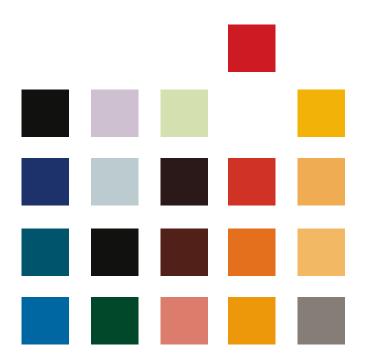


Careers at the Chancery Bar



With the right qualifications, where you come from doesn't matter, where you're going does.



"if you are looking for a career which combines intellectual firepower, communication skills and the ability to provide practical solutions to legal problems, then your natural home is the Chancery Bar"

Welcome to the Chancery Bar

Do you enjoy unravelling the knottiest of legal problems? Would you relish the prospect of your appearances in court helping to develop cutting-edge areas of law? How does advising major commercial concerns to put together a complex transaction appeal? Would you like to assist organisations to achieve their commercial goals, and support and guide individuals at times of great personal stress? If your answer to any of these questions is "Yes", then the Chancery Bar may be the career for you.

Barristers who specialise in the areas of property, business and finance law most closely associated with the Chancery Division of the High Court are called "Chancery barristers" and, collectively, the "Chancery Bar". Of the 15,000 barristers practising in England and Wales, about 1,200 specialise in Chancery work. Most are based in London but there are other important regional centres, such as Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds and Manchester.

In recent years the nature of Chancery work has changed dramatically. It still includes the important work traditionally undertaken in the Chancery Division, but the expansion and development of commercial activity, together with the increasingly complex matters that arise out of that activity, have widened its scope significantly.

Just as the work of the Chancery Bar has become more diverse, so too has the Chancery Bar itself. Only by recruiting the best, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or social background, will we maintain our unrivalled reputation for excellence.

There are lots of opportunities for experiencing the work of the Chancery Bar at first hand and we hope that this booklet will encourage you to do so. More information is available on the Chancery Bar Association's website at www.chba.org.uk.

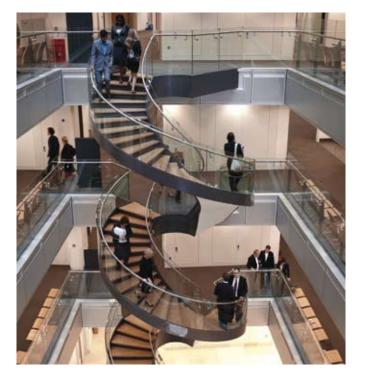


The Work of the Chancery Bar

Put ten members of the Chancery Bar in one room and ask them what kind of law they practise, and the chances are you will get ten different answers: one may say "land law", another "company", yet others "trusts", "insolvency", "professional negligence", "partnership", "wills and probate", "financial services", "tax", or "charities". What is it that links all these seemingly disparate areas of law – and others? How can they all constitute one specialist area of practice?

The answer lies in the fact that all these areas of law have roots in the body of legal principles known as "Equity", which was developed by the Court of Chancery, a Court in which the Lord Chancellor presided prior to the creation of the High Court. The Court of Chancery developed rules which promoted fairness and sought to mitigate the harsher aspects of the common law. These rules continue to influence all the areas of Chancery work, even though Parliament has intervened to put many of them on a statutory basis.







In the past, Chancery cases typically concerned real property, partnerships, patents, companies, insolvency, trusts and settlements. These traditional areas remain highly important. However, much of today's Chancery business arises in a commercial context and there is often an international dimension or cross-border element to such cases. The trust, for example, is no longer just used by wealthy families as a way of holding land, but for many different commercial purposes, including pension funds and investment trusts, some of which, usually for tax reasons, are based in offshore jurisdictions such as the Channel Islands and the Caribbean.

A more detailed list of the main areas of law comprised in "Chancery work" can be found at pages 22 to 23.

In the modern world, Chancery barristers are to be found in many places beyond the Chancery Division of the High Court. Many Chancery cases are heard in the county courts. Chancery practitioners also appear in other courts including the Commercial Court and the Court of Protection, the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. They appear in tribunals (for example, in relation to cases involving land, tax and charities) and other places where disputes are resolved, such as arbitrations and mediations. Some Chancery barristers are permitted to appear in certain courts outside of England and Wales, or may assist overseas lawyers in the preparation of their cases. To a greater or lesser extent, Chancery practice will also involve work beyond dispute resolution, in the form of advice on transactions, past or planned for the future.

