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LAPG Member Update

Issue 17 of 2025

Finalists announced for the 2025 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards!

We are absolutely delighted to announce the outstanding shortlist for this year's Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards. It has been an awful week for legal aid practitioners given the impact of the cyber attack on the LAA's systems, and the potential impact for legal aid clients, so we hope that this good news can at least provide a little respite from all the awfulness.

The LALYs is our opportunity each year to thank you all for your continued commitment to legal aid and access to justice. It is also a chance to shine a spotlight on the incredible, life-changing work of legal aid lawyers, and the power of legal aid to bring about positive change. The work is complex and difficult, remuneration is woefully inadequate, the scheme is unnecessarily bureaucratic, the IT systems are poorly designed (and fragile!), and the political environment is often hostile. Yet legal aid lawyers work tirelessly each day to get the best possible results for their clients. We couldn't be more proud to represent you or more honoured to have the opportunity to thank you for your efforts by delivering the LALY awards.

[Read the full press release here](#)

This year's winners will be announced at our customarily glittering ceremony on **Friday, 4 July 2025** in central London. 500+ finalists, friends and colleagues will join us for a true celebration of legal aid.

Tickets are very affordable for an in-person event and cover a drinks reception and food, with discounts available to YLAL members and Justice First Fellows.

A special thanks to our sponsors (set out below) and to our media partner Legal Action Group, who have been steadfast in their support for the LALYs. There is no LALY awards without them.

Here is the full list of finalists in the 9 award categories for which we seek nominations:

1. Legal Aid Newcomer - sponsored by Friends of LALY25 (crowdfunding)

Yasmin Karabasic - SL5 Legal

Samantha Maher - The Community Law Partnership

Nadia O'Mara - Garden Court Chambers

Katie Sinclair - Rook Irwin Sweeney LLP

2. Legal Aid Support Staffer/Support Team - sponsored by Accesspoint Legal

Rachael Kirk - Leigh Day

Kuda Tayengwa - ATLEU

Public Law and Human Rights Support Team - Irwin Mitchell LLP

3. Family Legal Aid incl. Children's Rights - sponsored by Resolution

Mary Richardson - Miles and Partners LLP

Beverley Watkins - Watkins Solicitors

Lynsey Welsh - Cartwright King

4. Criminal Defence - sponsored by Communicourt

Manisha Knights - MK Law

Emma McClure - SL5 LEGAL

Georgia Patterson - TV Edwards Solicitors

5. Legal Aid Barrister - sponsored by The Bar Council

Justin Ageros - 4PB

Ali Bandegani - Garden Court Chambers

Lucy Masoud - 33 Bedford Row

6. Legal Aid Firm/Not for Profit Agency - supported by The Law Society

Asylum Aid

GT Stewart Solicitors and Advocates

Phoenix Law Human Rights Lawyers

7. Immigration & Asylum Law - sponsored by Garden Court Chambers

Molly Nicolson - Asylum Aid

Laura Smith - JCWI

8. Social Welfare Law - sponsored by Doughty Street Chambers

Laura Coyle - Turpin Miller

Rachel Hogan - Children's Law Centre

Kevin Long - Hackney Community Law Centre

Erika Wright - Irwin Mitchell LLP

9. Public Law - sponsored by One Pump Court

Shaun Livingston - TV Edwards Solicitors

Sabrina Simpson - Coram Children's Legal Centre

Juliet Spender - Irwin Mitchell

Jennifer Wright - Rook Irwin Sweeney LLP

10. Outstanding Achievement - sponsored by Matrix Chambers

There is no shortlist for this award.

Along with our category sponsors, the LALY awards are also generously sponsored and supported by DG Legal, Leigh Day, 39 Essex Chambers, The Legal Education Foundation, Miles & Partners and our media sponsor Legal Action Group.

For all the latest news on the LALYs follow us on X - @LALYawards and @WeAreLegalAid - and Bluesky - @lalyawards.bskysocial

So there we have it - three organisations, 26 individual practitioners and one team - a truly inspiring shortlist.

As always, choosing the finalists was a fiendishly difficult task for our judging panel as the calibre of nominations was so high. The nominations are a testament to the professionalism, resilience and sheer brilliance of lawyers working in the social justice sector - who all deserve to be celebrated. We send our warmest congratulations to everyone shortlisted, and heartfelt commiserations to those who weren't.

Thank you to everyone who submitted or supported a nomination this year. We do appreciate it given all the competing demands on your time. It really is wonderful to be part of the legal aid sector.

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Thank you to everyone who submitted or supported a nomination this year. We do appreciate it given all the competing demands on your time. It really is wonderful to be part of the legal aid sector.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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Would you like to contribute to our Member Updates and share news and information with other members? If so, just email us and we can discuss how you can best contribute.

Thank you for being brave enough to be part of the LAPG community!





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