

# **“2018 LEGAL AID PRACTITIONERS GROUP LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS – SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED**

**Public law solicitors who were behind some of last year's most significant legal challenges have been selected as finalists for this year's Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year.**

**After reading over 800 pages of nominations, the LALY judges met in London earlier this week to make their selections for the 2018 awards.**

Finalists in the Public Law award category include: Harriet Wistrich, from Birnberg Peirce, who acted in the landmark judicial review of the parole board's decision to release black cab rapist John Worboys; and Emma Norton, from Liberty, who represents families in the Deepcut Barracks inquests into the deaths of four young army recruits, where judgment is expected in June 2018;

Also selected as a finalist in the Public Law category is Nancy Collins, from Hodge Jones & Allen, who acts on behalf of those with learning disabilities who are caught up in the criminal justice system, and also for bereaved families of people with learning disabilities at inquests.

There are 12 LALY award categories in total (see full list and names of all finalists, below), including Children's Rights, Criminal Defence, Family Legal Aid, and, new for 2018, Practice Management.

Finalists in the Practice Management award include Adam Makepeace, from Tuckers, the biggest criminal defence firm in the country; Richard Prust, from Watson Woodhouse Solicitors in Middlesbrough, which successfully mixes legal aid work with privately funded and conditional fee work; and Sally Thompson, from immigration specialists Luqmani Thompson, who is credited with ensuring the firm's survival, despite swingeing cuts to legal aid.

## **LAPG director Carol Storer says:**

*'The LALYs are known for celebrating those lawyers whose skills and commitment directly transform the lives of so many vulnerable people - and rightly so. However, this year, we also wanted to recognise those practice managers who do vital work behind the scenes so firms and agencies can stay afloat and keep providing a service to clients, and whose contribution is rarely publicly acknowledged. As one nomination said, "practice managers do not get cards or flowers from clients at the end of each success".'*

The winners will be announced by Baroness Doreen Lawrence OBE at a ceremony in central London on 17 July. See full list of finalists, below.

The LALYs are organised by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, and are into their 16<sup>th</sup> year.

For more information, contact

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LIST OF FINALISTS HERE

**1. Children's Rights – Sponsored by Anthony Gold**

Alex Rook, Irwin Mitchell LLP  
Dan Rosenberg, Simpson Millar LLP  
Silvia Nicolaou Garcia, Simpson Millar LLP

**2. Criminal Defence – Sponsored by DG Legal**

Aika Stephenson, Just for Kids Law  
Paris Theodorou, Hodge Jones & Allen LLP  
Helen White, Howells Solicitors

**3. Family including Mediation – Sponsored by Resolution**

Tony McGovern, Creighton & Partners  
Lesley Monkhouse, David Gray Solicitors LLP  
Philip Wilkins, Hudgell & Partners Solicitors

**4. Practice Manager – Sponsored by Accesspoint**

Adam Makepeace, Tuckers Solicitors LLP  
Richard Prust, Watson Woodhouse Solicitors  
Sally Thompson, Luqmani Thompson & Partners

**5. Housing – Sponsored by Garden Court Chambers**

Kate Hignett, Henry Hyams Solicitors  
Giles Peaker, Anthony Gold Solicitors  
Miles Richardson, Citizens Advice Southend

**6. Legal Aid Barrister – Sponsored by The Bar Council**

Martha Cover, Coram Chambers  
Alev Giz, 1 Garden Court  
James Stark, Garden Court North Chambers

**7. Legal Aid Firm/Not for Profit Agency – Sponsored by The Law Society**

Barking & Dagenham Citizens Advice  
Ealing Law Centre  
Greater Manchester Law Centre

**8. Legal Aid Newcomer – Sponsored by Friends of LALY18**

Joanna Bennett, Hodge Jones & Allen LLP  
Lewis Kett, Duncan Lewis Solicitors  
Catherine Osborne, Garden Court Chambers  
Ifeanyi Odogwu, Garden Court Chambers

**9. Public Law – Sponsored by Irwin Mitchell**

Nancy Collins, Hodge Jones & Allen LLP  
Emma Norton, Liberty  
Harriet Wistrich, Birnberg Peirce

**10. Social and Welfare – Sponsored by Tikit**

Julie Cornes, Simpson Millar LLP  
Sophie Freeman, Coram Children's Legal Centre  
Caroline Hurst, Switalskis Solicitors

**11. Access to Justice through IT – Sponsored by The Legal Education Foundation**

CaseRatio – Tuckers Solicitors LLP  
KIM – The Jeanie Project  
DIYLaw – Law for Good

The judges will also be making an award for Outstanding Achievement, sponsored by Matrix. There is no shortlist for this award.”