

2008

**LEGAL AID  
LAWYER**  
OF THE YEAR AWARDS

...a celebration  
of the work of  
legal aid lawyers



**NOMINATION FORM**



*'Unfailing commitment to the cases that ultimately change people's lives'*

*'The professionalism and quality of the lawyers was of the highest quality I have ever witnessed'*

*'Thanks to my legal aid lawyer, my daughter has become a little girl again, instead of the problem child she was becoming'*

*'...a great ability to fight for the rights of some of the most vulnerable people in our society'*

## Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards 2008

The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are unique. They are the only awards organised by the grassroots legal aid profession for the grassroots legal aid profession. The Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG) launched the LALYs in 2002 to celebrate the vital but unsung work of publicly-funded lawyers. These lawyers are not the fat cats of tabloid myths; they are not the famous names of high-profile trials. They are the dedicated professionals who commit their professional lives to improving the lot of the poor and the marginalised, without looking for substantial financial reward or public recognition.

We are seeking nominations in 9 categories:

**Criminal Defence Lawyer** – sponsored by Criminal Law Solicitors Association

**Family Legal Aid Lawyer** – sponsored by Resolution

**Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency** – sponsored by Matrix

**Legal Aid Barrister** – sponsored by Bar Council

**Social and Welfare Lawyer** – sponsored by Trimega Labs

**Mental Health Lawyer** – sponsored by Allen & Overy

**Immigration Lawyer** – sponsored by Anglia DNA

**Young Legal Aid Solicitor** – sponsored by Legal Services Commission

**Young Legal Aid Barrister** – sponsored by Irwin Mitchell

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**Outstanding Achievement** - sponsored by DG Legal

The judges will also be making an award for Outstanding Achievement

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**Closing date for nominations: 31 October 2008**

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by mid-November and invited to the ceremony on 1 December 2008, where the winners will be announced.

## From previous years' nominations...

“Her outstanding dedication and hard work, combined with a brilliant mind and kind heart, give the disadvantaged and marginalised back their dignity”

“I have my life back and everyone now knows the truth about my baby daughter's death. My solicitor sat with me throughout all the police interviews, which I really appreciated, as he knew how scared I was”

“She allows her clients to retain their dignity even when they are facing the most wretched situations as often happens in care proceedings”

“She has the ability to communicate easily with very different people and her consistency has won her the respect of colleagues, the judiciary and most importantly her clients. She is a shining example of a legal aid lawyer”

“It is very easy when working under current financial constraints for standards to dwindle. However, he is clearly not an individual who is happy with providing an inferior service and this is reflected in his willingness to put in the extra work, even in the absence of financial remuneration”

The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are now into their sixth year and are a unique celebration of the invaluable work done by solicitors, barristers, legal executives, and other advisers working in the publicly-funded sector. They are organised by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group on behalf of the profession. The awards are non-profit-making and are only possible because of the generous support of our sponsors.

### Principal sponsor



**The Law Society**

The Law Society is delighted to be the principal sponsor of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards. The society campaigns vigorously for legal aid lawyers. We successfully challenged the unified contract, negotiated a number of significant concessions and secured a package worth £55m+ for civil legal aid practitioners. Currently we are pressing the Legal Services Commission to rethink its plans on best value tendering for criminal defence services. [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

### Sponsors of individual awards

#### MENTAL HEALTH LAWYER

**ALLEN & OVERY** Allen & Overy LLP is an international legal practice with over 5,500 staff, including some 500 partners, working in 29 major centres worldwide. A&O is proud to be associated with the LALY awards which support legal aid lawyers who make a real difference to the lives of many vulnerable members of society. We are committed to pro bono and community work and we view such activities as central to our values. We congratulate the winner and commend all lawyers involved with the provision of legal aid work. [www.allenoverly.com](http://www.allenoverly.com)

#### IMMIGRATION LAWYER



A specialist laboratory in paternity and family relationship testing, Anglia DNA Services offers a tailored service through case-by-case management, sample collection service and express service (from 12 hours) for all legal purposes. At Anglia DNA, we are committed to offering a complete DNA service to our clients, recently highlighted through our accreditation by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to offer CPD courses. We are very pleased to be sponsoring the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards; which recognise the particular dedication of those involved in legal aid. [www.angliadna.co.uk](http://www.angliadna.co.uk)

#### LEGAL AID BARRISTER



The Bar Council is the professional body which represents and, through the independent Bar Standards Board, regulates barristers. The Bar provides vital advocacy and advisory services. The Bar Council fully supports the need for legal aid in providing essential access to justice for all who need it and congratulates those practitioners who work tirelessly to provide this essential public service. It is delighted to be sponsoring this year's awards for the third time. [www.barcouncil.org.uk](http://www.barcouncil.org.uk)

#### CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYER



The Criminal Law Solicitors Association is a proud voice of representation for solicitor members and associate members alike, in all areas of criminal law. Whether it be on changes to the law, legal process or legal aid, the association is a respected and influential consultee and contributor and is proud to be associated with the awards.

#### OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

**DG.LEGAL** DG Legal is delighted to be once again sponsoring this year's award for Outstanding Achievement. We provide specialist managerial, training, marketing, and cost reduction advisory services to organisations providing legal advice and services in the private and not-for-profit sectors. Our current clients include the Law Society, Citizens Advice, Law Centres Federation and dozens of private practitioners. We also write and mark a supervisory accreditation assessment for the Solicitors Regulation Authority. [www.dglegal.co.uk](http://www.dglegal.co.uk)

## YOUNG LEGAL AID BARRISTER

**irwinmitchell**<sup>(IM)</sup>  
solicitors Irwin Mitchell has over 90 years of facilitating access to justice – originally in Sheffield and now additionally in 8 other offices in England, Scotland and Spain. Reputedly the only one of the very large firms still to have a legal aid practice, Irwin Mitchell was National Firm of the Year 2007 at the Lawyer Awards, and is delighted to sponsor the LALY award for Young Legal Aid Barrister of the Year. [www.irwinmitchell.com](http://www.irwinmitchell.com)

## YOUNG LEGAL AID SOLICITOR

**legal services**  
COMMISSION The Legal Services Commission is proud to sponsor the Young Solicitor of the Year award. The LSC has already invested nearly £15m in the next generation of legal aid solicitors. This year we made 150 training grants available – 50% more than in the past. The training grants provided so far will translate into nearly 600 newly qualified solicitors working in legal aid. Each of these new solicitors will make a real difference to people's lives. [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk)

## LEGAL AID FIRM /NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCY

**matrix**  
chambers Matrix is pleased to once again be sponsoring the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards. We have a longstanding commitment to public interest and publicly-funded work and we celebrate the efforts that law firms make in this important field. Their

work is crucial in protecting the rights of the vulnerable and often undervalued groups in society. Matrix is delighted this year to be sponsoring the Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency award.

## FAMILY LEGAL AID LAWYER

**resolution**  
first for family law Resolution's 5,500 members are family lawyers committed to the non-adversarial resolution of family disputes. Resolution solicitors abide by a code of practice which emphasises a constructive approach to family problems and encourages solutions that take into account the needs of the whole family, and the best interests of any children in particular. At least half Resolution's members undertake legal aid work and their firms make up the vast majority of family legal aid lawyers. [www.resolution.org.uk](http://www.resolution.org.uk)

## SOCIAL AND WELFARE LAWYER

**TRIMEGALABS** Trimega Laboratories is an award winning alcohol and drug abuse testing company that provides accurate historical records from hair samples. As well as regulatory bodies and professions such as commercial aviation, its clients include social services, family law practitioners and tests ordered directly by courts. In supporting the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards, Trimega hopes to draw wider attention to the influence that hair tests have in cases where dependency is an issue. [www.trimegalabs.co.uk](http://www.trimegalabs.co.uk)

## Media partner

**LAG** The Legal Action Group is a self-financing educational charity which aims to provide greater knowledge of the law through its programme of publications and training for lawyers and advisors. LAG also undertakes policy research on access to justice issues particularly the public funding of legal services. We do not represent providers of legal aid, but are primarily concerned that the public has access to good quality publicly-funded legal services. [www.lag.org.uk](http://www.lag.org.uk)

## ORGANISER



The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are organised by Legal Aid Practitioners Group. LAPG is the leading membership organisation for lawyers working under Legal Services Commission contracts. We provide a range of services for members including Legal Aid Review, monthly newswires, courses and support on legal aid issues. We are at the forefront of discussions with the LSC and government over the future of legal aid. We believe in a system of publicly-funded law that enables all the vulnerable in society to protect and enforce their rights. [www.lapg.co.uk](http://www.lapg.co.uk)

# Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards 2008

## Nomination form

Please complete and return to Carol Storer, Director, Legal Aid Practitioners Group, 103 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL by **Friday 31 October 2008**.

See Guidance, below, and [www.lapg.co.uk](http://www.lapg.co.uk) for more details about what to include in your nomination.

Additional forms are available from the website

Nominee's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's organisation name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Nominee's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Category (tick as appropriate): Entrants can be nominated in more than one category

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Defence Lawyer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social and Welfare Lawyer <sup>3</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Legal Aid Solicitor <sup>2</sup> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Legal Aid Lawyer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Lawyer                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Aid Barrister                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Lawyer                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Legal Aid Barrister <sup>2</sup> |

Nominated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What type of legal aid work does the nominee conduct? \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

How has this person/organisation demonstrated exceptional commitment to their clients and publicly-funded work?

(continue on separate sheet) \_\_\_\_\_

We welcome supporting documentation. Please list additional material below: \_\_\_\_\_

### Guidance

- 1 With the exception of the Barrister and Young Barrister categories, nominees must work in a private practice solicitors' firm, law centre, or solicitor agency which has a specialist level contract with the Legal Services Commission. Solicitors, legal executives, employed barristers and paralegals are all eligible.
- 2 Nominees for the Young Solicitor award must be trainee solicitors working under a current training contract, or must be no more than 3 years' qualified on 1 September 2008. Nominees for Young Barrister must be of no more than 7 years' call on 1 September 2008.
- 3 The Social and Welfare category includes all legally-aided fields that are not covered separately.
- 4 Individuals may not nominate themselves, although an organisation may make a nomination on its own behalf for the Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency award. Where possible, one person should be identified at the lead nominator, that the organisers can contact for further information or clarification if needed, with supporting statements from others who wish to support the nomination, rather than supplemental nominations. Other documentation in support should be provided where possible.
- 5 Non-lawyers may nominate people for awards but, ideally, the nomination should be made or supported by a professional (ie, solicitor, barrister, judge, tribunal member). Nominations from outside the nominee's organisation are not essential, but external nominations/supporting statements are likely to carry more weight with the judges. We welcome supporting statements from clients.
- 6 Membership of LAPG is not required either to nominate someone or to be a nominee.
- 7 The judging panel has the right to nominate anyone who meets the criteria and will be solely responsible for awarding the Outstanding Achievement award.
- 8 Nominations must include a statement setting out the reasons for the nomination, and the name and details of the person making the nomination. The statement may be set out on the nomination form or on a separate sheet.
- 9 The decision of the director of LAPG as to whether to accept a nomination as valid is final.
- 10 Nominations will be acknowledged to the person identified as making the lead nomination. Those making the shortlist will be informed asap after the judging meeting in November 2008. It will not be possible to contact those who do not make the shortlist.
- 11 The closing date for nominations is 31 October 2008. Send to Carol Storer, Director, LAPG, 103 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL; [carol.storer@lapg.co.uk](mailto:carol.storer@lapg.co.uk); fax: 020 7183 2270