

LAPG announces Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards 2020 finalists

The criminal defence solicitor who led the way on county lines and modern slavery cases; plus the barrister behind the Supreme Court ruling in Samuels, are among 34 individuals and organisations shortlisted for this year's LALY awards.

Finalists of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group 2020 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards range from a criminal defence solicitor at small firm in west Wales, to a public law team at Duncan Lewis, one of the biggest legal aid providers in the country.

Chris Minnoch, CEO of LAPG, which organises the LALY awards on a not-for-profit basis to celebrate the work of social justice lawyers, says:

'The finalists selected by the LALY judges this year truly reflect the broad range of lawyers and organisations who all have a vital role to play in ensuring people in our communities have access to high-calibre legal advice. We are recognising the lawyers who are working to protect the rights of prisoners charged with the most serious offences; of children at risk of FGM; of families living in unsafe, unsuitable homes; and much more. We introduced a Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-Profit award this year, and are delighted that finalists in our 11 awards categories are based everywhere from rural Wales, to Northern Ireland, to Liverpool, to Stoke on Trent, to London – and many places in between.'

Finalists in the **Criminal Defence** award category include: **Philippa Southwell**, head of the human trafficking and modern slavery department at Birds Solicitors, who has acted in hundreds of forced criminality cases, and delivered training on legislative changes in this area to scores of lawyers and others. Also shortlisted is **Katy Hanson**, managing director of Welch & Co, who has doubled the size of her firm in three years, and now delivers criminal defence and other legal aid services in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Finalists in the **Legal Aid Barrister** category include **James Stark**, of Garden Court North Chambers, a housing barrister who played a leading role in securing the 2019 Supreme Court ruling in Samuels v Birmingham CC. The case – which entailed a lengthy tussle with the Legal Aid Agency to secure funding – was a landmark decision for thousands of tenants whose housing benefit doesn't cover their rent.

The winners will be announced on 7 July 2020, at a virtual awards ceremony. Full details on how finalists, their supporters, and other guests can join the event, will follow in due course.

Chris Minnoch says:

'Everyone in Team LALY is excited at the prospect of making LALY20 our most inclusive yet. Social distancing rules mean we can't gather in person this year, but an online event gives us

the chance to open the festivities more widely. The LALY20 ceremony may be virtual, but the celebrations and the LALY spirit will be as real and palpable as ever.'

See below for a full list of finalists in all categories:

1. Mental Capacity

Sheree Green – Greenchurch Legal
Katy Moulton – Irwin Mitchell

2. Criminal Defence

Katy Hanson – Welch & Co
Antonia Kim Charles – MTC Solicitors
Philippa Southwell – Birds Solicitors

3. Family

Kate Hammond – Miles & Partners
Juanita Kareer – Wilson Solicitors
Krina Parmar – Duncan Lewis

4. Immigration & Asylum

Julian Bild – ATLEU
Nicola Burgess – JCWI
Tori Sicher – Sutovic Hartigan Solicitors

5. Legal Aid Barrister

Charlotte Bayati – Goldsmith Chambers
Richard Davenport – Citadel Chambers
James Stark – Garden Court North

6. Legal Aid Team

Duncan Lewis Solicitors, Public Law team (Harrow)
JCWI
Community Law Partnership Travellers Advice Team

7. Legal Aid Firm/NfP

South West London Law Centre
Simpson Millar
Cartwright King Solicitors

8. Regional Legal Aid Firm/NfP

KRW Law
Turpin Miller
Ison Harrison

9. Legal Aid Newcomer

Arfan Bhatti – Oliver Fisher
Miranda Butler – Garden Court Chambers
Daniel Cooper – Imran Khan & Partners
Siobhan Taylor-Ward – Merseyside Law Centre

10. Public Law

Bahar Ata – Duncan Lewis
Dean Kingham – Swain & Co
Zareena Mustafa – Tuckers

11. Social Welfare

Martin Bridger – Instalaw Solicitors
Hazel Montgomery – Cartwright King
Simon Mullings – Edwards Duthie Shamash
Mike Norman – Bristol Law Centre

12. Outstanding Achievement

No shortlist for this award

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