

Celebrating social justice at a social distance

The Legal Aid Practitioners Group is proud to announce the finalists in this year's Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards.

Public law sponsored by Irwin Mitchell



Bahar Ata
Duncan Lewis

Bahar is a CILEx fellow and public law director at Duncan Lewis,

running a team of 20 at its Luton office. She specialises in immigration work, including challenging unlawful detention, age assessments, removals and deportations. She acted for a number of clients who were being put on a charter flight to Jamaica in February 2020, in a case that attracted intense media interest. She is described as 'a fearless advocate for human rights'.



Dean Kingham
Swain & Co

Dean conducts criminal appeals and public law work in relation

to prisoners' rights, acting for those accused of the most serious offences – murder, extreme violence, serious sexual assault and terrorism – whose cases attract little public sympathy. A clinical forensic psychologist says: 'What stands out is Dean's commitment to every client, regardless of circumstances and complexity.'



Zareena Mustafa
Tuckers

Zareena began her legal career as a criminal defence solicitor

and is now head of Tuckers' public law department, specialising in representing clients convicted of terrorism offences and their families. One barrister says of her work: 'Such cases test our commitment to human rights, but Zareena brings the same relentless resolve to fight for all her clients, whatever their background or personal histories.'

Mental capacity sponsored by Bidwell Henderson



Sheree Green
Greenchurch Legal Services

Sheree is a former chair of the Law Society Mental Health and Disability Panel, and is driven by a fierce determination to protect and empower

vulnerable people. She is described as 'just exceptional', 'fantastic with clients'. A fellow mental capacity lawyer says: 'If I ever needed help, I would choose her. She doesn't get people's backs up, but she will not let a point go.'



Katy Moulton Irwin Mitchell

Katy qualified in 2017, but has already made this most demanding area of practice her own. Her caseload is almost exclusively Court of Protection health and welfare cases, and she goes above and beyond for her clients. A QC who has worked closely with her on a complex case says: 'She is a great solicitor. Clever, thorough, organised. She has a great rapport with clients, which is just what this sensitive area of work needs.'

Criminal defence sponsored by DG Legal



Katy Hanson
Welch & Co

Katy is managing director of a small firm

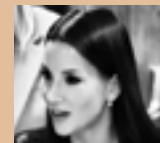
in rural west Wales, which has doubled in size since she took it over three years ago. She invests heavily in her staff and in bringing on the next generation of criminal defence lawyers. She has a passionate belief that everyone has an inherent right to justice and is a 'vocal and vociferous' champion for legal aid in local and national media.



Antonia Kim Charles
MTC Solicitors

Antonia is described as a brave and fearless fighter for her

clients. She has over a decade of experience in criminal defence work, and specialises in complex and serious criminal cases, involving murder, firearms, sexual offences and drugs. She is trusted and respected by her clients because of her expertise and determination. She also acts as a mentor to local young people.



Philippa Southwell
Birds Solicitors

Philippa is a solicitor

advocate and head of Birds' human trafficking and modern slavery department. She has developed unmatched expertise in modern slavery law, and has acted in hundreds of cases involving trafficking and forced criminality. She was one of the first defence lawyers to raise a Modern Slavery Act s45 defence, and is selfless in sharing her hard-won expertise, via training and writing.

Family sponsored by Resolution



Kate Hammond
Miles & Partners

Kate is managing partner as well as running her own demanding

caseload. She is praised as a brilliant role model to everyone, from young lawyers at the start of their careers, to her senior management team colleagues. She acts for parents, children and guardians involved in care proceedings. One supporter says: 'She gives an effective voice to some of the most marginalised people who find themselves navigating the family justice system.'



Juanita Kareer
Wilson Solicitors

Juanita acts for parents and children in care proceedings,

in private children law cases, and in domestic abuse and abduction issues. She conducts her own advocacy in most of her cases. One client says: 'I have mental health conditions which meant I was always anxious and at times couldn't wait until the next day to hear back from Juanita. She didn't mind how many times I called.'



Krina Parmar
Duncan Lewis

Krina is a family and child care director at her firm. Most of her work involves

serious non-accidental injuries, sometimes where babies have died or there are allegations of sexual abuse, and many of her cases are culturally complex. Her background in criminal defence law equips her to deal seamlessly with cases that have both criminal and family elements.

Immigration and asylum sponsored by Doughty Street Chambers



Julian Bild
Anti Trafficking
and Labour
Exploitation Unit
(ATLEU)

Julian has over 20 years' experience in immigration law and in that time has helped train 'wave after wave' of legal aid lawyers. He is described as an 'immigration celebrity', and 'exceptionally patient and generous with his time'. One client says: 'Even in your darkest moments, and I have had so many, he has always found a way to put a light there, to encourage, saying, it will be OK, and it has always come out to be OK.'

