

| The Bar category | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------|--|
| Set name | Set type | Reputation for innovation | Innovation displayed | Total | Description |
| Blackstone Chambers | Public and commercial | 8 | 8 | 16 | A heavyweight set that is light on its toes. Commended for working its way to its current position over the past 10 years by ambitiously marketing itself and adopting a more commercial mentality, on top of offering excellent advocacy. Described as leaders in the move to change the dynamic between chambers, law firms and in-house counsel. It has a noted personality difference from other big sets. |
| Matrix | Public | 7 | 8 | 15 | Described as "brave" and "determined", Matrix created a new template of chambers that has "put aside the barristerial image". It has adopted a populist approach that is reflected in the diversity of its barristers, support staff and clients. It is leading the way in demystifying the profession. It is also highly commended for its pro bono work. |
| Cloth Fair | Crime | 4 | 9 | 13 | On the tails of the Carter Report, seven silks joined up to create a diminutive crime superset. It has joined the fray "fighting", focusing solely on white collar fraud. This allows it the novelty of making a profit in the notoriously unprofitable field of crime. Nominators say no other set has managed to "reshape" itself so dramatically in the space of one year. |
| Hardwicke Building | Civil | 4 | 8 | 12 | It has displayed strategic thinking in merging and shuffling off crime, enabling it to earn more than £1m and move beyond "hard times". Commended as the first set to get a big, modern building. Actively seeking direct access work after publishing a unique market research report on attitudes at the Bar towards the trend. Noted for its dedicated fees clerks (clerks who collect debt) and efforts to "bring in fresh blood", such as new chief executives. Only set to request changes be made to its Inquisitor software to enhance client service. Has reported a significant growth in billings compared with the top sets. |
| Maitland Chambers | Commercial Chancery | 5 | 7 | 12 | It has made a "huge leap into modernity" after last year's merger with another set. Adopted a suite of best practice initiatives, in order to "offer business in the same way clients expect it" and to develop relationships beyond transactions. Worked with the Property Lawyers Association on its online webcast training. It is said to take pro bono and CSR "seriously". |
| St Philips Chambers | Commercial and crime | 4 | 8 | 12 | It has merged twice and absorbed 20 members of an imploding set in the last ten years to become the biggest regional chambers outside London. A multidisciplinary set that encourages cross-team co-operation to help generate more work. It is said to be a leader in tendering for local authorities. It also has a unique online billing system that is soon to be patented. It owns the set premises and is the only chambers to receive an unconditional 100 per cent in the BarMark audit. |
| 7 Bedford Row | Criminal, civil and family | 4 | 7 | 11 | Commended for developing an innovative strategy to deal with the changing criminal market in the UK. Tenants clubbed together to buy their own premises and formed an international alliance with BakerPlatt, a Jersey-based group, with which they offer a legal, regulatory, compliance and advocacy service. |
| One Essex Court | Commercial | 7 | 4 | 11 | An all-round, forward thinking "magic circle" set that has helped set the standards of best practice at the bar. The clerks have a real reputation for thinking outside the box and being "pre-eminent marketers". Commended as "clever" for its ongoing sponsorship of the Times Law Award, a student writing prize. |
| Serle Court | Commercial Chancery | 5 | 6 | 11 | Boasts a "magnificent marketing machine" and is described as "extremely proactive", even more so than some top sets. The 2000 merger has allowed it to offer a genuine combination of commercial and chancery. Client service is "paramount" and "runs through the set". |
| Henderson | Common law and commercial | 4 | 6 | 10 | The set has accounted for one-third of all barristers qualified to provide direct access. The set has embraced this issue, which has caused a culture shift in chambers and the necessary creation of a "public face". It now seconds members to corporations such as Nestlé. |
| 4 New Square | Commercial and civil | 4 | 5 | 9 | It has made notable strides in marketing itself, and is able to react and adopt new things quickly. It has adopted best practice initiatives and is following the trend of dealing directly with in-house lawyers. |
| Essex Court Chambers | Commercial | 7 | 2 | 9 | Historically one of the leading "magic circle" sets to look at markets outside London and the UK. Considered "generally innovative with a proactive mindset". Recommended for approaching business more like a law firm. Joined up with competitor Pump Court Tax Chambers for a joint VAT conference which was attended by more than 200 delegates. |
| Littleton | Civil and commercial | 5 | 4 | 9 | The set took a creative, entrepreneurial approach to the reality of less work in the market. It spearheaded the mediation trend in the late 1990s by setting up an alternative dispute resolution company, Littleton Dispute Resolution, for which it is widely known. |
| 23 Essex Street Chambers | Crime | 4 | 4 | 8 | A set that is acutely aware of the need to move proactively in a buyer's market. It has tried to increase the breadth of its advocacy, notably through developing an intellectual property (IP) crime practice which handled the first major internet piracy conspiracy case in the UK. |
| 3 Verulam Buildings | Commercial | 4 | 4 | 8 | Praised for its "dynamic" clerking and seeking to provide a "Rolls-Royce" service in doing business "like a law firm". A modernising set that is not scared to look at difficult markets such as arbitration in Kazakhstan. It has focused on adding value and is mentioned for its approach to billing. |
| Brick Court Chambers | Commercial | 6 | 2 | 8 | One of the "magic circle" sets. Commended as standing out for its pro bono work, it was also singled out for its mediation work and for "assiduously courting clients". |
| Wilberforce | Commercial Chancery | 4 | 4 | 8 | The set has shunned mergers, focused on recruitment and increased its competitiveness. It is now a contender for "magic circle" calibre work. Alive to "legal creativity", it approaches cases from a variety of specialisms. |
| 5RB | Media | 4 | 3 | 7 | Described as outstanding in its pro bono work. Clients can register on its excellent website for regular updates. Also commended for its professional client service. |