The law dealt with by the Chancery specialist is in constant (but gradual) flux as the market for legal services changes and new areas of law become important. Whilst having roots based in history, the Chancery Bar is a modern and evolving practice area, reflecting the usefulness and flexibility of its underlying equitable and property principles.

Chancery Bar Association 5

Chancery work is sometimes split by the legal directories into "Traditional Chancery" and "Commercial Chancery". Broadly speaking, chambers known for Traditional Chancery will undertake work which relates to private individuals (often called private clients), which includes trusts and the estates of deceased persons, personal insolvency, an individual's ownership of and dealings with land and related taxation issues. On the other hand, chambers listed as doing Commercial Chancery are focused more on commercial business and property dealings, which may include pension funds, investment trusts and structured investment vehicles and companies. But these labels can be a bit misleading. A dispute about the rights to light as between two skyscrapers in the City of London in one sense



is "traditional", because it involves principles of law which have a long history. But it is hard to imagine a more obviously "commercial" context for the dispute. Moreover, many barristers have practices which span Traditional and Commercial Chancery and most will further specialise within those two areas. There are also other more specialist areas of work within the Chancery Bar, such as intellectual property and tax.

Because of the increasingly commercial nature of many kinds of Chancery work, identifying the distinctions between what a "Chancery" barrister does and what a "Commercial" barrister does can be difficult.

There is a significant overlap between "Commercial Chancery" and "Commercial" work, but the two fields do not entirely coincide. If Chancery work and Commercial work were drawn as a spectrum, the Chancery end would include several key areas of Chancery work that Commercial barristers would not undertake, and the converse is also true.

So, for example, a Chancery barrister and a Commercial barrister might each:

- advise on the meaning of a commercial contract
- draft proceedings for and appear in a professional negligence claim against accountants
- advise on a guarantee from a company to a bank to secure a loan; or
- appear in a trial involving civil fraud and conspiracy.

However, a Commercial barrister would not usually (for example) advise on pension scheme documentation and a Chancery barrister would not generally be involved in a dispute involving shipping or aviation.

Currently, the vast majority of barristers who practise at the Chancery Bar are self-employed. However, the way in which legal services are provided is changing, which may provide greater opportunities for Chancery barristers to practise in new business structures or as employed barristers, rather than in the traditional chambers environment.

The main tasks undertaken by Chancery barristers are

- appearing in courts, tribunals or arbitrations
- advising clients (in writing, by email, in a meeting or on the telephone)
- drafting documents for court, such as statements of case or skeleton arguments
- negotiating settlement of disputes, often through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation; and
- drafting documents, such as trust deeds, wills, or those which give effect to corporate or other transactions.

Much time is spent reading documents and conducting legal research in preparation for these tasks. A weeklong trial may take a week or more of preparation beforehand; even a short meeting may require many hours of reading and research before the barrister knows what advice he or she will give at it. A Chancery barrister needs to be self-motivated and capable of working many hours at a stretch independently of others. But the ability to work in a team is also important. Chancery barristers work with solicitors, expert witnesses and others to provide a comprehensive service for their clients and in a large or complex case, a senior and junior barrister may be instructed together and will split the preparation and research work between them.

The variety of work across the Chancery Bar means that the proportion of time spent on each of these tasks will differ from person to person. However, as a generality it is true to say that Chancery barristers spend less time in court, and more time on preparation and advisory work, than do barristers in other fields of practice, particularly those in the criminal, family or common law fields. A criminal barrister will expect to be in court for the majority of days in the year: a Chancery barrister may have a two-or three-week trial, followed by six months in which they are not in court at all. Chancery barristers in their early years of practice may find themselves in court once or twice a week on short cases and in chambers preparing and advising for the rest of their working week. Some Chancery barristers, particularly those who specialise in drafting complex documents, advising on transactions and working in the field of tax law, are in court very infrequently.

self-motivated

Opportunities at the Chancery Bar

For those with the right skills and qualifications, the Chancery Bar is a very attractive career opportunity. Barristers in this field of practice speak of high levels of job satisfaction, associated with the intellectual challenge of solving complex legal problems and the pleasure of finding the right solution for their client.

Because almost all Chancery work is privately-funded, earnings are relatively high compared with other sectors of the Bar. This makes it possible for Chancery chambers to offer generous awards to those undertaking training with them. The level of pupillage awards tends to be significantly higher at Chancery chambers than for other sectors of the Bar: for the 2012-13 pupillage year, for example, the majority of Chancery chambers offered a pupillage award of more than £30,000, with some chambers offering up to £65,000 for the year. A growing number of Chancery chambers also permit a proportion of this award to be drawn down during the Bar Professional Training Course year, thereby helping those who would otherwise have to borrow to fund their legal training. Chancery chambers often offer financial assistance to new tenants starting out in practice, by way of loans, cash-flow assistance schemes, guaranteed minimum incomes or discounts on chambers' expenses.

Many Chancery barristers say they enjoy the flexibility of self-employed practice, particularly a practice which does not require them to be in court every day. The increasing sophistication of chambers' IT systems allows working from home for those who wish to, either regularly or from time to time. This is particularly attractive to those with family responsibilities, who can take an afternoon off to go to their child's sports day and still meet their clients' needs by working in the evening.

Unlike some other careers, practice at the Chancery Bar is a career with a long-term future. In some City jobs, for example, people find themselves considered "past it" by the time they are in their mid-40s. At the Chancery Bar, in contrast, the opportunities open up still further once you have been in practice for 15 years or so. Experience counts and the skills acquired at the Chancery Bar provide an excellent foundation for becoming a QC, applying for a part-time or full-time judicial or tribunal appointment or becoming an arbitrator or a mediator.

high levels of job satisfaction

The Challenge of getting to the Chancery Bar

What's the competition to get in?

Competition for places at the Chancery Bar is fierce. Across the Bar as a whole, many more students complete the Bar Professional Training Course than are able to obtain pupillage and eventually tenancy or employment as a barrister. For up-to-date information, you should consult the Bar Barometer, a statistical analysis published each year by the Bar Council. No separate statistics currently exist for the Chancery Bar, but the Chancery Bar Association believes that competition for Chancery pupillages is substantially more intense than for other practice areas and that this position is likely to worsen as areas of practice such as crime, family and common law contract in the face of reductions in the availability of public funding. Each year a Chancery chambers will typically receive over a hundred applications for one or two pupillage vacancies.

Students who are considering applying to the Bar are advised to look at the statistics made available by the Bar Council about the success rates applicable at each stage of the process of becoming a barrister and to analyse their own skills and attributes carefully. Do you have what it takes to succeed at each stage? What can you do to improve your prospects of success? Work experience through mini-pupillages and other schemes is a good way of finding out whether the Chancery Bar is likely to be the right career for you.



Can I afford it?

Legal education is expensive and those contemplating a career at the Bar will also need to consider carefully how they will fund each stage. But it should not be assumed that it is necessary to have wealthy parents to get to the Bar – far from it. The Inns of Court are major funders of scholarships, some of which are means-tested, and which are available to students undertaking the Graduate Diploma in Law, Bar Professional Training Course and during pupillage. Between them, the four Inns make millions of pounds available in scholarships every year. And, as indicated above, those who obtain pupillage in Chancery chambers are likely to benefit from a generous pupillage award, including the possibility of early draw-down of funding during the BPTC year.

But I don't have connections at the Bar!

You don't need them. We come from a wide range of different backgrounds and it is a myth to think that you can only succeed if you have a parent in the law, went to a fee-paying school or come from a privileged family. The recruitment of both pupils and tenants is governed by strict rules of professional conduct designed to ensure that the applicants who succeed are those who are best suited to a career at the Chancery Bar, regardless of background.

Am I suited to the Chancery Bar?

How to Become a Barrister

When recruiting pupils and tenants Chancery chambers look for candidates who are able to demonstrate:

- intellectual ability
- the capacity for presenting written work clearly and accurately
- an aptitude for oral advocacy
- the ability to assimilate and analyse information
- skill in legal analysis
- commercial practicality and a willingness to understand clients' needs
- maturity and confidence
- the ability to engage appropriately with clients and solicitors
- interest in the work done by the chambers they are applying to.



a fantastic career

The professional regulatory body that oversees the process that must be completed to qualify as a Barrister (and the process of transferring to the Bar from practice abroad or from practice as a solicitor in England and Wales) is the Bar Standards Board. Its website gives detailed and up-to-date information which you should check.

There are four Inns of Court: Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple, Inner Temple and Gray's Inn. It is the Inns of Court which actually "call" barristers to the Bar. They also provide additional educational activities, as well as grants and scholarships.

In brief there are three stages to the qualification process:

Academic Stage: You must obtain at least a 2ii in an undergraduate law degree or at least a 2ii in an undergraduate degree in another subject and pass the one year conversion course called the Common Professional Exam or Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE/GDL). Applications for the full time conversion course are made through a centralised system: the Law Courses Central Applications Board. The closing date for applications is usually early in the calendar year in which you intend to start the course. Mature students and graduates of universities outside the UK and Ireland should consult the Bar Standards Board and Bar Council websites.

