thoroughly enjoyable environment for me personally.

The internship was entirely transformative to both my approach and my abilities as I apply for pupillage, providing me with knowledge, challenges, experiences and a fantastic network that has been continually invaluable.

“ *The opportunity to work in a real criminal law environment was also an eye-opening glimpse into the true importance of such work in real people's lives, and a thoroughly enjoyable environment for me personally.* ”

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.

CANDIDATE VOICES

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The internship gave me a flavour of different areas of law I had not had much experience of previously, such as family and employment law. It has increased my interest in those areas and motivated me to pursue them later in my career. Although I was committed to pro bono work previously, seeing how charities such as Advocate operate and the positive impact they have on people's lives has provided even greater motivation to take on this kind of work.

- James Collier

This internship was incredibly useful for my personal and professional development. It has honed my written and oral advocacy skills and increased my confidence.

- Tamyah Jones

This was a once in a lifetime opportunity and a chance to persuade the UK Supreme Court, of all places, on what I considered important to the future of the legal profession. I am immensely grateful to have listened to 9 other incredibly talented aspiring barristers. I cannot imagine that there is even a single a person, in that room, that did not learn something that day'.

-Oscar Minto

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MENTORING PROGRAMME

BTB's mentoring programme offers candidates a rare and valuable opportunity: one-to-one guidance from a practising barrister who reflects both their intended practice area and their lived experience.

It is one of the most comprehensive matching processes available; taking into account general area of law, specific specialism, and intersecting identity characteristics, to ensure each pairing is both meaningful and effective.



Over the course of eight months, candidates meet regularly with their mentors to shape strategy, build confidence, and refine their pupillage preparation. From early application planning to mock interviews and real-time feedback, the mentoring relationship provides tailored support at every key stage.

Mentors are equipped with a detailed guide to help structure the experience, while still allowing space for personal connection and individual goals. For many candidates, their mentor becomes not just a source of advice, but a powerful model of what's possible.

As a core part of the Academy's offer, the mentoring programme continues to be one of the most valued elements of the year and is consistently cited by candidates as pivotal to their development and success.



MENTORING PROGRAMME

ABBAS HUSSAIN

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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 Bar's 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.

CANDIDATE VOICES

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The most useful part of mentoring was having someone who looks like me and shares my values show me that I can belong at the Bar. Seeing someone with a similar background not only succeed but thrive in this space was incredibly affirming. It made the goal feel more real and achievable, and reminded me that there's space for people like me in the profession. - *Tracy Bossman*

Being assigned a mentor has been one of the most valuable opportunities provided by bridging the bar. Having a mentor has allowed me to feel like I have someone in my corner, championing my own success. - *Aaliyah Kisembo*

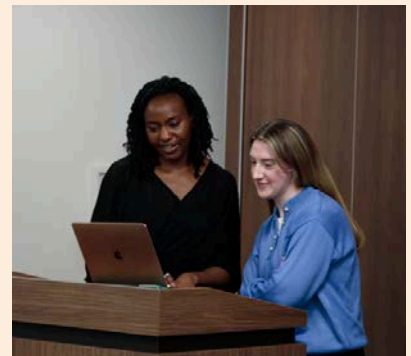
BTB have made an extensive effort to match mentors with your chosen area regardless of how niche it may be. I would like to undertake a clinical negligence and personal injury pupillage therefore, being matched with a leading clinical negligence barrister, as opposed to a General Civil barrister was particularly helpful in terms of asking for specific significant developments within this field -*Amisha Ramdut*

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FUNDAMENTALS OF ADVOCACY TRAINING

Advocacy training is one of the most skills-focused components of the Academy year. Delivered in partnership with The Advocacy Coach, the programme combines self-directed learning with immersive, in-person training designed to build confidence and develop key courtroom skills.

The course is led by Bibi Badejo, barrister at 4PB, founder of The Advocacy Coach, and host of The Advocacy Podcast. Through a bespoke online platform, candidates are introduced to core advocacy techniques, including case theory development, persuasive oral delivery, and the mechanics of effective cross-examination.



The programme culminates in a live training day, where candidates bring theory into practice. Working with professionally trained actors and supported by experienced practitioners, candidates prepare and deliver advocacy exercises across a range of realistic court scenarios. Each participant receives personalised, constructive feedback, helping them refine their technique and grow in confidence.

This strand of the Academy has quickly become a standout highlight of the programme and offers vital preparation for both interview performance and early practice.



“

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

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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.

CANDIDATE VOICES

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Bibi is an incredible advocate who supported me throughout my opening speech and gave invaluable guidance. The event was a great opportunity to learn, grow, and build confidence in my advocacy skills!

- Noor Saeed

This course was great to develop my skills and also to be more confident when it comes to advocacy. This will definitely help my delivery going forward.

- Leona Walker

Putting what you learnt from the course into practice in front of the advocacy coach was an invaluable experience to practice in front of an audience and receive thorough feedback.

- Vanessa Faye Thomas

A fantastic course which I will definitely refer back to in the future.

- Eilidh Rowan

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INTERVIEW ADVOCACY TRAINING

Following a successful pilot in 2022 with 6KBW College Hill, Interview Advocacy Training is now a core part of the Academy programme. Designed to demystify the practical exercises often used in pupillage interviews, the training gives candidates the chance to practise with real problems, receive detailed feedback, and build confidence in a supportive environment.

The programme runs across two Saturdays in autumn, with support from 15 partner Chambers. Each candidate is paired with a participating Chambers that reflects their intended area of practice, allowing them to focus on relevant topics while also making valuable professional connections.

Candidates work on exercises such as statutory interpretation and bail applications, tasks that can be unfamiliar to those without access to targeted preparation or professional networks. Sessions are delivered in small groups and include one-to-one feedback from barrister volunteers.

The training not only develops core legal skills but also helps candidates feel more prepared and better equipped to succeed in high-pressure interview settings. It has become a key element of our wider efforts to level the playing field at the point of pupillage selection.





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

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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.

CANDIDATE VOICES

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The interview advocacy training has been instrumental in preparing me for upcoming interviews. I feel confident in how to approach legal questions in pupillage interviews now thanks to the training.

- *Simran Chard*

The interview advocacy training provided invaluable hands-on advocacy experience, with expert feedback that sharpened my skills and boosted my confidence for pupillage interviews. A must for anyone serious about a career at the Bar!

- *Jahangir khan*

A practical insight which provided constructive criticism and a great confidence boost. A very special opportunity allowing you to elaborate on your advocacy skills.

- *Natalia Squire*

This is an excellent attempt for those seeking more experience into the interview process at chambers. BTB provide a realistic opportunity to undergo interview training and work on these skills before pupillage interviews commence.

- *Ibrahim Saine*

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LECTURE SERIES

The Academy launched a two-part lecture series designed to explore the challenges facing aspiring barristers from underrepresented groups and to equip candidates with the tools needed to succeed within the profession. Delivered by Elaine Banton, a barrister at 7BR, elected Bencher of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, and co-chair of the Bar Council's Equality, Diversity and Social Mobility Committee, the series focuses on key issues shaping access, retention, and progression at the Bar.

Part one, held at King's College London, focused on access to the Bar and the cultural changes needed to create equitable opportunities. Candidates engaged in discussions about practical steps to improve diversity, informed by real experiences and current initiatives driving change across the profession.

Part two examined retention and progression, addressing the challenges that caused individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to leave practice disproportionately. Elaine led an interactive discussion on the systemic barriers faced within the profession and invited candidates to reflect on strategies for overcoming these challenges in their own careers.

Across both sessions, the lectures combined thought leadership with collaborative discussion, giving candidates the insight and confidence to shape meaningful change within the profession.



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.



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

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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.

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

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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.

CONSULTANCY PANEL

The Consultancy Panel provides candidates with tailored, one-to-one support on all aspects of the pupillage process. Candidates can request targeted assistance, including CV and application reviews, proofreading, general guidance, mock interviews, and help with specific advocacy exercises.

Since its launch, the panel has been met with an overwhelmingly positive response. Over 80 legal professionals from a broad range of practice areas have volunteered their time and expertise to support our candidates. This network of support ensures that candidates receive high-quality, practical feedback from those with real-world experience at the Bar. By offering personalised insight and structured advice, the Consultancy Panel helps demystify the application process and build candidates' confidence, strengthening both the quality of submissions and their readiness for interview.

The consultancy panel was a very helpful part of the academy for me. Whilst I had great mentor, I have also valued getting several opinions on important work and interview preparation. The panel offered a real bridge for me. Often barristers' time is like gold dust, and it is difficult to find people who will help you on a 1-1 basis. The panel gave me the 1-1 support that I needed during pupillage application through pairing me directly with a barrister who really helped to refine my interview technique. I was also able to ask some general questions and even get a last-minute CV-check in.

Whilst you can use mini-pupillages and mentors to get important questions answered, you may often find your most important questions arise during the pressure of an application windows itself. The consultancy panel delivered for me by pairing me with somebody who could be that interim support and give me the reassurance that I needed. The most isolating time is during application season and this opportunity made it much more manageable.



OSCAR MINTO

“ The consultancy panel delivered for me by pairing me with somebody who could be that interim support and give me the reassurance that I needed. ”

GRADUATION

The Academy year concludes with the Graduation Event, held at the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. This moment marks the culmination of the candidates' journey through the programme and provides an opportunity to come together and celebrate their achievements in a formal and uplifting setting.

