

The sixth annual Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) awards attracted a record number of entries. This year's finalists, who are named and pictured in this special feature, were selected by a panel that was chaired by Cherie Booth QC. The winners will be announced at a ceremony in central London this month.

The LALYs 2008 finalists

Carol Storer, director of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG), announcing the 2008 shortlists said: 'LAPG is thrilled to announce the shortlists for the sixth LALY awards, which celebrate the work of solicitors, barristers and other legal aid practitioners who have dedicated their careers to the service of some of the most vulnerable members of society. We are absolutely delighted with the standard and number of entries. It is very humbling to read about the work carried out by these practitioners and the warmth with which they are described by fellow professionals and clients alike.'

Criminal defence lawyer
sponsored by Criminal Law
Solicitors' Association



Craig Uversidge
(Forbes Solicitors, Preston)



John Waste
(BMN Solicitors, Birkenhead)



Zarina Gani
(Gani and Co Solicitors, London)



LAPG is an independent, grassroots movement that represents approximately 500 firms at the heart of the provision of publicly funded legal services.

The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are non-profit making.

Family legal aid lawyer
sponsored by Resolution



Nigel Priestley
(Ridley and Hall Solicitors, Huddersfield)



Samantha Little
(Russell-Cooke Solicitors, Surrey)



Toni Moore
(Adams Moore, Milton Keynes)

Immigration lawyer sponsored by Anglia DNA



James Howard (Blakemores Solicitors, Birmingham)



Jawaid Luqmani (Luqmani Thompson and Partners, London)



Kahvir Kaur (Immigration Advisory Service)



Sean McLoughlin (The Rights Partnership, Birmingham)

Legal aid barrister sponsored by the Bar Council



Maya Sikand (Garden Court Chambers, London)



Robert Latham (Doughty Street Chambers, London)



S Chelvan (Mitre House Chambers, London)

Legal aid firm/not-for-profit agency sponsored by Matrix Chambers



Davles Gore Lomax (Leeds)



Jackson and Canter (Liverpool)



Switalskis LLP (West Yorkshire)

Mental health lawyer sponsored by Allen & Overy



Andrew Howarth (Terry Jones Solicitors, Shrewsbury)



Julie Burton (Julie Burton Law, Gwynedd)



Sophy Miles (Miles and Partners, London)

Social and welfare lawyer sponsored by Trimega Labs



Dawn McPherson
(Fisher Meredith, London)



Mike McIlvaney
(Community Law Partnership, Birmingham)



Yagi Amin
(Irwin Mitchell, Sheffield)

Young legal aid barrister sponsored by Irwin Mitchell



Ben McCormack
(Garden Court North, Manchester)



Felicity Williams
(6 King's Bench Walk, London)



John Beckley
(Garden Court Chambers, London)

Young legal aid solicitor sponsored by the Legal Services Commission



Debaleena Dasgupta
(Fisher Meredith, London)



Gwendolen Gwynn Morgan
(Bindmans LLP, London)



Jo Hickman
(Fisher Meredith, London)

■ The panel of judges will also be making an award for **Outstanding achievement**, which is sponsored by DG Legal.

■ For the first time, the Law Society is acting as overall sponsor of the LALYs. Legal Action is the awards' media partner. LAPG is grateful to all the sponsors of the LALYs (see inside back cover of this issue).

The judging panel

The panel was chaired by **Cherie Booth QC**, and other judges included:

- **Fiona Bawdon**, freelance legal journalist;
- **Rob Brown**, former director of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association;
- **Yvonne Brown**, former chairperson of the Black Solicitors Network;
- **Wesley Gryk**, Law Society council member for immigration;
- **Michael Kennedy**, winner of the 2007 mental health lawyer LALY award;
- **Doreen Lawrence** of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust;
- **Mr Justice Andrew McFarlane QC**;
- **Roy Morgan** (chairperson of LAPG);
- **Aika Stephenson**, winner of the 2007 young legal aid solicitor LALY award; and
- **Polly Toynbee**, Guardian columnist.