Vocational Stage: Before registering on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) you must become a student member of an Inn of Court. You must pass the BPTC, which is completed either full time over one year or part time over two years. During the course you must also undertake 12 qualifying educational sessions with your Inn of Court, which for the most part take the form of dining in the Inn. You will then be called to the Bar by your Inn. Applications for the BPTC are made through a central online system. You should apply for the course early in the academic year before you intend to start the BPTC.

Pupillage: You must spend a one year training period either in barristers' chambers or another approved legal organisation. This training is called "pupillage"; the trainee is called a "pupil" and is trained by a "pupil supervisor". Most pupillages commence in October; you should apply for pupillage at least 18 months in advance of the October in which you intend to undertake pupillage.

Transfer to the Bar: Qualified solicitors, qualified lawyers from other common law countries and legal academics are able to transfer to practice at the Bar, subject to satisfying the requirements of the Bar Standards Board.

How to Become a Chancery Barrister

The Life of a Chancery Pupil

There are no special or additional qualifications required to practise at the Chancery Bar, beyond those required for being a barrister.

However, if you are interested in a career at the Chancery Bar you should consider applying to Chancery chambers for the opportunity to undertake mini-pupillages during your undergraduate law degree or your CPE/GDL course. A mini-pupillage is a short period of work experience, lasting from a couple of days to a week. Some chambers require you to undertake an "assessed" mini-pupillage as part of the process of applying for pupillage.

Applications for pupillage in Chancery chambers would usually be made during your final year as an undergraduate in law or during your CPE/GDL course. All vacancies for pupillage are advertised on the Pupillage Portal system, run by the Bar Standards Board. However, not all applications for pupillage are



made through the Pupillage Portal. The Portal is generally open for the submission of pupillage applications to chambers who are members of the system in April each year for pupillage starting in October 18 months later. Many Chancery chambers do not use the Pupillage Portal system and some chambers have closing dates for applications significantly earlier than the Portal's April deadline. It is vital to check the position on the website of chambers to which you are interested in applying.

A Chancery pupil will spend his or her time shadowing their pupil supervisor and other barristers in chambers, going to court, listening to the advocates and learning the skills of advocacy and attending meetings with clients, solicitors and other barristers. From the start of pupillage, he or she will also practise the job of being a Chancery barrister. There will be written advice to prepare, court documents to be drafted and legal research to be undertaken. But instead of the work being given to a client, as it is when the barrister is fully qualified, the work will be discussed with his or her pupil supervisor, who will advise how it can be improved. Pupils have the opportunity to chat over the pupil supervisor's cases and share ideas: the learning curve may be a steep one initially, but the progression along the way is enjoyable and stimulating. Once in the second half of their year-long pupillage, pupils may appear in court and act for clients themselves; whether or not this is done depends on the chambers.

Pupils comment favourably on the intellectual challenge of Chancery work, and the variety of cases they see. They learn about many new areas of law that they have not previously encountered as part of their legal studies and develop their commercial and tactical awareness so as better to understand and meet their clients' needs.

modern and evolving practice area



Georgia Bedworth

Georgia Bedworth was called to the Bar in 2001 and practises in London. Her principal areas of practice are trusts, probate and the administration of estates and property, including landlord and tenant.

I grew up in Great Barr, an area in north east Birmingham. I went to the local comprehensive school. My father worked at a small company selling cold rolled steel sections, initially as a salesman, then working his way up to become sales manager, sales director and then managing director. My mother worked as a secretary for an engineering company.

I first decided to become a barrister when I was about 15, after doing work experience on the local paper in Birmingham. I went to the Crown Court with one of the court reporters. One of the cases involved a legal argument about whether or not reporting restrictions should apply to a fraud trial. I found the argument and the interaction between the barristers and judge fascinating. I researched it more and thought it was a career that was interesting, varied and would give me intellectual stimulation.

The thing I enjoy most about my job is reading a new set of papers to find out what the problem is and (hopefully) providing a solution to that problem for the client. I've always been quite academic and enjoy researching and finding an answer to a legal conundrum. I also enjoy the fact that, sometimes, you have to extrapolate from the reported cases to find the principle which applies to your particular facts. Chancery work offers me the opportunity to combine advisory work with advocacy and to that they are not able to solve on their own.