The event welcomes guests from across the legal profession, including members of the judiciary, court representatives, and supporting chambers, alongside candidates, mentors, volunteers, and BTB staff. It is both a celebration and a recognition of the dedication, progress, and resilience demonstrated by the cohort throughout the year.



The ceremony includes opening remarks, guest speakers, and the presentation of certificates to all graduates who have successfully completed the programme and met the full set of requirements. Select awards are also presented to individuals who have demonstrated particular excellence or made a notable contribution to the Academy community.

The Graduation Event is a fitting close to the Academy year. It is designed to be joyful, reflective, and inspiring; a space for candidates to feel pride in their work, gratitude for their supporters, and excitement for the professional journey ahead. It serves as a powerful reminder of what they have accomplished and what they are capable of achieving as they take the next step toward a career at the Bar.

ACADEMY GRADUATION

DORCAS BAAH



“ It embodied BTB’s unwavering commitment to supporting us and helping us become not just phenomenal advocates, but empathetic and grounded members of the Bar. ”

The formal graduation ceremony, with certificates awarded and prizes announced for the essays, moots, and Candidates’ Choice Awards, felt like the culmination of a year’s worth of hard work and resilience. Yet, despite its grandeur, the evening remained intimate. The entire evening was defined by the warmth of celebrating alongside friends, peers, Pod Leaders and mentors who had shared the journey.

The Bridging the Bar Graduation for the Class of 2025 was a truly memorable occasion. The evening began with light refreshments and a three-course meal, followed by a series of moving addresses that captured the spirit of the programme. We heard powerful reflections from past graduates Sarah, Cameron and Miah, which reminded us that the path to the Bar is rarely linear, but always worth pursuing.

For me, this graduation symbolised more than a recognition of our achievements. It embodied BTB’s unwavering commitment to supporting us and helping us become not just phenomenal advocates, but empathetic and grounded members of the Bar.

One of the most striking moments was Professor Jo Delahunty KC’s keynote address. Her words resonated deeply: imposter syndrome is not a weakness but proof that you care and refuse to become complacent. She also urged us to guard fiercely those aspects of ourselves that make us unique –our heritage, our accent, our roots– and never to sacrifice them in pursuit of a career at the Bar. This message was raw, thought-provoking, and profoundly affirming.



“Different Journeys, One Community, One Unforgettable Celebration”

CANDIDATE VOICES

“

It was lovely celebrating each other's accomplishment and knowing we are now part of a group of like-minded individuals forever.

- Cynthia Garba

Graduation was a celebration of unity , success and tangible development; whether practical or professional.

- Vanessa Thomas

Graduation is a great time to celebrate what you have achieved and give you motivation to achieve more.

- Tenishia Prah

This is the culmination of your Bridging the Bar Academy journey and the opportunity to celebrate your progress with your peers, mentors, BTB staff and volunteers.

- James Matthes

”

THE RESILIENCE FUND

Each year, a portion of the Academy budget is allocated to provide financial assistance to candidates. The Resilience Fund is designed to support those facing financial challenges that could prevent them from participating fully in Academy events or accessing opportunities.

The fund covers travel and accommodation costs, as well as individual needs, such as hiring carers for those with caregiving responsibilities. This initiative ensures that all candidates can engage with the Academy without facing financial or logistical barriers.



Megha Banerjee,
Academy 2024 Graduate

"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."



Mohamed Major,
Academy 24/25
Candidate & High Court
Intern

"As a grateful recipient of the Resilience Fund, I have been fortunate to receive financial support from Bridging the Bar's partners. By demonstrating genuine financial need through my bank statements, I was placed within Tier 3 criteria. This covered my travel and accommodation expenses, as well as the cost of hiring an alternative care provider, giving me invaluable peace of mind... This support has been transformative, enabling me to undertake a recent internship at the Royal Courts of Justice and attend personal development workshops."

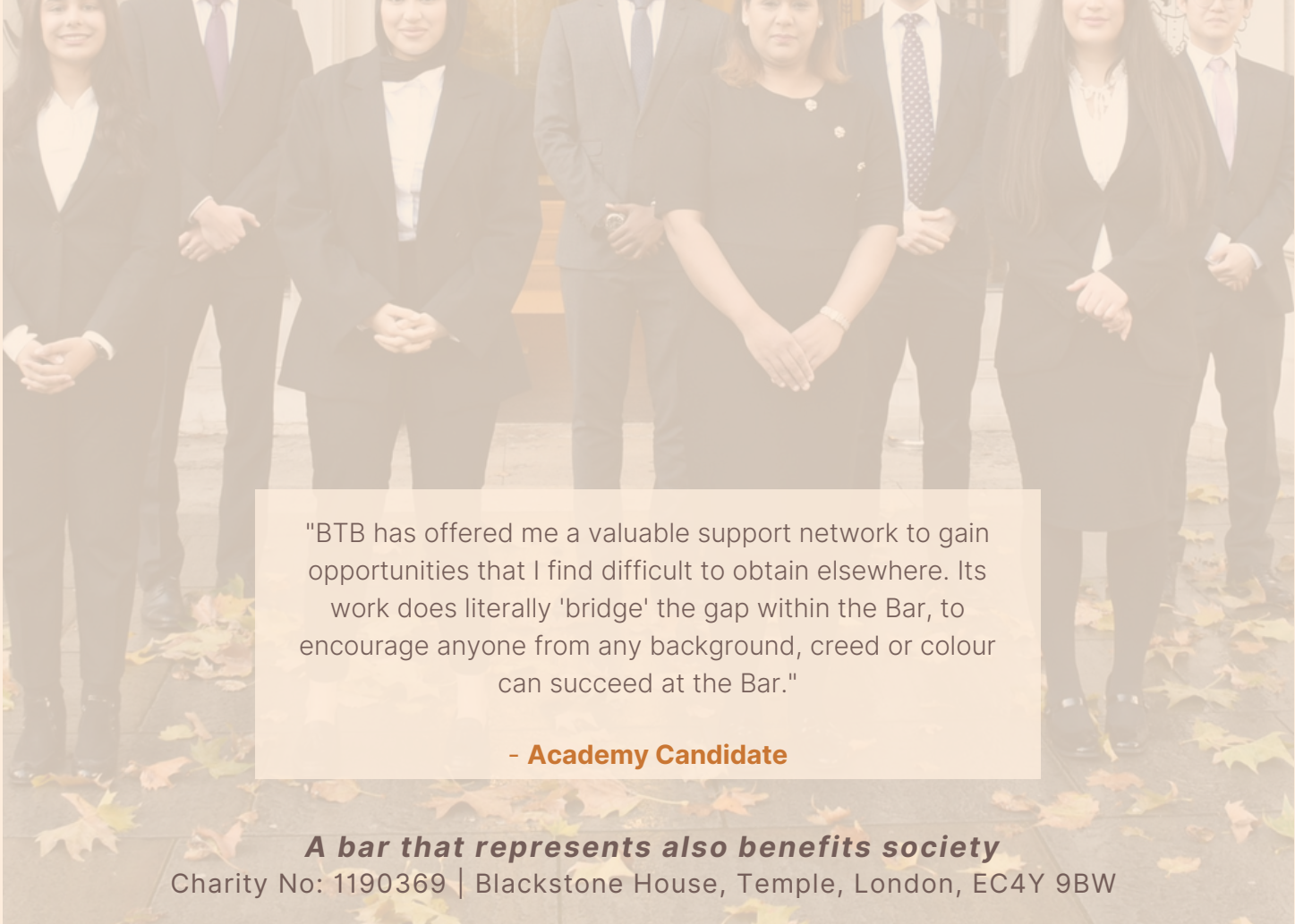
A heartfelt thank you to the sponsors who made this possible. Your commitment to Diversity and Inclusion is evident, creating access to opportunities for disadvantaged aspiring barristers. These experiences have exceeded my expectations, and I look forward to becoming an alumnus with fond memories and newfound confidence."



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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PROGRAMME EXPANSION

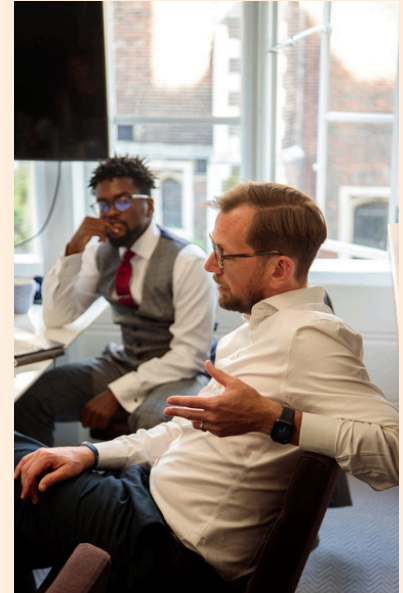


"BTB has offered me a valuable support network to gain opportunities that I find difficult to obtain elsewhere. Its work does literally 'bridge' the gap within the Bar, to encourage anyone from any background, creed or colour can succeed at the Bar."

- **Academy Candidate**

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PROGRAMME EXPANSION

Since BPP became headline sponsor in 2023, BTB has expanded and refined our core Academy programmes, strengthening both the depth and quality of candidate support. Each year, we gather detailed feedback from candidates, mentors, and chambers, using these insights to enhance programme delivery and ensure we remain responsive to the evolving demands of pupillage recruitment.