Nicola Burgess
Joint Council for
the Welfare of
Immigrants (JCWI)



Nicola specialises in deportation cases, often involving vulnerable clients who have lived in the UK for many years, and also acts for victims of trafficking and torture. Her work demands not just high-level expertise, but also great tenacity and resilience. As well as her JCWI team, Nicola also supports the immigration and asylum sector more generally, through her writing and by sharing expertise.



Tori Sicher
Sutovic & Hartigan

Tori undertakes legal aid work at all levels, ranging from legal help, through to having conduct of judicial reviews before the Upper Tribunal and the Administrative Court. One barrister who has worked with her over many years says: 'I have been moved constantly by the compassion she displays for her clients, which is matched only by her extraordinary determination.'

Legal aid barrister sponsored by The Bar Council



Charlotte Bayati
Goldsmith
Chambers

Charlotte works tirelessly to highlight the plight of Sri Lankan

Tamil refugees, including women subjected to sexual violence. She has been involved in a string of significant cases over the last year, including KV in 2019, which will have an impact on all asylum cases involving torture.

Richard Davenport
Citadel
Chambers



Richard is a criminal defence barrister who shows exceptional commitment to his clients, who are often vulnerable and facing serious charges, including manslaughter and historic rape. The work is relentless and rarely glamorous but Richard always goes the extra mile, literally in one case, where he undertook a three-hour round trip to deliver what he knew would be distressing news to a manslaughter client face to face.



James Stark
Garden Court North

James was counsel for the successful appellant in last year's Supreme Court case of *Samuels v Birmingham City Council*, which has been hailed as a landmark victory for tenants whose housing benefit doesn't cover their rent. James fought 'valiantly and bravely' for Terryann Samuels and is described by one supporter as 'truly a Superbarrister'.

Legal aid team sponsored by Accesspoint

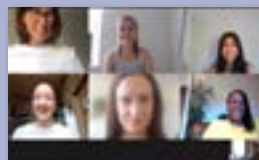
Duncan Lewis Public Law Team (Harrow)



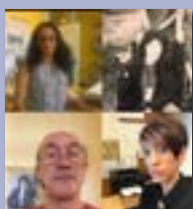
Led by director Toufique Hossain, Duncan Lewis's Harrow-based public law team consists of solicitors, trainees and caseworkers, all dedicated to holding the government to account and upholding the rule of law. The team is known for bringing cutting-edge cases, and acting for asylum-seekers, refugees and trafficking victims. Its urgent legal challenges are often a client's last hope of securing their safety.

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)

JCWI's seven-strong, all-women team is known for its strategic litigation. High-profile interventions in the last year include K, in the Court of Appeal, which challenged an antiquated element of British nationality law affecting who is deemed to be a child's father, when it operates to that child's detriment. An asylum-seeker client says: 'I cannot describe what it feels to be treated like a human being. It made me in tears.'



Community Law Partnership Travellers Advice Team



CLP's TAT is led by partner Chris Johnson, supported by solicitors Sharon Baxter and Parminder Sanghera, and administrator Emma Westwood. A QC who works with the team regularly says: 'TAT represents everything that is good about legal aid practitioners. It provides truly outstanding service to the most vulnerable members of our community in the face of drastic legal aid cuts and incessant Legal Aid Agency bureaucracy.'

Legal aid firm/not-for-profit agency sponsored by The Law Society

South West London Law Centres



SWLLC is the UK's largest Law Centre and last year helped over 8,000 people access justice and defend their rights. They advise on everything from housing to employment, welfare benefits and immigration. One housing client says: 'Before I came to SWLLC, I was seriously suicidal. I couldn't bear the thought of me and my son on the street. Now, I know there is a place I can come where people are willing to help.'



Simpson Millar

Simpson Millar is a national law firm, with 500 staff and 11 offices. It is praised for its innovation, client care and expertise. Its nomination is supported by umpteen clients and organisations, who single out many of their lawyers by name for special mention. Staff are praised for their 'consistent, unrelenting commitment to the welfare of clients'. One is described as being 'not only my lawyer, but my doctor, teacher and guide'.

CartwrightKing
SOLICITORS

Cartwright King Solicitors

Cartwright King has 11 offices nationwide with over 100 staff. Its services include criminal defence, family, childcare, mental health, Court of Protection, immigration, education and community care. The firm's core values are reflected in its commitment to ensuring the rights of individuals are retained.