My working hours vary, depending on whether I am in court or what my workload is. Generally I try to be in chambers by 8.30am and leave by 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. I try not to work weekends but, if I do, I work on Sunday.

The Chancery Bar is a fantastic career, but you do need to be prepared to work hard: if you do, it is extremely rewarding. My advice to students would be do something which marks you out from the crowd, by putting something interesting on your CV. Funding your legal education is always going to be an issue, although this is mitigated by the size of pupillage awards at most Chancery chambers.

provide practical assistance to people with problems

Kavan Gunaratna

Kavan Gunaratna was called to the Bar in 2004 and practises in London. He is a Commercial Chancery litigator, with a focus on insolvency, property and general commercial disputes.

I grew up in North London and went to the Haberdashers' Aske's School in Elstree. My father was an engineer and my mother an office manager. I studied History, Maths and Biology at A level and went on to Cambridge University to read law.

A career at the Bar had been on my radar since I was at school, when I undertook my first work experience with a barrister. I began to think about it more seriously when I was at university, as I enjoyed studying law, and have always liked problem solving and different forms of advocacy. I did some further work experience right across the legal spectrum which convinced me that I should head to the Bar.

At university, I liked and did best at equity, company, contract and land law. Those subjects seemed to match up well with the areas of law employed in Chancery/Commercial practice. The Chancery Bar also appealed to me, as it offered the chance to take on legally interesting cases and to develop my own

practice from early on, whilst maintaining a healthy earnings potential and a sensible balance between court and written work.

My best cases are those in which I have made a palpable difference to the lives of my clients. For example: I recently acted for the victims of a commercial property fraud and was able to secure the recovery of their life savings. I also acted for a single mother on a low income, facing claims from her ex-husband's creditors and the loss of her home, until we secured a settlement that ensured her home was safe.

I have never felt that my race or background was an issue in practice at the Chancery Bar (although getting people to spell my name correctly is sometimes a pain!).

To anyone interested in Commercial/Chancery practice, my key pieces of advice are: (i) study hard in your degree, focusing on relevant subjects; and (ii) get to know the market well, by researching chambers, attending the Chancery Bar Careers Fair, and undertaking mini-pupillages, so you can target your applications effectively.

extremely rewarding

I have made a palpable difference



Gemma de Cordova

Gemma de Cordova was called to the Bar in 2006 and practises in London. Her practice involves property litigation and commercial disputes.

I grew up in Bristol. I am the third of four daughters; my father is a self-employed bookkeeper and my mother is a secretary. I went to St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School, a co-educational faith school, and then went on to college before moving to Guildford to study Law and German at the University of Surrey.

From a young age I knew that I would enjoy a career in which I could be my own boss and work with a wide range of people, and in which I would be able to talk a lot!

In all honesty I wasn't initially drawn to Chancery work. My initial impression was that practitioners only did what could be described as "traditional chancery": tax, wills, probate and the like, and I thought that I would find these areas rather dry. I now realise that Chancery work is extremely varied and is very relevant in the modern day. As well as the intellectual challenges, there are opportunities for regular court work and, with that, I get to meet some very interesting people! I particularly enjoy the variety of my client base, which includes private individuals, local authorities, housing associations, charities, banks and companies of all sizes.

I love being in court. Very little can match the sense of achievement and job satisfaction that you get at the conclusion of a case. Sometimes cross-examination goes particularly well; on a good day, the Judge or even your opponent will accept the strength of your argument. However, one of the most satisfying outcomes is when the client thanks you and tells you that you have done a good job.

I have to say that it was never obvious to me that the Chancery Bar was even an option for a barrister like me who has what could be described as a 'non-traditional' background. Before coming to the Bar I knew very few barristers and certainly none who did Chancery work. It was a challenge for me just to establish what Chancery practitioners would be involved in on a daily basis and also to understand what I would need to do in order to progress.

It is apparent to me when I attend Chancery Bar events that I am still one of only a few people who look anything like me, i.e. young, black and female, but I know now that anyone with the requisite skills can succeed at the Chancery Bar.

I know that there are efforts being made to encourage all aspiring practitioners to consider the Chancery Bar and I hope that I can help to convey that irrespective of background, gender, race, or any other differentiating factor, it is possible for anyone with talent and determination to succeed.



Stephen Davies QC

Stephen Davies QC was called to the Bar in 1983 and became a QC in 2000. He practises in Bristol and specialises in the law of insolvency.

I was born in 1960 in South Wales. My father was a farmer and feed salesman, my mother a housewife. I was educated at comprehensive schools, LSE and Cambridge.