A key focus has been increasing meaningful 1-to-1 interaction between candidates and practising barristers. Across advocacy training, POD workshops, mentoring, and consultancy support, we have introduced more personalised coaching and tailored feedback, giving candidates greater opportunities to develop practical skills and confidence in settings that mirror the realities of the Bar. Alongside this, we've enhanced mini-pupillage and internship opportunities so that more candidates gain direct, relevant experience, creating stronger CV and interview outcomes.

These refinements have significantly increased the quality of the candidate experience and the strength of their results. Candidates now benefit from more practical exposure, richer professional networks, and clearer preparation for the pupillage process. By expanding opportunities and raising the standard of delivery, the Academy is better equipped than ever to help candidates succeed.

PROGRAMME EXPANSION

WELCOME EVENT

The Welcome Event has evolved from a purely online introductory session into a fully in-person launch of the BTB Academy year. Initially designed for basic orientation and programme overview, the event has now been expanded to focus on meaningful relationship-building between candidates, senior alumni and BTB staff.

The welcome now includes structured networking segments, informal community-building activities and taster sessions to familiarise candidates with upcoming BTB programmes. This shift to an in-person format has strengthened early cohort cohesion and provided candidates with the opportunity to start forming their professional networks at the outset of the programme.



PROGRAMME EXPANSION



POD PROGRAMME

The Pod Programme has evolved into one of the most distinctive and impactful elements of the BTB Academy. Originally focused on personal coaching and soft skills development, the programme has been expanded to combine these foundations with targeted professional development.

Alongside existing sessions on confidence-building, mindset, and navigating challenges at the Bar, we have introduced specialist workshops delivered by practitioners and sector experts. These sessions focus on the key stages of the pupillage application cycle, giving candidates tailored insight and practical tools to strengthen their written applications, sharpen their interview techniques, and refine their overall professional presentation.

Crucially, candidates now benefit from 1-to-1 feedback from practising barristers, covering everything from CV reviews and written application guidance to advocacy exercises and mock interview practice. This dual approach — combining personal development with targeted, practical preparation — has transformed the Pods into an integrated coaching and skills-development programme.

PROGRAMME EXPANSION

MINI- PUPILLAGE PROGRAMMES

The Mini Pupillage Programme has grown into one of the Academy's most successful and impactful offers, providing candidates with structured opportunities to gain meaningful experience in their intended areas of practice. We have now introduced two clearly defined cycles at distinct points in the year, creating a more strategic and consistent model.

The first cycle guarantees every Academy candidate a mini-pupillage before the pupillage application window opens, ensuring they can draw on first-hand experience when preparing their applications. The second cycle provides additional opportunities for those not selected for internships, enabling them to build further insight and strengthen their applications ahead of interviews.

To meet growing demand, we have significantly expanded our recruitment of chambers partners, securing a wider range of practice areas and creating more placements than ever before. The programme's success has also allowed us to open up excess capacity to Academy Alumni, extending its impact beyond the current cohort.



PROGRAMME EXPANSION

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Additional Opportunities Workshop aims at supporting candidates who have not yet secured pupillage while equipping them with practical ways to strengthen their applications. Originally launched as a small online session focused on Judicial Assistant positions, the workshop has now evolved into a full in-person event.

The workshop now features contributions from a range of leading organisations and practitioners, including UK Supreme Court Judicial Assistants, advocates from Gittings & Knott, and representatives from the Free Representation Unit (FRU). These partners provide invaluable insights into roles and experiences that enhance advocacy skills, expand professional networks, and significantly improve candidates' competitiveness in future recruitment cycles.

By expanding its scope and building stronger partnerships, the workshop has grown into a flagship event within BTB's programme. Candidates are empowered to take control of their progression, identifying meaningful opportunities to build their CVs and develop their professional experience.



PROGRAMME EXPANSION

INTERNSHIPS

The Internship Programme has developed into one of the Academy's most competitive and rewarding opportunities, offering candidates unparalleled access to high-profile legal environments. Building on strong relationships and consistently excellent feedback from both partners and participants, we have significantly expanded the scale and diversity of placements available.

For the 2024/25 cycle, opportunities at the UK Supreme Court have grown from 8 to 10 placements, while positions at the High Court and Court of Appeal have increased from 16 to 19. This year also marked the introduction of a new paralegal internship with Hallinan Blackburn Gittings & Nott, giving candidates the chance to gain hands-on experience within a leading criminal defence practice.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we are excited to launch a new partnership with Cumberland Lodge, adding an additional strand of placements focused on research, policy, and social justice. These developments reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring candidates can access meaningful, CV-enhancing experience while deepening their understanding of the legal system at its highest levels.



PROGRAMME EXPANSION



MENTORING

The Mentoring Programme has evolved into one of the most tailored elements of the Academy experience. Where candidates were previously matched to mentors based only on broad practice areas, we now deliver the most comprehensive matching process BTB has ever offered. Candidates are paired not just by general area of practice but also by specialism — for example, clinical negligence — ensuring that guidance is directly relevant to their individual career ambitions.

In addition, the programme now incorporates diversity and inclusion considerations into the matching process. Candidates are offered the opportunity to be paired with mentors who share, or have experience supporting, relevant diversity characteristics, creating space for open and informed conversations about navigating the profession as someone from an underrepresented background.

This refined approach has significantly deepened the quality of the mentoring relationships, providing candidates with more relevant, personalised support and ensuring they have trusted spaces to seek both practical advice and lived-experience insights.

PROGRAMME EXPANSION



FUNDAMENTALS OF ADVOCACY

The Fundamentals of Advocacy series has developed into one of the Academy's most impactful training offers. Previously delivered entirely online, the programme has now evolved into a blended model that combines structured digital learning with a live, in-person event. Candidates first work through online modules designed and delivered by Bibi Badejo, founder of The Advocacy Coach, which introduce the core techniques of effective advocacy and build candidates' confidence step by step.

The programme culminates in a practical advocacy day, where candidates put their learning into action in simulated courtroom scenarios. Working alongside professionally trained actors as witnesses, participants practise exercises such as cross-examination and submissions before receiving detailed, tailored feedback directly from Bibi and a team of experienced practitioners.

PROGRAMME EXPANSION

INTERVIEW ADVOCACY

The Interview Advocacy Programme has been redesigned to deliver a more consistent, structured, and impactful experience for all candidates.

To ensure standardisation across all sessions, BTB has developed tailored training exercises and provided these directly to participating chambers, ensuring a consistently high-quality experience regardless of where candidates are placed. Candidates are now matched with chambers not only by their intended practice area but also by geographical location, allowing them to engage in advocacy exercises that reflect the realities of their chosen path.

The programme has been so successful that additional places are now offered to alumni, extending its benefits beyond the Academy year. Candidates leave the training with strengthened advocacy techniques, increased confidence, and a clear understanding of how to approach practical exercises commonly tested at interview.



PROGRAMME EXPANSION

GRADUATION

The Graduation Ceremony has evolved into one of the highlights of the Academy calendar. Hosted at Inner Temple, the event marks the culmination of the Academy year and provides a moment for candidates, alumni, supporters, and members of the wider BTB network to come together and celebrate.

In recent years, the tone of the event has shifted from educational to truly celebratory, with speeches, certificate presentations, and opportunities for networking. The ceremony now attracts guests from some of the most prestigious institutions in the profession, including representatives from the UK Supreme Court, Blackstone's Chambers, and other leading organisations.

