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LAPG Member Update

Issue 5 of 2025

We are delighted to launch the 2025 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) awards.



This year sees the 23rd outing of these non-profit-making awards, which were founded by LAPG in 2003 to celebrate the work of social justice lawyers. **Nominations will close on 22 April 2025.** Winners in the 10 award categories will be announced to an audience of around 500 guests at a **ceremony in central London on 4 July 2025.**

Why do we organise awards for legal aid lawyers? For us, the answer is pretty obvious. Legal aid is a vital, foundational element of our society. The system doesn't operate without talented and dedicated lawyers, and for too long those lawyers and their support teams have been the only thing keeping the system going. The LALYs is our opportunity to thank all those working so hard for access to justice, and to let them know their work is recognised and appreciated. It also gives others in the sector a chance to do the same [by nominating their legal aid hero\(es\)](#) to tell them how much they admire their work.

The LALYs is also a fillip. We know that legal aid work can be relentless, exhausting and frustrating. We know the consequences of decades of chronic underfunding from successive governments. And sometimes we all need to get together in a show of mutual support to remind ourselves of why we keep going. The LALYs is a perfect opportunity to do just that, as put by a long-standing and

battle-hardened practitioner last year:

Thank you Team LALY for another incredible event. It has given me the lift I needed to go again for another year. And go again we will!

And we also use the LALYs to improve understanding of the power of legal aid and the positive impact that can be made when lawyers are given the tools to use the law for good. Here is a quote from a senior MOJ civil servant, who attended the 2024 LALYs whilst working on the Review of Civil Legal Aid:

It was a pleasure and a privilege to be a part of this celebration, and I know I speak for the team when I say that we left with a refreshed understanding of how important the work of legal aid lawyers is, as well as a renewed sense of motivation to improve policy in this area. I don't think I speak out of turn when I say that a new government offers us a real opportunity to effect positive change.

As well as being a truly humbling and inspiring evening, it was also a very fun one! The venue, hosting, and atmosphere were all wonderful and we enjoyed the opportunity to mingle outside the confines of MS teams and meet some of the fantastic finalists. Who would have thought the LAPG could throw such a great party!

Well we're not sure about that last bit, but the rest of the quote speaks volumes about the importance of the LALYs as a way of showing those from outside the sector why we all fight so hard for legal aid.



And then there are the legal aid lawyers-to-be, who are inspired to take up the fight, and we all know important it is to encourage the next generation of social justice warriors:

As an aspiring barrister, the ceremony was incredibly inspirational. It was a powerful reminder of why I have always been drawn to the legal profession - a profession filled with individuals committed to fighting for justice and fairness for those in need. Legal aid lawyers play an indispensable role in our society, ensuring that everyone has access to legal representation regardless of their circumstances. Their relentless pursuit of justice is something I not only admire but strive to emulate in my future career.

And those who don't work in legal aid but are in our corner, shouting out for legal aid and those who deliver it:

On Friday night, I got to spend my evening hanging out with the beating heart of the legal profession, at the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards (affectionately known as the LALYS). So wonderful to have the opportunity to come together with colleagues from across the advice sector, to celebrate these wonderful individuals, chambers, firms and law centres - and hear their clients' stories.

So please join the LALY community by making or supporting a nomination. We would love to show everyone committed to legal aid how much they mean to us by rewarding them in some way. But we need your help to nominate the lawyers and support staff for these special awards so they receive the public recognition they so richly deserve. [Nominations are submitted via our simple online form](#), and the most compelling nominations are those supported by peers, colleagues, experts and clients.

Key information

- Nominations close at **23:59:59 on Tuesday 22 April 2024**
- We have retained the popular Legal Aid Support Staffer/Support Team award and as always have **award categories that cover all areas of legal aid**
- [To make a nomination](#)
- [Awards criteria and guidance](#)
- [Download the LALY25 launch flyer to share with colleagues](#)
- [To book tickets for the 4 July 2025 ceremony](#)
- [To donate to become a Friend of LALY25 and help sponsor the Legal Aid Newcomer award](#)

Become an official Friend of LALY25

Once again, [we are crowdfunding for sponsorship of our Legal Aid Newcomer award](#), which celebrates the solicitors, barristers, paralegals, legal executives and caseworkers who are the future of this profession. Donations are from £10, and all money will go towards keeping ticket prices affordable. The names of donors will be included as Friends of LALY25 in our ceremony programme and on social media in the run up to the July event.

LALY25 award categories

1. Outstanding Achievement*
2. Legal Aid Newcomer
3. Criminal Defence
4. Public Law
5. Immigration and Asylum
6. Legal Aid Support Staffer/Support Team
7. Family Legal Aid Including Children's Rights
8. Legal Aid Barrister
9. Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-Profit Agency
10. Social welfare

* We do not accept nominations for this award

The LALY awards are non-profit-making and would not be possible without the support of our generous sponsors:

- [39 Essex Chambers](#)
- [Accesspoint](#)
- [Communicourt](#)
- [DG Legal](#)
- [Doughty Street Chambers](#)
- [Garden Court Chambers](#)
- [Legal Action Group](#) (media partner)
- [Leigh Day](#)
- [Matrix Chambers](#)
- [Miles and Partners](#)
- [One Pump Court](#)
- [Resolution](#)
- [The Bar Council](#)
- [The Law Society](#)
- [The Legal Education Foundation](#)

If you have any questions about this year's awards, please get in touch with me (chris.minnoch@lapg.co.uk) or LALY co-founder and co-organiser Fiona Bawdon (fiona.bawdon@gmail.com). Please follow [@LALYawards](#) and [@lalyawards.bsky.social](#) for news and look out for and use the [#LALY25](#) hashtag.

We know there are many practitioners and professionals out there making an incredible difference through publicly-funded work. Now is the time to nominate your legal aid hero!

Please do help us to make this year's LALYs another celebration of the power and impact of legal aid.

Take care one and all,

Chris Minnoch, CEO [@ChrisLAPG](#)

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



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