

PRESS RELEASE - 19 May 2022

LAPG announces shortlist for 2022 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards

The lawyer acting for an autistic teenager denied a potentially life-saving kidney transplant; one of the defence solicitors in the Colston Four case; and the first UK university advice clinic to secure a legal aid contract, are among the 29 individuals and six organisations selected as LALY22 finalists.

New for LALY22: Legal Aid Support Staffer Award

For the first time in its 20-year history, the LALYs includes an award to celebrate the work of legal aid support staff, who play an essential role in keeping social justice organisations operating.

Congratulating all the finalists, CEO Chris Minnoch said LAPG was particularly pleased this year to be able to recognise the vital role of support staffers.

'Every legal aid organisation in the country depends on its support staff, to keep the lights on, literally in some cases, and to ensure lawyers and advisers are able to do their jobs and deliver access to justice for clients. Many of these dedicated, behind-the-scenes, professionals were put under pressure as never before during the pandemic, with some having to oversee a shift to remote working almost overnight. The admiration and respect that legal aid lawyers have for their support colleagues really shone through in these nominations, and we hope this award will go some way to giving this truly unsung group the recognition they deserve.'

Finalists in the inaugural Legal Aid Support Staffer award are:

- David Neale, Garden Court Chamber's 'treasured legal researcher', described as a 'legend and absolute saint';
- Jenny Malone, finance manager at Community Law Partnership, known to colleagues as 'powerjen', and described as 'in many ways, the most important person at the firm';

- Lesley Kennedy-Neal, practice secretary at Wilson Solicitors; 'the heart and soul of the practice for 32 years';
- Simone McGlynn, receptionist at Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre, who makes every client welcome, no matter how 'ill, angry or sad' they may be when they arrive.

Finalists in other categories, include (see full list, below):

Disability Rights: Liz Davis (Irwin Mitchell), who acted for Amy McLennan, when doctors treating her 17 year old son autistic William Verden for a rare kidney disease, said it was not in his best interests to have a transplant; Anna Moore (Leigh Day) for her Court of Protection and inquest work, described as 'fighting hard for every bit of funding and supporting her clients' needs at the worst times of their lives'; Sarah Griffiths-Jones (Reeds Solicitors), who set up her Cardiff-based firm's Court of Protection practice, and has 'an incredible ability to connect with and form a relationship of trust and understanding with her clients'.

Criminal Defence: Adeela Khan (Edward Fail, Bradshaw & Waterson), who specialises in protest work, and is vice-president of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association; Laura O'Brien (Hodge Jones & Allen), who acted for Rhian Graham, one of four defendants acquitted after toppling the statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol; Seema Dosaj (Berris Law), who acted for lorry driver Maurice Robinson, who faced 39 manslaughter charges following the deaths of 39 Vietnamese people.

Legal Aid Firm/Not-For-Profit Agency: MTC Solicitors, which acts for young vulnerable clients from BME backgrounds in gang-related cases, involving modern slavery; University College London Integrated Legal Advice Clinic, which started out as a pop-up advice centre in a GP practice in East London, and now has legal aid contracts in housing and community care; Mary Ward Legal Centre, whose lawyers are described as fearless, and known for their expertise and determination to secure justice for their clients.

The winners in these and the other award categories will be announced at a live ceremony in central London on 12 July.

Chris Minnoch says:

'This will be our first in-person LALY ceremony since before lockdown and also the 20th anniversary of the awards, so we are expecting it to be a true celebration of the incredible, life-changing work of legal aid lawyers.'

Book tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/laly-awards-2022-20th-birthday-general-admission-ticket-tickets-262518689467>

For more information, contact LAPG CEO, Chris Minnoch

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LALY22 full list of finalists:

1. Legal Aid Newcomer

Sponsored by Friends of LALY22

Ciara Bartlam

Marie Paris

Rabah Kherbane

Samuel O'Flaherty

Garden Court North Chambers

Doughty Street Chambers

Doughty Street Chambers

Osbornes Law

2. Legal Aid Support Staffer

Sponsored by Accesspoint

David Neale

Jenny Malone

Lesley Kennedy-Neal

Simone McGlynn

Garden Court Chambers

Community Law Partnership

Wilson Solicitors LLP

Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre

3. Disability Rights

Sponsored by Bidwell Henderson

Liz Davis

Anna Moore

Sarah Griffiths-Jones

Irwin Mitchell LLP

Leigh Day

Reeds Solicitors LLP

4. Family Law

Sponsored by Resolution

Alison Leivesley

Deborah Piccos

Grace Bradley

Bindmans LLP

TV Edwards LLP

The Family Law Company

5. Criminal Defence

Sponsored by Doughty Street Chambers

Adeela Khan

Laura O'Brien

Seema Dosaj

Edward Fail, Bradshaw & Waterson

Hodge Jones & Allen

Berris Law

6. Legal Aid Barrister

Sponsored by The Bar Council

Amean Elgadhry
Gráinne Mellon
Oliver Lewis

One Pump Court Chambers
Garden Court Chambers
Doughty Street Chambers

7. Legal Aid Firm/Not for Profit Agency

Sponsored by The Law Society

MTC Solicitors
UCL Integrated Legal Advice Clinic (UCL iLAC)
Mary Ward Legal Centre

8. Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-Profit Agency

Sponsored by The Legal Education Foundation

Ashwood Solicitors Limited
Johnson Astills Solicitors
David Gray Solicitors LLP

9. Housing Law

Sponsored by Garden Court Chambers

Hannah Khalifah
Lisa Haythorne
Rajea Sultana

Mary Ward Legal Centre
Derbyshire Law Centre
Miles & Partners LLP

10. Social Welfare Law

Sponsored by DG Legal

Andrew Bowmer
Chris McKendry
Clare Jennings

Miles & Partners LLP
Wilson Solicitors LLP
Gold Jennings

11. Public Law

Sponsored by One Pump Court

Qaisar Sheikh
Jamie Bell
Rebecca Ives

Coram Children's Legal Centre
Duncan Lewis Solicitors
Wilson Solicitors LLP

12. Outstanding Achievement

Sponsored by Matrix Chambers

No shortlist for this award