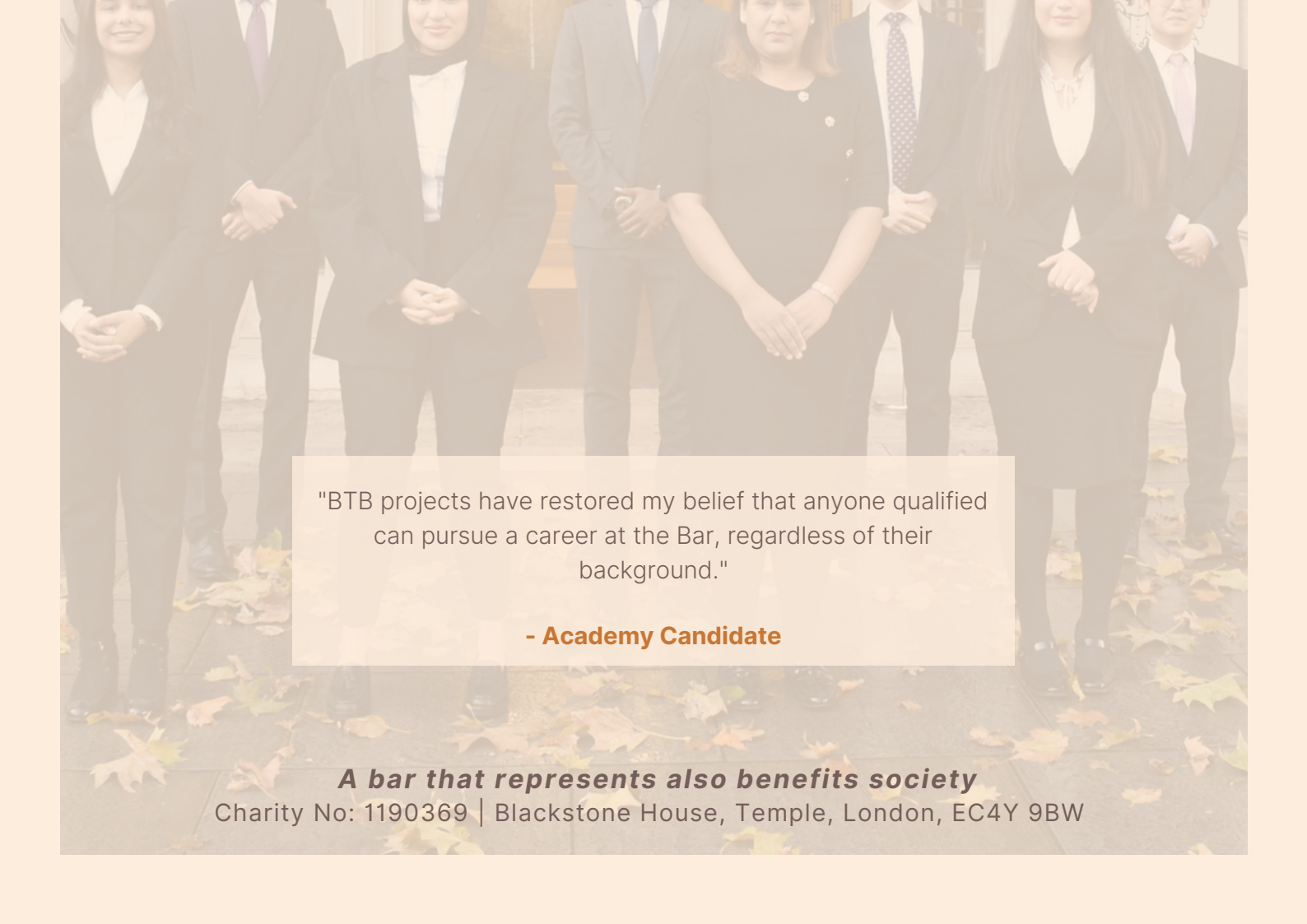




BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

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NOVEL PROGRAMMES

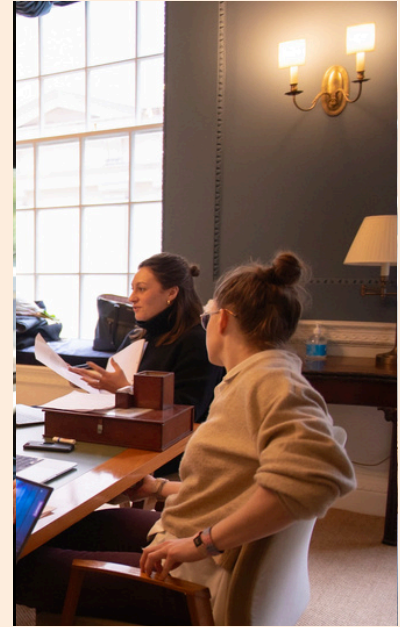


"BTB projects have restored my belief that anyone qualified
can pursue a career at the Bar, regardless of their
background."

- **Academy Candidate**

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NOVEL PROGRAMMES

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Since BPP became headline sponsor in 2023, we have launched a series of new Academy initiatives aimed at deepening impact, widening access, and better preparing candidates for the realities of pupillage. These programmes were developed in direct response to candidate feedback and sector insight.

With a view to strengthening both written and oral advocacy skills, we introduced the Academy Mooting Competition, giving candidates the chance to practise live submission in a formal, competitive setting. We also launched two Essay Competitions, encouraging deeper engagement with topical legal issues and giving candidates an additional platform to demonstrate critical thinking, written expression, and professional insight.

Each of these new programmes is designed to deliver direct CV and interview value, while reflecting BTB's commitment to academic rigour, progression and practical skills. They are open to all Academy candidates, and represent important steps towards diversifying the range of experiences candidates can draw on during pupillage recruitment.

BPP's sponsorship funding has been used to design, deliver and grow these offers, enabling us to secure venues, produce professional materials, and ensure high-quality feedback and follow-up for candidates. This investment helps ensure that the Academy is not only relevant and ambitious, but also responsive to what aspiring barristers need.

NOVEL PROGRAMMES

BTB MOOTING COMPETITION

As part of the 25/26 Academy Programme, candidates had the opportunity to participate in BTB'S first ever Mooting Competition. The competition allowed candidates to practise and enhance their advocacy skills while gaining firsthand experience in mooting.



Candidates took part in three rounds of competition, working across both civil and criminal problem questions. The first round, open to all Academy participants, drew 76 competitors. Across each round, candidates prepared skeleton arguments, delivered oral submissions, and received structured feedback from experienced practitioners. Each successive round brought increasing challenge and higher expectations, with judges including practising barristers, former pupils, and members of BTB's volunteer network.

The final took place in person at 7BR and was judged by His Honour Judge Bennethan, a High Court Judge. Four finalists mooted a live problem before an audience of peers, volunteers and invited guests; a high-profile moment that several candidates have since cited in interviews and applications. The Mooting Competition remains one of the most skills-focused and CV-relevant elements of the programme, and its placement early in the year ensures candidates can refer to it throughout the pupillage process.



MOOTING COMPETITION

SIMRAN CHARD

“ To be able to practice both my written and oral advocacy was invaluable, as this was strategically placed closer to pupillage interviews it also really helped me feel confident when going into interviews as a moot winner. ”

The BTB Moot was a fantastic and worthwhile addition to the academy programme, it involved 3 rounds: an initial written skeleton round, oral online semi final rounds and a written and oral round for the in-person finals. It is great to have this addition to the academy as mooting opportunities can be sparse and unless you are usually part of a university or institution it is hard to enter into them as an individual.

To be able to practice both my written and oral advocacy was invaluable, as this was strategically placed closer to pupillage interviews it also really helped me feel confident when going into interviews as a moot winner.

. Getting to perform in person advocacy is a vital skill for the profession and it was great to present my submissions to a sitting High Court Judge.

I would definitely recommend this opportunity to future academy candidates, it develops many skills imperative for the bar and has helped my pupillage applications stand out. I was able to demonstrate successful advocacy experiences and this strengthened my applications.

The moot was organised as an online semi final which allows more people, and those not in London, to participate and the finals are held in chambers which is always a great experience and allows you to network after the moot.

“ I would definitely recommend this opportunity to future academy candidates, it develops many skills imperative for the bar and has helped my pupillage applications stand out. ”



CANDIDATE VOICES

“

Participating in BTB Mooting competition allowed me to work with my partner to consider diverse perspectives and prepare a written piece of advocacy. I enjoyed the challenge!

- Cynthia Garba

The mooting competition allowed us to work on written and oral advocacy and get really good feedback on how to develop.

-Tenishia Prah

The BTB Mooting Competition is a great experience to practise advocacy and network with fellow students.

- Ethan Naish

”

NOVEL PROGRAMMES

BTB ESSAY COMPETITION

As part of the 25/26 Academy Programme, candidates were invited to take part in BTB's inaugural Essay Competition. Designed to support written advocacy, critical thinking and legal analysis, the competition gave participants the chance to explore a complex topic in depth and showcase their ideas to a senior legal audience.



Candidates were asked to respond to the question:

“Evaluate the role of unconscious bias in legal decision-making. What measures can be implemented to promote fairness within the judiciary and legal practice?”

Submissions were judged by Margaret Purdasy, a barrister, Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, and senior lawyer at the Commonwealth and Development Office. Candidates were assessed on the clarity, originality and rigour of their arguments, as well as their awareness of how bias can manifest within legal systems and what reforms might address it.

Finalists were announced publicly and recognised across BTB's social and digital platforms. The competition offered a meaningful way for candidates to express their views on issues at the heart of BTB's mission, while also producing strong material to draw on in pupillage applications and interviews. It will remain a key academic feature of the Academy's annual programme.

NOVEL PROGRAMMES

JO DELAHUNTY KC ESSAY COMPETITION

As part of the 24/25 Academy Programme, candidates were invited to submit entries to the first annual Jo Delahunty KC Essay Competition. This opportunity encouraged participants to engage critically with evolving areas of legal practice while developing skills in structured argument, legal research and written expression.



The question set for this year was:

“Consider the legal framework and practice guidance that the UK has in place to accommodate the needs of neurodiverse individuals in legal proceedings. Does it achieve its aims? Discuss.”

Entries were judged by Professor Jo Delahunty KC, a highly respected barrister and academic, known for her work in the most complex family law cases and for championing access to justice across the profession.

Candidates responded with insight and thoughtfulness to a timely and socially relevant topic. The competition offered the chance to explore underexamined areas of law and reflect on fairness and procedural justice within the court system. Finalists’ essays were recognised across BTB channels and contributed to strong interview material for pupillage applications. The competition will remain a key part of the Academy’s academic and advocacy offer in future cycles.



“
Receiving the award at
the BTB graduation was
an immense honour.
Professor Jo Delahunty
KC has long inspired me,
so having my work read
and recognised by her
was profoundly
affirming.”

THE PROFESSOR JO DELAHUNTY KC ESSAY COMPETITION

MONIQUE FREMDER

The Professor Jo Delahunty KC Essay Competition invites BTB Academy candidates to submit up to 1,000 words on a legal question exploring neurodiversity in the justice system. Judged and funded by Professor Jo Delahunty KC of 4PB, the competition awards a £500 prize to the winning entry.

