



Guidance for the 2026 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards

1. All nominations must be made online at www.lapg.co.uk/laly-nomination. Supporting documents must be paginated and uploaded.
2. Entries should consist of the completed online nomination form; plus **no more than 10** numbered pages of supporting documents (e.g. client and other testimonials, etc.). Material over this amount will only be put before the judges at the discretion of LAPG's CEO and in exceptional circumstances. His decision in this respect will be final. Please avoid repetition and duplication of material, where possible.
3. Documents uploaded in support of a nomination must be in one of the following file formats: gif | png | jpg | jpeg | pdf | doc | docx | ppt | pptx | odt. Regardless of the number of pages, each supporting document must not exceed 10mb.
4. One person should be identified as the lead nominator, with supporting statements from others, rather than sending multiple nominations for the same nominee. The lead nominator should complete the online form (and tick the declaration), and will be contacted in the event that further information or clarification is needed.
5. *Individuals must not* nominate themselves in any category. *Organisations* may make a nomination on their own behalf for the Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency category.
6. Ideally, the nomination should be made or supported by a legal professional (e.g. solicitor, barrister, judge, CILEx member, etc.). Supporting statements from outside the nominee's organisation are not essential but the judges are likely to give particular weight to external testimonials. We particularly welcome supporting statements from clients.
7. Membership of LAPG is not required to nominate someone or to be a nominee.
8. The judging panel has the right to nominate any individual or organisation who meets the criteria and will be solely responsible for choosing the winner of the Outstanding Achievement award. We do not accept nominations for the Outstanding Achievement award.
9. For the following awards, nominees (solicitors, employed barristers, caseworkers and legal executives, etc) must work in a private practice solicitor's firm, law centre, or other organisation with a Legal Aid Agency (LAA) contract; or be undertaking a significant amount of legal aid certificated work from the Northern Ireland Legal Services Agency (NI LSA):
 - a. Criminal Legal Aid;
 - b. Family Legal Aid including Children's Rights;
 - c. Housing Law;
 - d. Public Law;
 - e. Social Welfare Law.
10. Organisations nominated for the Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-Profit Agency award must hold a LAA contract or conduct a significant amount of legal aid certificated work from NI LSA.
11. The Legal Aid Barrister award is open to any junior barrister based in England, Wales or NI who has undertaken a significant amount of legal aid work over the past year.
12. The Legal Aid Newcomer award is open to trainee solicitors, solicitors, pupils, barristers, caseworkers, and legal executives.
 - a. This award is open to trainee solicitors working under a current recognised period of training or training contract; caseworkers employed in that capacity for no more than 5 years on 1 May 2026; solicitors of no more than 5 years qualification on 1



- May 2026; CILEx graduate members and CILEx Fellows with up to 5 years PQE on 1 May 2026; pupils carrying out predominantly legal aid work and barristers of no more than 7 years call on 1 May 2026 (whether self-employed or employed).
- b. Solicitor, legal executive and caseworker nominees for the Newcomer award must work in an organisation with a LAA contract, or which conducts a significant amount of legal aid certificated work from NI LSA.
 - c. Barrister nominees must have undertaken a significant amount of legal aid work over the past year.
13. The Family Legal Aid including Children’s Rights award is open to lawyers conducting both private and public family legal aid cases. This category also covers legally-aided family mediation and family lawyers whose work primarily involves protecting the rights and welfare of children and young people.
 14. The Social Welfare category includes all legally-aided fields that are not covered by a dedicated award category. It specifically includes, but is not limited to, areas such as Clinical Negligence, Community Care, Discrimination, Education, Inquests, Housing and Debt, Mental Health, Prison Law, and Welfare Benefits.
 15. The Public Law award is open to legal aid lawyers acting on behalf of individuals or groups against public bodies. Qualifying nominees will include (but not be restricted to) those working in the fields of Claims Against Public Authorities, Inquests, Prison Law, and Judicial Review, where the work is funded by legal aid.
 16. The Legal Aid Support Staffer/Support Team award is open to any individual or team providing support services (whether as an employee or on a consultancy basis) to an organisation (or number of organisations) with a LAA contract (or undertaking a significant amount of legal aid certificated work from the NI LSA); or a set of chambers that undertakes a significant amount of legal aid work. No legal qualifications are needed. Qualifying nominees will include (but not be restricted to) non-fee-earners with expertise in IT, research, training, compliance, human resources, billing, admin, office management, finance, media relations, reception work, triage, organisation structure, etc.
 17. Qualifying nominees may be entered in more than one category (e.g. Social Welfare and Legal Aid Newcomer). Please just tick the relevant boxes on the nomination form. There is no need to submit more than one entry.