I first thought of being a barrister when I was 15. I had been sent out of the classroom for talking when the small but aggressive head teacher of my school approached me. He queried whether I would be capable of holding down a job when I grew up and asked what I would like to do. I said I wanted to be a barrister and he laughed scornfully, saying I had no chance. This seemed to fix me in my plan although, to this day, I have no idea why I said that I wanted to be a barrister. I only knew that being a barrister would mean I would be able to stand up to people like him.

At University, I loved the subject "Equity and Trusts". It seemed very sophisticated and, although the rules were strange on first learning, in time there always appeared to be a good reason for each of them which I felt I could understand – and so I sort of grew with the subject, and this led me to the Chancery Bar.

In terms of my best experiences, it is always the earliest cases which stick most in my memory. About 4 years into practice, I had last-minute instructions to try to stop a bankrupt's wife and her three young children being evicted. I was able to bring a successful claim for damages against the bankrupt's former solicitors, which meant that the family could stay in their home and pay off their mortgage. I was over the moon.

Trying to specialise as a Chancery barrister outside of London has been challenging. In the 1980s and 1990s it was not the judges or my opponents who were the difficulty, but the perception of many solicitors that you could not possibly be a specialist and practise in the regions. Over time that has changed and I've shown them to be wrong, but it can slow down the development of your practice.

I would have three suggestions for any student who is thinking of coming to the Chancery Bar. First, never say you understand something if you don't. Secondly, read all legal documents and cases carefully before forming a view on what you think they might mean. And thirdly, stay cheerful.

possible for anyone with talent and determination to succeed

extraordinarily varied range of fields of law



Gregory Denton-Cox

Gregory Denton-Cox was called to the Bar in 2000 and practises in London. His principal areas of practice are company, commercial, insolvency and civil fraud.

I was born in 1977 in Hong Kong and grew up there. I went to school at Shatin College, in Hong Kong, until I finished GCSEs and then I did my A levels, in English, Maths and Economics, at Taunton School, in Somerset.

I then went to the University of Nottingham where I read law with American law, which meant I got to spend a year at the University of Texas in Austin.

I first started to think about becoming a barrister at university when considering whether to pursue a career in the law and if so, whether as a barrister or solicitor. I attended two mini-pupillages (at a Commercial set and a Chancery set) in the summer after I returned from Texas and decided I would prefer to be a barrister. I was attracted to the Chancery Bar in particular because I had studied company law at university and enjoyed it, and thought Chancery would offer more diverse work especially in the early years of practice than straight commercial law.

One of the more interesting cases I was involved in at an early stage of my career was as junior for the Nigerian Government seeking to recover monies

The great upside of being a barrister is that you are always dealing with a variety of different cases and different clients, rather than doing the same thing each day. Being self-employed means that you are able to control (to some extent and subject to the whims of the clerks) the amount of work taken on and working hours and there is scope for working from home.

However, the downside to being self-employed is that sometimes there is a lot on your plate at once and you are the one who has to deal with it: you can't delegate to anyone else. It can be frustrating having to cut short or cancel time off to deal with something that has arisen urgently.

I think that any aspiring Chancery practitioner needs to have common sense, an ability to communicate to clients and the Court, an interest in the law and self-belief (without being arrogant or cocky). It also helps to have an ability to express yourself clearly in writing, an ability to assimilate information quickly and to be able to empathise with your clients and understand their objectives.

misappropriated from the State by General Abacha, a former dictator. It was a compelling "story", which kept the work interesting and involved a trip to Abuja.

Emer Murphy was called to the Bar in 2009 and practises in London. Her practice includes commercial disputes, civil fraud, professional negligence, trusts and property.

I was born in 1984 and grew up in Newry, County Armagh, Northern Ireland. Newry is classified as a city but is more like an overgrown village. My parents were both teachers and I am the youngest of six children. I attended the local girls' grammar school and did a mixture of arts and science A Levels.

One of my teachers at school bullied me into applying to Oxford: at that stage I had never met a barrister, and I'm not sure I even knew what they did. I was accepted to read Law with French Law and so spent a year of my degree course in Paris.

I first started to think about becoming a barrister after I had left university. I really enjoyed my law degree and my tutors recommended the Bar. After I had spent some time in different chambers doing minipupillages I realised that a career as a barrister offered the sorts of challenges and rewards in terms of problem solving and interesting work that appealed to me.