This year's question asked: "Consider the legal framework and practice guidance that the UK has in place to accommodate the needs of neurodiverse individuals in legal proceedings. Does it achieve its aims? Discuss." I approached the topic through the lens of family law, drawing on my observations of intermediaries and adaptations in counsel's approach to the cross-examination of vulnerable witnesses during mini-pupillages and marshalling.

Researching and writing the essay was both rigorous and rewarding. It enabled me to examine how procedural mechanisms operate in practice and to assess their role in securing access to justice.

Engaging with the theme of neurodiversity deepened my perspective, reinforcing my belief that neurodivergence is a vital dimension of human diversity that enriches society and must be meaningfully included within our legal system.

Receiving the award at the BTB graduation was an immense honour. Professor Jo Delahunty KC has long inspired me, so having my work read and recognised by her was profoundly affirming. The prize has strengthened my confidence as an aspiring barrister and sharpened my focus on advocating for greater inclusivity in family justice.

This competition reflects BTB's commitment to advancing inclusivity and meaningful change within the legal system. It offers candidates a rare opportunity to engage with real legal issues and to contribute to conversations that matter.

“
This competition reflects BTB's
commitment to advancing inclusivity and
meaningful change within the legal
system.”

CANDIDATE VOICES

“

The essay competition, was thought provoking and a great way to keep legal skills fresh whilst advocating for change.

- *Tenishia Prah*

Good opportunity for those who have not been able to participate in legal essay competitions before and to write about unconscious bias in the legal profession.

- *Mandy Heer*

The essay competition was a good opportunity to practice my legal research and written skills.

- *Enehuwa Adagu*

It gives people an opportunity to be involved in a competition and research something new.

- *Raymah Selvaraj*

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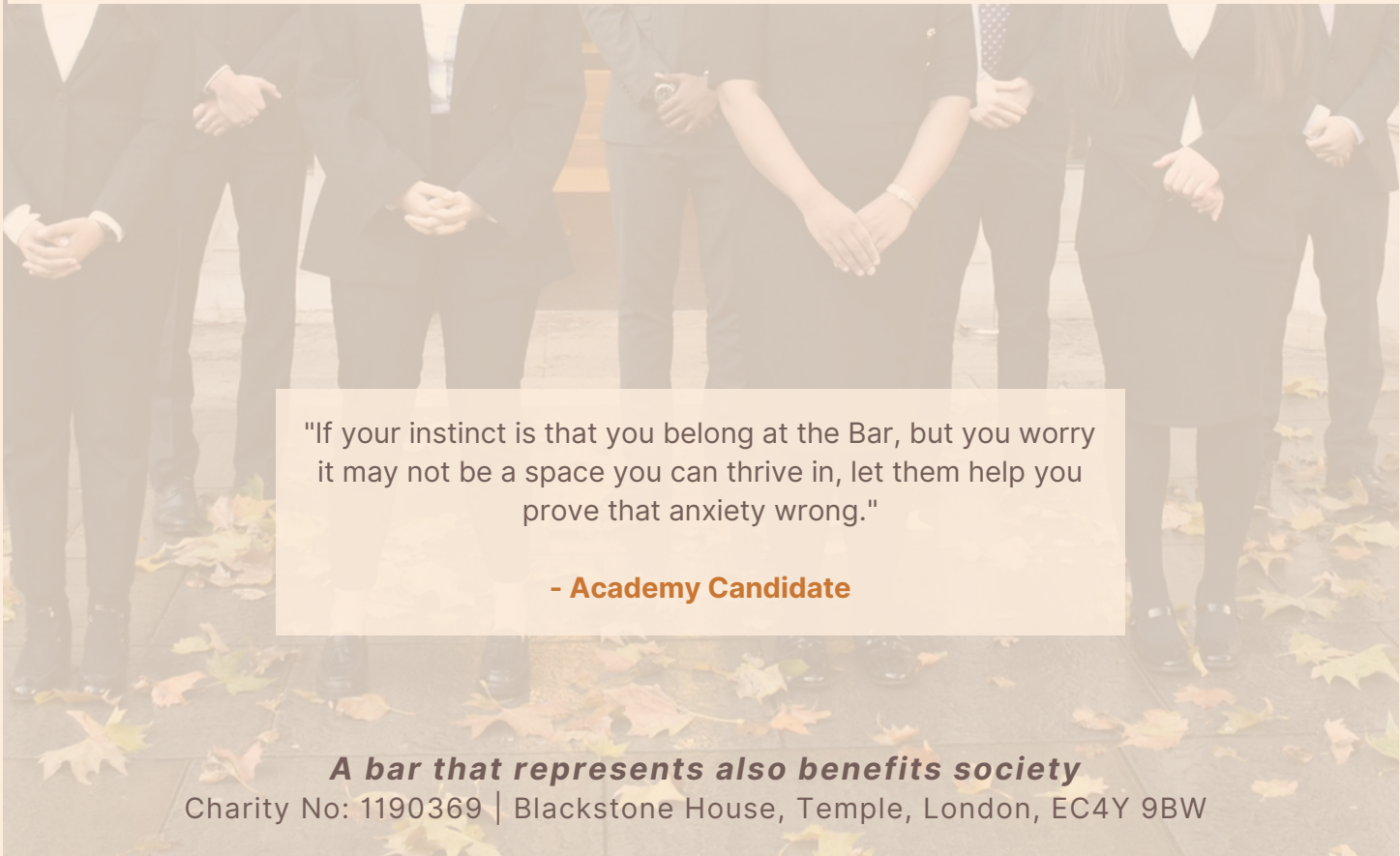


BRIDGING

THE BAR

ALUMNI

ALUMNI PROGRAMME



"If your instinct is that you belong at the Bar, but you worry it may not be a space you can thrive in, let them help you prove that anxiety wrong."

- Academy Candidate

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ALUMNI NETWORK

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

As the number of Academy graduates grows, so too has demand for continued development and connection. Since the beginning of BTB and BPP's partnership in 2023, BTB has formalised its alumni activity and begun delivery of a sustained programme. It is designed to provide continued access to development opportunities while sustaining the values, community and momentum built during the core Academy year.

Alumni receive structured pre-pupillage support, including written application reviews, mock interviews and practical recommendations for CV development. Alongside this, BTB provides guidance on the practical realities of junior practice, from chambers culture and work allocation to confidence, resilience and long-term development. To maintain connection and shared identity, the programme also includes regular community-building and networking events, designed to keep alumni engaged

The Alumni Network has three key goals:

- Professional development: Continuing to equip alumni with the skills, mindset and practical experience required to succeed at the Bar.
 - Community building: Maintaining and strengthening the sense of belonging created during the Academy, and mitigating the isolation often experienced by those entering the profession from non-traditional backgrounds.
 - Pay-it-forward culture: Encouraging alumni to support the next generation of BTB candidates through volunteering and peer-led activities.
-

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MOCK TRIAL

The BTB Alumni Mock Trial gives alumni a hands-on opportunity to deepen their advocacy skills and gain realistic courtroom experience in a supported, structured environment. Taking place over three in-person Saturday rounds at a London Magistrates' Court, with the pilot in summer 2026, the programme offers participants the chance to act as counsel across both civil and criminal trials, developing fluency in case theory, examination, and submissions under pressure.



In the lead-up to the competition, BTB will deliver pre-trial workshops on case preparation, advocacy structure, and courtroom conduct. Alumni will also be offered team-based coaching to help them work collaboratively, think tactically, and reflect on performance. Each round will be presided over by volunteer barristers, with the final round judged by a senior judicial stakeholder, offering participants high-quality exposure to feedback from professionals across the system.

The Mock Trial is a key part of BTB's commitment to building the skills alumni need to succeed at pupillage interview and in the early years of practice. It gives candidates the opportunity to refine their advocacy in realistic conditions, build confidence in court procedure, and demonstrate readiness for the demands of junior practice.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ADVOCACY TRAINING

In Autumn 2026, the Alumni Network will pilot a new Advocacy at the Junior Bar workshop series in partnership with Coram Chambers, aimed at alumni pursuing pupillage and early practice at the Family Bar. These specialist sessions are designed to strengthen candidates' readiness for practice by focusing on the specific demands of advocacy in family proceedings including the communication, positioning, and professional judgement required at junior level.



The workshop series will explore the types of advocacy alumni are likely to encounter both during second six and in early tenancy, as well as the soft skills essential for managing clients, handling sensitive subject matter, and working constructively with judges and opponents. It will also support candidates in understanding how to communicate these skills effectively in pupillage interviews when applying to family-focused sets.

This event reflects BTB's growing focus on sector-specific development for alumni, providing not only general support for progression, but tailored preparation that speaks directly to candidates' chosen areas of practice.

If successful, the model will be expanded into other areas of law, helping alumni to develop targeted confidence and credibility across their targeted sector of the Bar.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PUPILLAGE POST MORTEM

As part of BTB's Alumni Programme, we run an annual Post-Pupillage Applications Workshop to support alumni preparing for the next pupillage recruitment cycle. Held in person at Littleton Chambers, the session helps candidates reflect on their most recent applications and develop targeted action plans to strengthen their prospects in the year ahead.



