

Lawyer of the week Sulaiha Ali

Sulaiha Ali, a solicitor at Duncan Lewis, acted for a Jamaican national who was deported to Jamaica in 2016. In the first case to assess the fairness of the Home Office's "deport first, appeal later" policy, the tribunal ordered ministers to fund and facilitate his return to the UK.

What were the main issues in this case? There was precedent case law against us, so we needed to distinguish this case by evidencing why an appeal could not be effective from abroad. Cases of this nature are always bound to be difficult. It was important to focus the tribunal's attention on the



human rights issues at stake and, above all, the best interests of the children. It was a team effort involving Philip Armitage, and counsel Sonali Naik, QC, Bijan Hoshi and Ali Bandegani.

What is the best decision you've taken? Rejecting a job offer from a corporate firm and accepting a job in legal aid — my focus is now aligned to assist the marginalised.

Who has inspired you? My remarkably intelligent sister, whom I've always strived to be like; the talented and compassionately driven lawyers I

work with; and my director, who has taught me more in the two years that I have been at this firm than ever in my career.

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you? In between seeing clients at a pro-bono advice surgery, I slipped, tried to regain balance for what seemed a lifetime, gave up and crashed head-first into a pillar. Onlookers were as mortified as I was.

What is the best advice you have received? To be tenacious. Some of my most successful cases have involved receiving negative advice from counsel or having to exhaust the appeals process several times over.

Which three qualities should a

lawyer have? With some inspiration from Maya Angelou: passion, compassion, and to conduct oneself with some humour and style.

What law would you enact? One that mandates the proper safeguarding, support and protection of victims of gender and sexual-based violence, irrespective of immigration status.

How would you like to be remembered? As having made some sort of positive contribution to society, but above all, to be a daughter that my loving and selfless parents would be proud of.

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