I really enjoy the variety, the people and those occasions when I really feel that I have helped my client. The great thing about Chancery work is

Emer Murphy

that you might be representing a multi-national corporation one day and an elderly lady the next. I also like being my own boss, and not having to explain why I am slinking in at 10.30am. However, I find that practice can be very stressful, and when you get involved in a big piece of litigation, the hours can be very long. My typical working hours are 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and about once or twice a month I need to work a day at the weekend.

To be a Chancery barrister you need to be intelligent, self-assured and able to express yourself clearly. It is also helpful if you are thick-skinned. In the kind of work I do, you need a real eve for detail and a fair amount of determination to find the right, or best, answer. I think every barrister in the early years has crises of confidence; the nature of the job is that you are very much thrown into the deep end. I have found these moments challenging.

I would advise any aspiring Chancery barrister that there is no secret to success other than sheer hard work. The Chancery Bar offers interesting work for decent financial rewards and so competition is fierce. There are a lot of misconceptions surrounding the Bar and pupillage, but if you think this is the career for you, just go for it!

variety of different cases and clients

I like being my own boss



Mark Baxter

Mark Baxter was called to the Bar in 2006 and practises in London. His practice concentrates on inheritance, wills, and trusts.

I was born in 1982 and grew up in suburban Hampshire with two older sisters. My father was a pension fund accountant and my mother was a local government officer. I was educated at Neville Lovett Community School in Fareham. I did A levels in English Literature, Government and Politics, History and General Studies at a sixth form college.

I went to Bristol University and studied law. During my second year I began to think that a career as a barrister, being self-employed, selfsufficient and acting as a "consultant", would suit my personality better than a career as a solicitor.

Chancery work appealed to me because I had enjoyed equity and trusts at university and their roots in principle and conscionability. The fact that Chancery practice is of a quite academic nature was also attractive to me and I wanted a balance between advocacy and non-court work. I was also keen to work for private individuals rather than

corporate clients and the areas in which I work allow me to do that.

My most satisfying case was one where I was acting for the wife of a man with dementia and successfully prevented her step-daughter from seizing control of her husband's wealth against his wishes. I find it frustrating when the law does not provide a satisfactory solution for a client with whose position I have sympathy and it can be difficult to see their disappointment when you have to advise them of the position.

I usually work from 8am to 7pm on weekdays and occasionally on Sundays. A significant proportion of my work can be done flexibly, including from home and out of office hours.

A Chancery barrister needs to have an analytical mind, self-resolve and reliance, a sense of humour and the ability to relate to people of different backgrounds. It is important also to be prepared to work long hours when necessary and be able quickly to absorb and retain large quantities of information. Good time-management skills, self-confidence and a thick skin are also useful.

analytical mind, self-resolve and reliance



Joanne Wicks QC

Joanne Wicks QC was called to the Bar in 1990 and became a QC in 2010. She practises in London and specialises in property litigation and professional negligence.

I grew up in Bristol and Nottingham and went to a state selective school and then a comprehensive. My father worked for Rolls-Royce aero engines and my mother was a nursery teacher. I studied law at Oxford and stayed on there for a year to do a BCL degree. I am married to a primary school teacher and have two sons, aged 11 and 13.

People sometimes ask me how I cope with having a family and working full time. I actually believe that the Chancery Bar is a lot more family-friendly than many other professional jobs. Being self-employed gives you great flexibility. I don't have a fixed holiday entitlement, so I can take plenty of time off over the school holidays. And as long as it's done on time, it doesn't matter to the clients whether I do their work at 9am or at 9pm, so it's possible to fit the work around the children's activities to some extent. It helps that I'm not in court every day and in this respect being at the Chancery Bar is very different from, say, the criminal or family Bars. There are times when it is difficult to give the family the time they need, particularly when I'm preparing for trial or in court, but I'd like to assure those who are thinking about a career at the Chancery Bar that it

really is possible to have a successful practice and a meaningful family life: it just takes a bit of juggling!

I have to say I love my job with a passion. It's the best job in the world. It isn't easy, by any means. The hours can be long and you have to be able to take responsibility for important decisions right from the start. It can be stressful to know that what you do or say can make a difference to whether your client keeps their home or becomes bankrupt, for example. But there's a great feeling when things go right and that doesn't just mean winning cases. Putting your client on the right path by giving them good advice – such as warning them not to spend money on litigating a case they are going to lose – can be just as satisfying.

My advice to someone starting out would be that you shouldn't be daunted by the traditions of the Bar. There can't be many jobs which require you to eat a certain number of dinners as part of the qualification process, or which have a horsehair wig as part of their working uniform. But nobody is born knowing that a meeting with a junior barrister is traditionally called a "conference" but a meeting with a QC is a "consultation": you'll just pick these things up along the way. Once you do, you'll realise that none of it matters. All that really matters is that you maintain your integrity and do an excellent job for your client.

possible to have a successful practice and a meaningful family life

The Chancery Bar Association

This booklet is produced by the Chancery Bar Association, an association of Chancery barristers which exists to represent and promote the interests of the Chancery Bar and which provides training, educational opportunities and other support and guidance to its members. The Chancery Bar Association is one of the longest-established specialist Bar associations.

Membership of the Association is restricted to barristers who specialise in Chancery work. We also have academic members and overseas members.

Please visit our website, www.chba.org.uk, for further information.

Today the work of the Chancery Bar includes:

- **Banking:** retail and investment banking, supervision and regulation and banking instruments and products
- **Charities:** their formation, alteration, amalgamation and dissolution, interpretation of documents, and their relationship with the Charity Commission and with commercial organisations
- **Civil Fraud:** proceedings in the civil courts concerning investment frauds, fraudulent misrepresentation, conspiracy and misappropriation of funds, asset tracing, preservation and recovery
- **Company:** all aspects of the life of a corporation from formation to dissolution, including mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance, regulatory requirements, directors' duties and shareholders' rights
- **Consumer Credit:** the drafting and enforcement of standard-form credit and mortgage agreements, unfair terms and relationships, complaints to the Financial Ombudsman Service, regulation of mortgage lending
- **Corporate Insolvency:** contested winding up petitions, applications relating to the conduct of administrations, receiverships, compulsory and voluntary liquidations and voluntary arrangements, disputed proof of debt proceedings, asset recovery proceedings, directors' disqualification proceedings
- **Court of Protection:** applications to the Court of Protection, including for the appointment of a Deputy to manage the affairs of a person lacking capacity, enduring and lasting powers of attorney, statutory wills and gifts
- **Financial Services and Regulation:** disciplinary and regulatory proceedings before a wide range of tribunals and regulatory bodies and challenges to their decisions, investor compensation, drafting and interpretation of documents, advising on financial business, structures and transfers of businesses
- **Intellectual Property:** patents, copyright, design rights, trade marks, passing off actions, confidential information and privacy, entertainment and media law and performers' rights

- Land and Real Property: contracts for the sale and development of land and joint ventures, land registration, adverse possession and title issues, equitable interests in land, including trusts of land, co-ownership and proprietary estoppel, trespass, nuisance and boundary disputes, mortgages, easements, restrictive and positive covenants, commons and village greens
- Landlord and Tenant: commercial, residential and agricultural tenancies, interpretation of leases, forfeiture and actions for breach of covenant, statutory regulation of tenancies including business tenancy renewals, leasehold enfranchisement and extension, service charges, commonhold, housing associations, right to buy
- **Media and Entertainment:** drafting and interpretation of management, recording and production agreements, merchandising rights, copyright disputes, broadcasting, film and theatre, publishing, confidential information and privacy
- **Partnership:** formation of partnerships and the appointment, retirement and removal of partners, drafting and interpretation of partnership agreements, partnership disputes, including those relating to partnership assets and actions for an account
- **Pensions:** the preparation, amendment, amalgamation and winding-up of pension schemes, their administration and applications to court for directions, interpretation of pension scheme documentation, the regulatory framework relating to pension schemes, disputes between members, trustees and employers, complaints to the Pensions Ombudsman
- Personal Insolvency: bankruptcy petitions, individual voluntary arrangements, disputes with trustees
 in bankruptcy or supervisors of voluntary arrangements, orders for sale of the bankrupt's home or
 other property, setting aside transactions to defraud creditors
- **Probate and Administration of Estates:** drafting and interpretation of wills and deeds of variation, intestacy, pre- and post-death inheritance tax planning, challenges to wills, probate actions, removal and substitution of personal representatives, issues arising in the administration of estates and applications to the court for directions
- **Professional Negligence:** claims against the whole range of professional advisers, including accountants, auditors, actuaries, solicitors, barristers, insurance brokers, banks and including claims for pensions and investments mis-selling and those arising out of property and other transactions
- Revenue and Tax: corporate taxation, personal taxation, employee remuneration, VAT and other indirect taxes, stamp duties
- **Trusts and Settlements:** the creation, variation and termination of trusts, interpretation of trust documentation, challenges to the validity of trusts, administration of trusts, removal of trustees, allegations of breach of trust and tracing against trustees and third parties.

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www.chba.org.uk

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