



**Alexandra Whelan**

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“I studied law in Australia and then worked for a few years as a solicitor and associate (judicial assistant) in Australia before moving to England. At that time, I was considering becoming an academic in legal philosophy (just about as non-practical as it is possible to be...). However, after some agonising, I decided to pursue a career at the Bar instead. I have not regretted my decision.

The Bar is a wonderful place to work. The work is intellectually challenging, often demanding, and rewarding in its practical application. Right from the start, barristers are independent and have real control over how they organise their own practices. In this way, working as a barrister is very different from working at a top tier law firm.

Although it is not the common perception, I have found the commercial Bar to be a great place to work while having young children. Because I tend to work on large commercial cases, I generally know well in advance when I will be in Court and when I will be particularly busy. Outside of Court, I am free to organise my work life in a manner that suits me, both in terms of when I work and the amount of work I take on.

There can also be a perception that life as a barrister might be lonely. In reality, while we do spend quite a lot of time reading and writing in our rooms, we often work very closely in small teams. Fountain Court is a collegiate and supportive place to work. I have made many good friends here and I continue to learn a lot from other members.”