Legal aid newcomer sponsored by Friends of LALY20 (crowdfunding)



Arfan Bhatti Oliver Fisher

Arfan became Oliver Fisher's lead solicitor for its Grenfell Tower clients when he was just two years' qualified, representing survivors and bereaved families at the inquiry into the disaster. A barrister working with him says he is 'strikingly calm and patient', even in the most difficult circumstances, and 'creative and ambitious' in his determination to secure the best result for his often vulnerable and distressed clients.



Miranda Butler
Garden Court Chambers

Miranda has a broad public law practice, focusing on immigration, asylum and nationality law, and has built particular expertise in trafficking and unlawful detention cases. She was called to the bar in 2013 and has worked on a string of strategic challenges, including to the Home Office over fees charged to children entitled to register as British citizens. She is described as having 'strength and depth', being accessible and a team player.



Daniel Cooper Imran Khan & Partners

Daniel qualified in June 2019 and has achieved remarkable successes for his firm's public law department. While a trainee, he acted at a three-week jury inquest into the deaths of five men killed when a wall collapsed at a recycling plant. He is representing 60 abuse survivors in the Lambeth Children's Homes Redress Scheme. Imran Khan QC says Daniel has shown 'extraordinary ability' to deal with emotionally and intellectually demanding cases.



Siobhan Taylor-Ward Merseyside Law Centre

Siobhan is a dedicated social welfare lawyer and tireless campaigner for justice. She qualified this year and is praised for her immense contribution to 'the reinvigoration of specialist social welfare legal advice in Merseyside'. She is a Justice First Fellow and former national vice-chair of Young Legal Aid Lawyers, leading on its work promoting social mobility and diversity. A former colleague says she is 'a fantastic fighter for clients' rights'.

Social welfare sponsored by Tikit



Martin Bridger InstaLaw Solicitors

Martin works with young, unaccompanied asylum-seekers and has played a key role securing greater protections for these vulnerable children. His landmark cases in the last year include *AB v Kent*, which challenged the practice of conducting 'visual age assessments' of unaccompanied child migrants at police stations, and *TN v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, which established that the Home Office has strict liability when wrongly detaining a child whom it had believed to be an adult.



Hazel Montgomery Cartwright King

Hazel is a former criminal defence solicitor who now specialises in mental health work. Her nomination is supported by a range of medical professionals, including a consultant psychiatrist who says she makes a 'formidable adversary' at tribunals, adding that she fights 'the patient's corner to the nth degree'. Another says she has a gift for putting patients with complex needs and communication difficulties at their ease.



Simon Mullings Edwards Duthie Shamash

Simon is a housing caseworker with more than 20 years' experience at the legal aid coalface, who has also acted in cases that have gone to the Court of Appeal. He is described as having all the qualities anyone would want to find in a legal aid lawyer: 'compassion, resilience, a brilliant mind, and a determination to achieve the very best for his clients'. He is also praised for his commitment to campaigning for access to justice.



Mike Norman Bristol Law Centre

Mike is a housing lawyer handling possession proceedings, injunctions, disrepair and unlawful evictions. Many of his clients are intensely vulnerable: victims of trafficking and domestic violence, and with enduring mental health problems. One barrister says: 'He is a true expert in housing law in the dual jurisdictions of England and Wales.' Another adds: 'He is the most passionate and dedicated solicitor I have ever worked with.'

Regional legal aid firm/not-for-profit agency sponsored by The Legal Education Foundation



KRW Law

Belfast-based KRW is known for its ground-

breaking work on conflict-related legacy litigation, covering complex, multi-death inquests, judicial review and claims against public authorities. It secured an amendment to Legal Aid Agency regulations to allow it to act for families at the resumed inquest into the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings, and is acting at the resumed inquest into the Guildford pub bombings, due to start in 2021 thanks to its efforts.



Turpin Miller

Turpin Miller provides legal aid housing, debt and immigration

advice across a wide geographical area, stretching from Reading through west Berkshire and Oxfordshire. One supporter from a housing support agency says they are 'literal lifesavers'. A worker at a homelessness charity says: 'They understand the needs and vulnerabilities our clients face and are able to communicate the legislation in a way that is understandable to all.'



Ison Harrison (incorporating Harrison Bunday)

Describing itself as 'the

Yorkshire law firm', Ison Harrison has a string of offices across the county and beyond, providing legal aid services in family, clinical negligence, criminal defence, immigration and public law. Among the leading lights in its publicly-funded work is the legendary Leeds-based Ruth Bunday, who has spent four decades building an unmatched reputation as a specialist in inquest law.

■ The winners of LALY20 will be announced at a virtual ceremony on 7 July 2020. Check LAPG's website and see @LALYawards #LALY20 for details of how to join what will be our most inclusive ceremony.

■ The LALY judges will also be making an award for Outstanding Achievement (sponsored by Matrix). There is no shortlist for this award.

■ LAG is media partner of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards.