

# Legal Aid – The Next Generation a conference for legal aid trainees

## Biographies



### **Tom Jones - Legal Services Commissioner**

Tom Jones was appointed as Legal Services Commissioner on 1 March 2004. His responsibilities with the Commission include chairing the Wales Committee for the Community Legal Service and membership of the Audit Committee. Tom also has a special interest in Wales and the LSC's South region. Tom is a working farmer with a lifelong knowledge of rural issues. He has a particular interest in social exclusion and social responsibility and has extensive public appointment experience both regionally and nationally, being the former Chair of the National Lottery Charities Board – Wales Committee. Tom is Honorary Vice President of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Chair of the Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust and a UK delegation member on the European Union Economic and Social Committee.



### **Lord Bach - Parliamentary Under Secretary Of State**

Responsibilities Responsible for all departmental business in the House of Lords and: Supreme Court, EU and international, Crown Dependencies and Legal Aid.

Lord Bach was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice on 6 October 2008. He previously served as a Minister in the Whips' office, the former Lord Chancellor's Department, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.



### **Carolyn Regan - Chief Executive – Legal Services Commission**

Carolyn Regan joined the Legal Services Commission as Chief Executive in September 2006, becoming responsible for a legal aid budget of more than £2 billion and a staff of 1,600. Most of her career has been spent in the National Health Service with her most recent post being Chief Executive of North East London Strategic Health Authority. Carolyn was educated at the Lycee Francais de Londres and at Oxford University; is a council member of City University and a Trustee of Action Space Limited. She is a founding member of Yarrow Housing Limited, a charity set up in 1990 to provide supported housing for people with learning disabilities and now a registered social landlord.

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### **Patrick Reeve - Head of Legal Aid Service Development**

Patrick qualified as a solicitor in 1989, having completed his training at a small legal aid firm in East London. He remained in private practice until 1996 when he joined the Legal Aid Board (forerunner to the Commission) initially as a legal advisor, and subsequently in a number of policy roles. He is currently Head of Legal Aid Service Development.

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### **Richard Miller - Head of Legal Aid at the Law Society**

Richard Miller is the Head of Legal Aid at the Law Society. He qualified as a lawyer in 1992, and soon became involved in the political side of legal aid through the Legal Aid Practitioners Group alongside his work in practice in a small firm in Kent. When in 2000 LAPG decided to appoint a full time director, Richard was appointed to the post. At LAPG, he was responsible for the Group's responses to consultations, and developed their popular legal aid e-mail updates. He took the decision to attend law fairs to tell students about careers in legal aid, and developed a brochure in conjunction with the College of Law, as well as the Student Supplement to Legal Aid Review. Along with David Emmerson and Fiona Bawdon, he helped establish the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards. In 2007, he accepted Des Hudson's invitation to join the Law Society to lead its work on legal aid.

### **Aika Stephenson – Young Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year 2007**



Aika Stephenson is a solicitor who specialises in representing young people. Prior to joining the Youth Department at Lawrence and Co. Aika was the bail support worker for Westminster Youth Offending Team. Aika also worked for The Children's Society at Feltham Young Offenders Institute as a child advocate. In recognition of her work in the legal community, Aika was awarded Young Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year in June 2007. Young Solicitor Aika Stephenson not only works in the Youth Justice System, she has also developed Just For Kids Law. This organisation provides Youth Advocates for youngsters caught up in legal and quasi-legal proceedings, and trains lawyers and other advisers who work with young people.

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### **Zarina Gani – Gani and Co Solicitors**

Zarina Gani began her training as a criminal solicitor . Zarina Gani, of Gani and Co Solicitors in London, was awarded Criminal Defence Lawyer of the Year 2008. Zarina's dedication and commitment to criminal clients was praised by clients, colleagues, staff at the local court and barristers. Colleagues inspired by her wrote very movingly in support of her nomination.



### **Carol Storer – Director of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group**

In April 2008 Carol Storer became Director of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, after 5 years at Shelter. Prior to that, Carol had been a solicitor at two local authorities, three private practice firms and one law centre. She started working life carrying out a range of subjects and over the years gradually dropped other areas of law to do nothing but housing law and LSC contract management work both in private practice and the not for profit sector.

### **Jo Hickman – Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year 2008**

Jo is a member of the Public Services Law department of Fisher Meredith and specialises in public law, human rights and civil liberties. She has been involved in a number of high profile cases including assisting a coalition of NGOs to intervene in the "torture evidence" case in the House of Lords, and advising other NGOs on the intervention process in the European Court of Human Rights. Recently Jo has been acting for the comedian Mark Thomas in an application for disclosure of documents in the "Serious Fraud Office/BAE" case; an action which is likely to have significant implications for press freedom.

jo trained at Fisher Meredith and qualified as a solicitor in 2006. She studied law at Nottingham Trent University before specialising in immigration & asylum law. Jo worked for the Refugee Legal Centre while completing the Legal Practice Course at the University of the West of England (Bristol).

Jo has contributed to a number of publications including Liberty's 'Your Rights', and the New Law Journal. She has provided training and consultancy to organisations including the International Harm Reduction Association, the Refugee Legal Centre and the Refugee Council. Jo presently chairs and co-moderates the Foreign National Prisoners group.

### **Julie Bishop -Director of Law Centres Federation**

Julie Bishop took up the position as Director of the Law Centres Federation in February 2008. Immediately prior to her work with the LCF, Julie was Director of National Association of Community Legal Centres in Australia. Julie worked in the IT industry for 20 years, including 10 years working with Community Legal Centres in Australia in this capacity. Before IT, Julie studied and taught philosophy at the University of Sydney.

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