

Guidelines for judges of the Social Policy Association Annual Awards

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SPA Awards Officer

Thank you for agreeing to judge this year's Social Policy Association Annual Awards. The Social Policy Association has asked you to act as a judge at this year's awards because of your standing as a senior, well-respected and distinguished member of our profession and Association. We give judges a large amount of discretion in the process, asking only that you undertake judging in a fair and equitable way. The following therefore are only intended as guidelines for judging and should not be seen as prescriptive.

The timetable for judging the awards

The number of awards, the criteria for each award and the level of awards are decided annually by the Social Policy Association Executive Committee in their September meeting. The judging panel is appointed by the Executive Committee, and usually comprises of the SPA President, plus four other senior, well-respected and distinguished members of the Association who are not members of the Executive Committee. Since 2011, it is expected that judges should act for more than one year. With a group of four judges, one is replaced each year, so that, once operational, all judges serve for four years within a rolling membership. Since 2012, it has been decided that one member of the judging panel should come from outside HE. The SPA Awards Officer supplies the judges with the timetable and materials for the judging process: this is usually dictated by the timing of the Annual Conference. The awards are presented by the SPA President at the Gala Dinner of the Annual Conference, and the judges are invited to attend (with their dinner fees paid for by the Social Policy Association).

Nominations

Any member of the Social Policy Association, **except the SPA Awards Officer and the Awards judges**, can make any number of nominations for awards in any category. Those making a nomination must do so with the full knowledge of the person being nominated.

Judging

In the interests of efficiency the judging process takes place via email discussion. Once the judges have received and read the nomination forms and accompanying information, the SPA Awards Officer will open up discussion via email. The SPA Awards Officer will chair the judging process

but will not usually vote, unless a 'casting' vote is needed in the case of a split panel.

Judges are *not* bound by previous decisions or 'precedents', and must judge each cohort of nominees on their own merits, without making comparisons to past nominees or winners.

Judges are also free to exercise their discretion to make *no* award in a category if they do not feel the nominations meet the criteria for the award.

Confidentiality

Judges *must not* engage in any correspondence about the awards or the judging process. Any enquiries about the awards should be directed to the SPA Awards Officer. Judges may be asked by the Awards Officer if they are willing to disclose certain information – for example, by providing a quote or review of a winning publication – but they are not obliged to do so, and should not do so if asked independently without reference to the SPA Awards Officer in the first instance.

The SPA Awards Officer will keep all details of the judging process confidential. He or she may ask the Executive Committee for advice or guidance on individual matters if asked to do so by the judges, but this information will be kept confidential.