



PRESS RELEASE - 7 JULY 2021

## **LAPG hosts the second 'lockdown LALY awards' to celebrate the vital work of social justice lawyers during the pandemic.**

Winners at last night's awards include solicitor and barrister duo behind successful challenges to Home Office 'No Recourse to Public Funds' policy.

Adam Hundt, from Deighton Pierce Glynn, and Alex Goodman, from Landmark Chambers, were named as winners of the Outstanding Achievement award, at the 2021 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year ceremony, broadcast live yesterday evening.

During the event, organised by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, compere, broadcaster Anna Jones, said the LALY judges were awarding the pair the LALY's highest award in recognition of the way:

*'Adam and Alex have worked together in their different roles and using their different skills to systematically challenge the Home Office's No Recourse to Public Funds policy.'*

The duo have brought a string of successful cases over several years, establishing that the Home Office policy of denying many migrants access to the welfare safety net is leaving people in destitution and damaging the lives of children. Their most recent High Court success, in April this year, was their second win in 12 months. In this case, they acted for a 5-year-old British boy and his Zimbabwean-born mother, who was a former key worker and unable to work during the pandemic.

The vital role of legal aid lawyers in defending the rights of vulnerable migrants during the pandemic was a recurring theme throughout the evening.

Other winners included:

- Matthew Gold & Co's Public Law and Community Care Team (Legal Aid Team), which has fought for access to free school meals and the government's Healthy Start Scheme, which provides food vouchers and vitamins to the poorest families;

- Rakesh Singh, from Public Law Project (Public Law), who acted for Medical Justice in a successful appeal against the Home Office's 'removal window' policy.

Full list of winners, below.

The prestigious Legal Aid Newcomer award was won by Garden Court Chambers barrister Audrey Cheryl Mogan, who was praised for her expertise in trafficking and deportation law. Audrey is director of Black Protest Legal Support, an organisation set up in the wake of last year's Black Lives Matter demonstrations to protect the rights of marginalised groups to peacefully protest.

**Chris Minnoch, LAPG CEO, says:**

*'This year's awards are a celebration of the way social justice lawyers have risen to all the challenges of the pandemic, and continue to fight doggedly for their clients. During the ceremony we heard about the lawyers who are fighting to stop children and families being left hungry and destitute because of government policy; for women who are being failed by state bodies; and who challenge the unforeseen and unfair consequences of coronavirus legislation that has been passed at great speed and with little parliamentary scrutiny. Those are the lawyers we are proud to recognise, and we call on our government to give them equal recognition and act now to repair our underfunded and increasingly overwhelmed justice system.'*

LALY21 winners in full:

- 1) Disability Rights - Kirsty Stuart (Irwin Mitchell)
- 2) Social Welfare Law - Andrew Sperling (SL5 Legal/Tuckers Solicitors)
- 3) Legal Aid Newcomer - Audrey Cheryl Mogan (Garden Court Chambers)
- 4) Legal Aid Team - Matthew Gold & Co Public Law & Community Care Team
- 5) Legal Aid Barrister - Tessa Buchanan (Garden Court Chambers)
- 6) Family Legal Aid - Cris McCurley (Ben Hoare Bell)
- 7) Public Law - Rakesh Singh (Public Law Project)
- 8) Housing Law - Kathleen Cosgrove (Greater Manchester Law Centre)
- 9) Criminal Defence - Suzanne O'Connell (Tuckers Solicitors)
- 10) Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency - MJC Law
- 11) Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency - Law Centre Northern Ireland
- 12) Outstanding Achievement - Adam Hundt (Deighton Pierce Glynn); Alex Goodman (Landmark Chambers)

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Notes for editors:

1. LAPG is the leading membership organisation for legal aid lawyers, providing a wide range of services and support. [www.lapg.co.uk](http://www.lapg.co.uk)
  
2. The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are into their 19th year. They are organised on a not-for-profit basis by LAPG, and are the only awards aimed solely at lawyers doing publicly-funded work. They are made possible by the generous support of the LALY sponsors:
  - Disability Rights – Bidwell Henderson
  - Criminal Defence – Doughty Street Chambers
  - Family – Resolution
  - Housing – One Pump Court
  - Legal Aid Barrister – The Bar Council
  - Legal Aid Team – Accesspoint
  - Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency – The Law Society
  - Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency – The Legal Education Foundation
  - Legal Aid Newcomer – sponsored by CILEX
  - Public Law – DG Legal
  - Social Welfare – Garden Court Chambers
  - Outstanding Achievement – Matrix Chambers
  - Additional sponsors – TV Edwards & Anthony Gold
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