Led by a team of volunteer barristers, the workshop offered small-group discussions tailored to candidates' preferred practice areas. Alumni received practical, honest feedback on their current profiles, explored common pitfalls in the selection process, and gained insight into how best to address gaps in experience or confidence. The format encouraged open, constructive conversation and gave participants a clearer sense of how their applications are viewed by practitioners within their chosen fields.

This event was particularly significant as it was organised by BTB alumna Mia, now a pupil at Littleton Chambers. Her leadership and initiative ensured that the session was directly shaped by the alumni perspective and rooted in real-time understanding of what applicants need.

It was a powerful example of the BTB community in action: alumni taking ownership, practitioners giving back, and candidates progressing with the tools they need. The workshop will now run annually and form a model for future peer-led activity within the wider Alumni Programme.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCE ACCESS

Recognising that many candidates secure pupillage months or even years after completing the programme, we offer ongoing, flexible support to help alumni stay pupillage-ready throughout the recruitment process.



Alumni continue to have access to the BTB Consultancy Panel, where they can request feedback on applications, schedule mock interviews, and receive tailored guidance from experienced practitioners. Where capacity allows, they can also take up places on mini-pupillages or interview advocacy training sessions offered during the Academy year, ensuring they don't miss out on key opportunities for further development.

This offer is designed to meet alumni where they are, allowing them to engage with support as and when they need it, while staying connected to BTB's wider community. It ensures that candidates can continue to develop and refine their applications over time, with the tools and feedback needed to approach each round of the pupillage process with greater confidence and clarity.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICE PREPERATON

The Alumni Programme includes a series of professional development sessions designed to prepare candidates for the realities of practice. Delivered in collaboration with sector experts, these sessions focus on the wider skills needed to build a sustainable career at the Bar.

We are working with Michaela Hardwick of Beyond Compliance to offer a session on the Professional Statement competencies and broader principles of regulatory compliance. This practical workshop will help alumni understand their professional obligations from the outset and support confident, compliant early practice.



BTB is currently in discussions with Azets UK, specialists in legal accounts, accounting, and advisory services, to deliver a practical session tailored for future self-employment. The talk will cover essential topics like tax efficiency, cash-flow planning, and financial systems that help junior practitioners manage the complex realities of self-employed life. Drawing on Azets' experience supporting barristers at all career stages, the session will combine clarity, technical insight, and realistic guidance; a useful addition to BTB's wider practical training offer.



BTB will continue to expand its workshop offerings to reflect the evolving needs of alumni, with a focus on practical, skills-based sessions that support confident, well-rounded entry into practice.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

ANNUAL HIKE

The Annual Hike is a relaxed, informal opportunity for community-building across BTB's extended network. Open to Alumni, current Academy candidates, and BTB-associated barristers, the event brings together multiple cohorts in a setting that encourages genuine connection away from the formality of legal events.



Taking place each August, the hike follows a guided route through Virginia Water, past the Magna Carta monument, and into the Enchanted Forest in Surrey. Along the way, participants join in light-touch activities including rounders, mindfulness and guided reflection sessions: these aim to foster connection, wellbeing, and peer support. The walk concludes at a local pub, offering space for informal conversation and cross-cohort exchange.

The hike provides a unique opportunity for barristers and candidates at different stages to meet, share experiences and build relationships in a low-pressure, inclusive environment. The event reflects BTB's wider commitment to sustaining a diverse, values-led professional community; one that supports each other not only in CVs and courtrooms, but also in everyday moments of belonging.

As the Alumni Programme develops, the hike will remain a key part of BTB's approach to long-term engagement and cultural continuity.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

ANNUAL REUNION



The Annual Reunion is the flagship Alumni Network event and serves as a key opportunity for alumni to reconnect, meet new members of the BTB community, and expand their professional networks. Designed to create a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere, the event brings together current Academy candidates, Alumni, and BTB-associated volunteer barristers in an informal setting.

Planned to launch in London on 5 December 2025, the evening will begin with welcome drinks and light catering, followed by short acknowledgements, informal networking and community-building activities such as games and raffles.

By providing a social and professional platform for Alumni to remain engaged with one another, and with BTB more broadly, the Reunion supports long-term community cohesion, reduces the isolation often experienced at the Bar, and embeds a culture of mutual support throughout the BTB ecosystem.



PAY-IT-BACK CULTURE

CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT

In addition to structured events and training, the BTB Alumni Programme offers a range of opportunities for graduates to remain actively involved in the Academy. Alumni are encouraged to support the next cohort by taking on meaningful roles within the programme.



Each year, alumni return as mentors, session facilitators, and POD leaders, helping to guide candidates through the academic and emotional demands of the Academy. Their recent, lived experience of the process allows them to offer practical advice, encouragement and perspective.

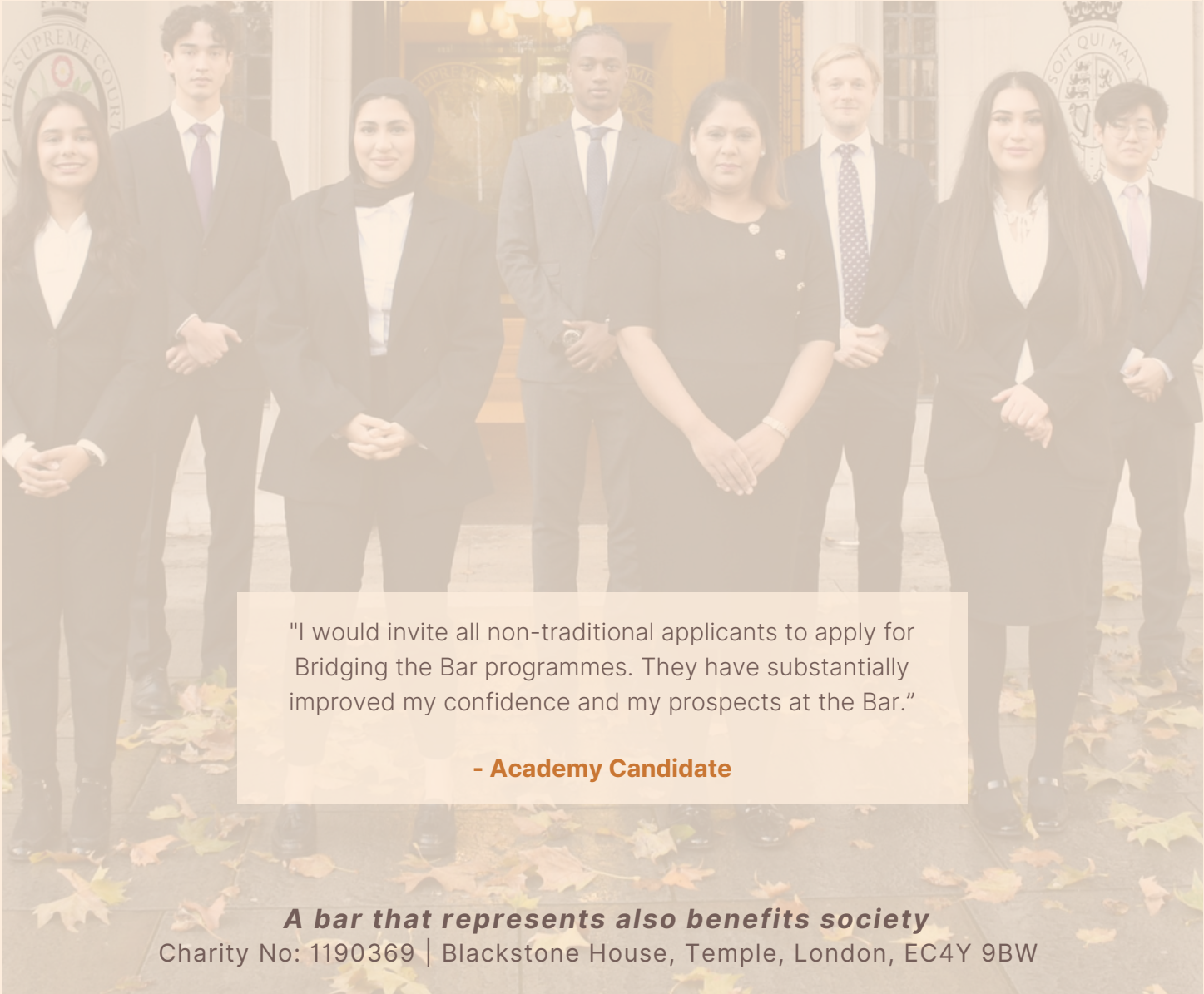
For those who want to take on a more public-facing role, the Alumni Ambassador scheme provides a structured route to champion BTB externally. Ambassadors speak at events, contribute to written and video content, and help raise awareness of the programme across the profession. These roles offer valuable opportunities for alumni to develop their public speaking, storytelling and leadership skills, while visibly modelling what success can look like.

Together, these roles help to foster a culture of continuity and shared investment across the BTB community. Alumni are given meaningful ways to stay involved, pass on what they've learned, and contribute to an experience they themselves have shaped. As more graduates step into these roles, they help ensure the Academy remains responsive, grounded and informed by the realities of the path to pupillage.



BRIDGING THE BAR

ACADEMY IMPACT



"I would invite all non-traditional applicants to apply for Bridging the Bar programmes. They have substantially improved my confidence and my prospects at the Bar."

- **Academy Candidate**

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ACADEMY FIGURES



100

CANDIDATES

Selected for the Academy Programme



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MINI PUPILLAGES

Undertaken by
Bridging the Bar candidates



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INTERNSHIPS

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

ACADEMY FIGURES



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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

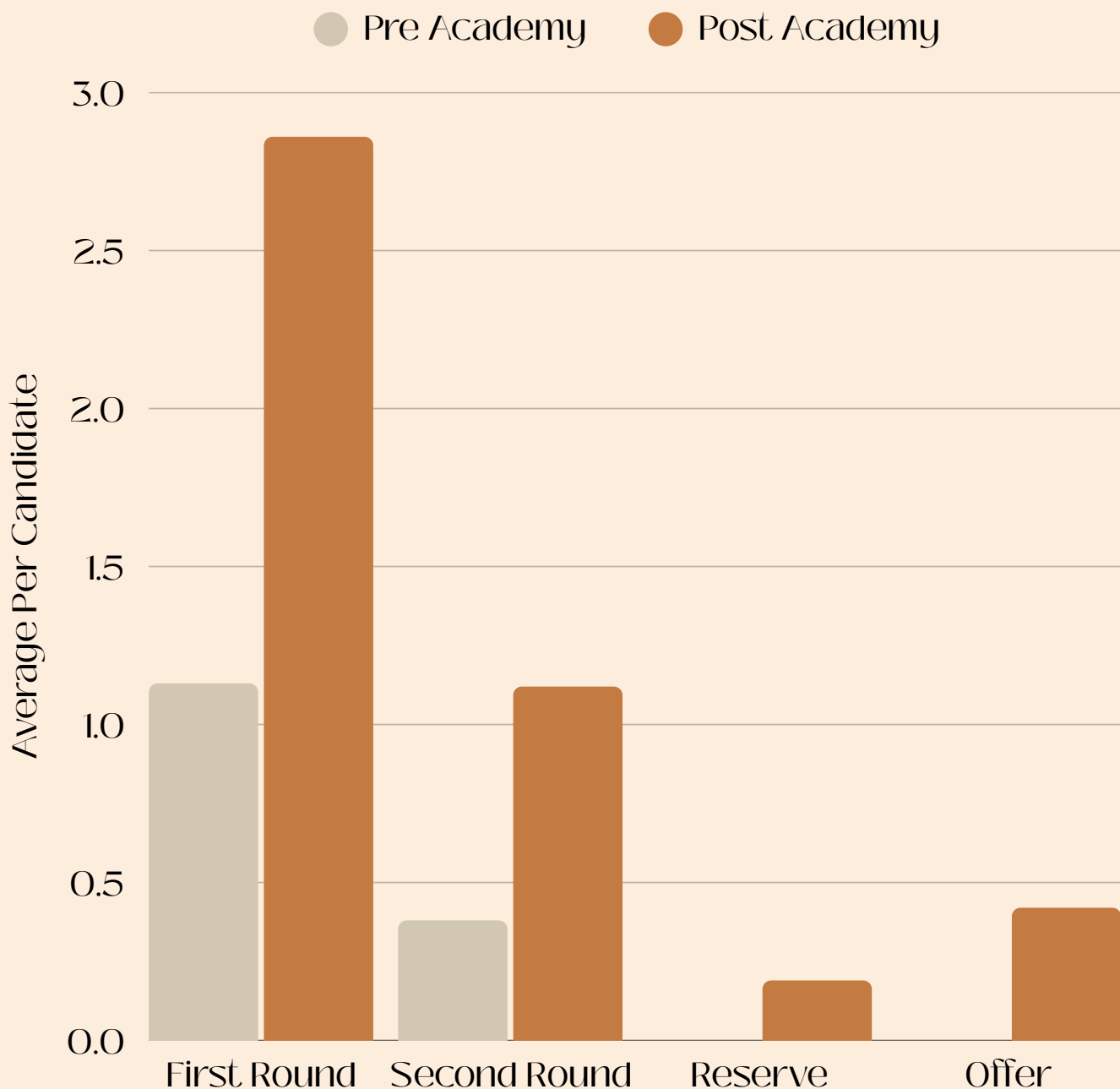
ACADEMY IMPACT



**220% INCREASE
IN TOTAL
SECOND-ROUND
INTERVIEWS**



**173.3%
INCREASE IN
TOTAL FIRST-
ROUND
INTERVIEWS**



Reported data from BTB Academy's 24/25 cohort at onboarding and at exit.

ACADEMY IMPACT



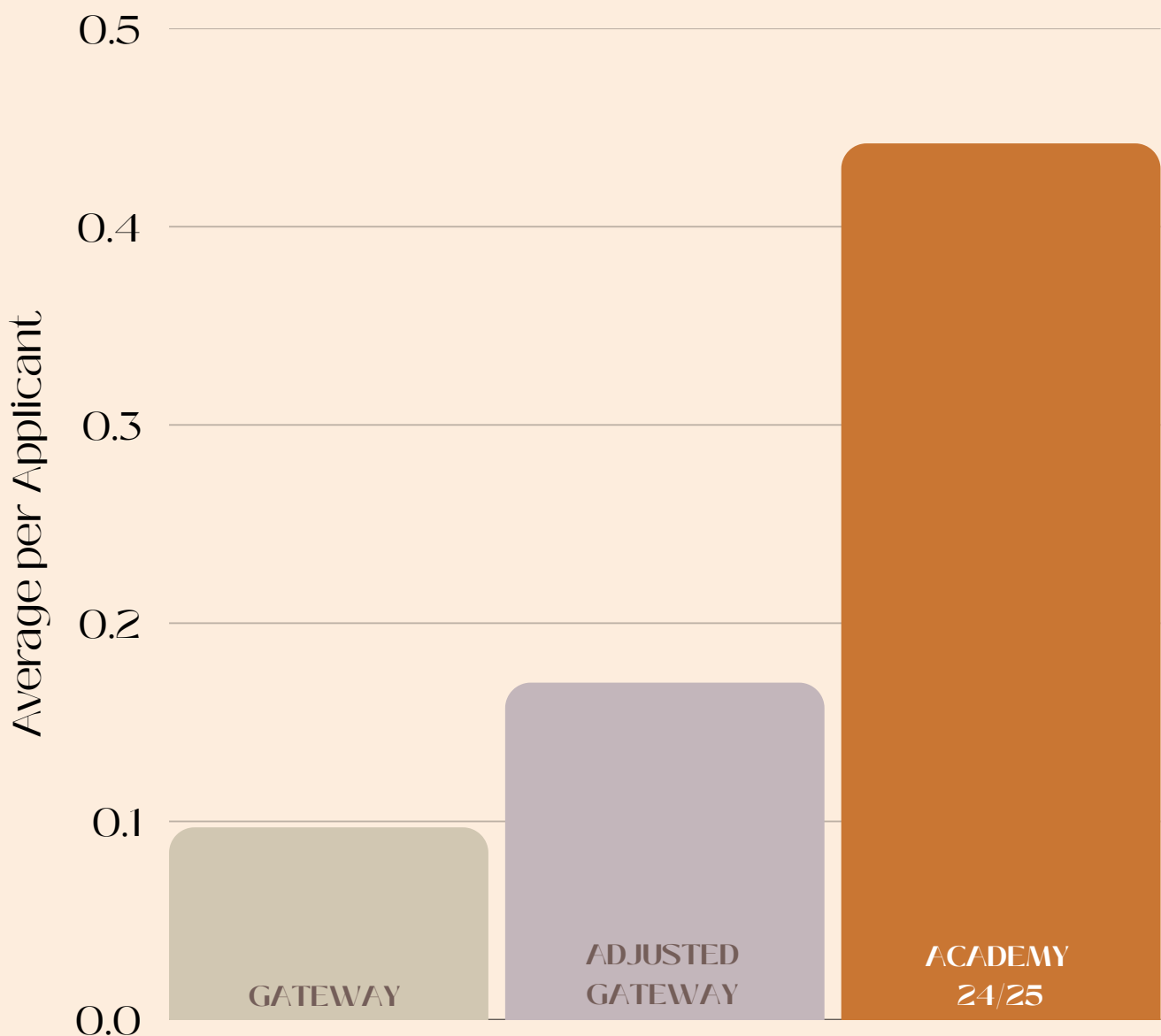
**5.74X MORE
LIKELY TO GET
PUPILLAGE**

AGAINST RAW GATEWAY DATA



**2.60X MORE
LIKELY TO GET
PUPILLAGE**

AGAINST ADJUSTED GATEWAY DATA



Pupillage Gateway Report 2023/34 in comparison with reported data from BTB Academy's 24/25 cohort.

ACADEMY IMPACT

OUR CANDIDATES ARE....



Low Income
Background*

3.39x

more likely to succeed

20.0% vs Gateway 5.9%



BAME

3.16 x

more likely to succeed

13.6% vs Gateway ≈4.3% (derived)



LGBTQ+

3.72 x

more likely to succeed

28.6% vs Gateway overall 7.7%



Disability

4.33 x

more likely to succeed

33.3% vs Gateway overall 7.7%

*Using free school meals as a proxy for socio-economic status

Multipliers compare Academy per-applicant success from reported data (24/25 cohort) with the latest national benchmarks. FSM uses Gateway 2022/23 (latest with counts). BAME uses derived 2023/24 rates (offer share ÷ applicant share). Disability and LGBTQ+ use the overall 2023/24 success rate (7.7%) because subgroup success rates aren't published. Small-n caution applies.

ACADEMY IMPACT



"The programme has given me more than I could have hoped for – I'm sure I would not have obtained pupillage without the opportunities it has provided. My wholehearted thanks to the BTB team, I know you work phenomenally hard and it really is so appreciated."



"I don't think this would have been possible without BTB and the support I have got over the past few months. I truly think it has made such a tangible difference and just wanted to let you know that. I am indebted to the academy for making me a better candidate."



"The BTB Academy gave me more than I could have ever imagined. The Academy did so much for me from helping me with my pupillage apps to being paired with a fantastic mentor and networking with some amazing likeminded people. I can't thank the Academy enough for their support over this year. I can honestly say, without a doubt, I would not have got pupillage this year with you! I am immensely grateful."

ACADEMY IMPACT



"I would like to thank the Academy for allowing me to be a part of the programme. I would not have got pupillage without it. Through the Academy I gained the experience and resources I needed to obtain pupillage. I met great people going through the same experience as myself and I could not recommend the Academy enough!"



"The mentorship, opportunities, and sense of community I found through Bridging the Bar were invaluable in helping me secure pupillage. The programme support gave me the confidence to keep going, and I'm incredibly grateful to have been a part of such a brilliant programme. Thank you for everything BTB team!"



"The BTB academy has given me more than I could imagine - The Academy provided advocacy training, mentorship and networking opportunities that helped me secure pupillage during my bar course. As someone from a non-typical background I felt accepted and celebrated. BTB has played a foundational role in facilitating my success, I would recommend it to any aspiring barrister."

ACADEMY IMPACT



"The academy was instrumental for me this year and I believe was key to me securing pupillage. I am grateful to have joined and learnt from such a valuable community of aspiring barristers. In a predominately self-employed profession, a supportive friend group and a helping hand cannot be understated. I have learnt and grown from the people I have met at BtB."



"The BTB Academy has opened many doors, including to the Supreme Court, that allowed me to secure pupillage. It has given me the self-confidence, tools and energy to succeed. Most importantly, I gained a network of brilliant, inspiring and hard-working peers that I am proud to call my friends."



"The impact the BTB academy has had on me both personally and professionally cannot be overstated. After multiple years of failing to secure pupillage, I am delighted to say that this year I was successful. This was in large part due to the incredible opportunities and support provided by BTB. From my fantastic mentor's input to mock interviews and supportive POD sessions, this was the first year that I didn't feel alone in the application process and the outcome speaks for itself. BTB has reinforced my belief in myself and the future of a bar that represents society as a whole. I couldn't be more thankful to you all."

ACADEMY IMPACT



100%

of pupillage offer holders

reported that obtaining the offer was materially aided by the Academy



89.5%

of Academy Candidates

reported improved written applications

63.2% 5★; 26.3% 4★; 10.5% 3★; avg 4.53/5; median 5



94.7%

of Academy Candidates

reported improved interviews

42.1% 5★; 52.6% 4★; 5.3% 3★; avg 4.37/5; median 4

ACADEMY IMPACT



100%

of Academy Candidates

would recommend the Academy. 89.5% 5★; 10.5% 4★; avg 4.89/5; median 5



89.5%

of Academy Candidates

reported improved community building
36.8% 5★; 52.6% 4★; 5.3% 3★; avg 4.21/5; median 4



84.2%

of Academy Candidates

reported improved confidence
52.6% 5★; 31.6% 4★; 15.8% 3★; avg 4.37/5; median 5



BRIDGING THE BAR ACADEMY

Sponsored by  **BPP**
UNIVERSITY

GET IN TOUCH

www.bridgingthebar.org

programmes@bridgingthebar.org
candidatecommunications@bridgingthebar.org

for group, press and media enquiries
info@bridgingthebar.org



@BridgeTheBar



Bridging The Bar



Bridging The Bar



@bridgingthebar

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 2025**

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 2024
END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	1st April 2025
TRUSTEES AT 1ST APRIL 2025	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
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PRIMARY BANKERS	Coutts & Co 440 Strand London WC2R 0QS Zempler Bank Ltd Cottons Centre Cottons Lane London SE1 2QG
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS	Castle View Accounting Ltd Ground Floor Offices 53 High Street Arundel West Sussex BN18 9AJ
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BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2025**

Trustees' Responsibilities


The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Law and the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice GAAP).

The Law applicable to Charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the Governing Document 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 Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the CIO will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the Governing Document. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees on 24 January 2026

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 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2024/25 £	TOTAL 2023/24 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds					
Donations, Grants & Legacies	3a	202,231	-	202,231	131,690
Investment Income	3b	26	-	26	66
Other Incoming Resources	3c	5,751	-	5,751	1,671
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		208,008	-	208,008	133,427
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of Generating Funds					
Cost of Charitable Activities	4a	156,042	-	156,042	92,749
Governance Costs	4b	1,650	-	1,650	1,350
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		157,692	-	157,692	94,099
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		50,317	-	50,317	39,328
Funds Brought Forward		91,950	-	91,950	52,622
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		142,267	-	142,267	91,950

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 102 to 107 form part of these financial statements.

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 1ST APRIL 2025**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 01-Apr-25 £	TOTAL 01-Apr-24 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	2	-	-	-	-
Investments	6	-	-	-	-
Total Fixed Assets		-	-	-	-
Current Assets					
Debtors & Prepayments	8	-	-	-	-
Cash at Bank and in Hand	7	144,727	-	144,727	93,990
Total Current Assets		144,727	-	144,727	93,990
Creditors: Amounts due within one year	9	2,460	-	2,460	2,040
NET CURRENT ASSETS		142,267	-	142,267	91,950
TOTAL ASSETS less current liabilities		142,267	-	142,267	91,950
Creditors: Amounts falling due in more than one year	10	-	-	-	-
NET ASSETS		142,267	-	142,267	91,950
Funds of the Charity					
General Funds		142,267	-	142,267	91,950
Restricted Funds	5	-	-	-	-
Total Funds		142,267	-	142,267	91,950

Approved by the Trustees on 24 January 2026

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 2025**

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 2025

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
----------------------------------	---------------------------

2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

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

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

1st April 2025: None
1st April 2024: None

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2025

3. INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2024/25 £	TOTAL 2023/24 £
a) Donations, Grants & Legacies				
Gifts & Donations	202,231	-	202,231	131,690
	202,231	-	202,231	131,690
b) Investment Income				
Interest	26	-	26	66
	26	-	26	66
c) Other Incoming Resources				
Sundry Income	5,751	-	5,751	1,671
	5,751	-	5,751	1,671

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2025

4. RESOURCES EXPENDED

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2024/25 £	TOTAL 2023/24 £
a) Cost of Charitable Activities					
Academy Programme Costs		22,728	-	22,728	13,106
Administrative Expenses		1,132	-	1,132	2,160
Advertising & Publicity		1,987	-	1,987	1,246
Award & Prizes		342	-	342	860
Bank Charges		57	-	57	98
Catering Costs		9,009	-	9,009	-
Gifts & Donations		-	-	-	2,328
Insurance Costs		424	-	424	266
Photography Costs		2,990	-	2,990	1,650
Staff Costs	12	104,377	-	104,377	58,095
Staff Expenses		8,950	-	8,950	3,700
Sundry Expenses		625	-	625	2,367
Venue Hire		240	-	240	4,240
Volunteers Costs		50	-	50	-
Website Costs		3,130	-	3,130	2,633
		156,042	-	156,042	92,749
b) Governance Costs					
Independent Examiners Fees	9	1,320	-	1,320	1,140
Legal & Professional Fees		330	-	330	210
		1,650	-	1,650	1,350

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2025

5. RESTRICTED FUNDS

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

6. INVESTMENTS

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

7. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	TOTAL 01-Apr-25 £	TOTAL 01-Apr-24 £
Cash at Bank & in Hand	144,727	-	144,727	93,990
	144,727	-	144,727	93,990

8. DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	TOTAL 01-Apr-25 £	TOTAL 01-Apr-24 £
Sundry Debtors	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	TOTAL 01-Apr-25 £	TOTAL 01-Apr-24 £
Independent Examiners Fees	1,320	-	1,320	1,140
Sundry Creditors	1,140	-	1,140	900
	2,460	-	2,460	2,040

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

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

11. NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 01-Apr-25 £	TOTAL 01-Apr-24 £
Fixed Asset Investments	-	-	-	-
Net Current Assets	142,267	-	142,267	91,950
Long Term Liabilities	-	-	-	-
	142,267	-	142,267	91,950

BRIDGING THE BAR
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1ST APRIL 2025

12. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS

	TOTAL 2024/25	TOTAL 2023/24
	£	£
Gross Wages, Salaries & Fees	100,363	53,845
Employer's National Insurance Costs	4,014	4,250
Pension Contributions	-	-
	104,377	58,095

Employees who were engaged in each of the following activities:

	TOTAL 2024/25	TOTAL 2023/24
Charitable Activities	5	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. (2023/24:None)

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. (2023/24:None)

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 2025 set out on pages 100 to 107.

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: 28th January 2026