



Mental Health Matters

Thriving in law

Elizabeth Rimmer CEO LawCare

We are living and working in an era of significant change and evolving expectations



What is mental health?

WHO defines mental health as:

‘a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and can make a contribution to his or her community’

What is LawCare?

- The charity that supports and promotes good mental health in the legal professions across the UK
- We support everyone - law students, trainees, pupils, retired and non-practising lawyers, HR and Business Services staff, lawyers, can all use our free and confidential service
- We understand life in the law
 - volunteers and support team staff have all worked in the legal profession
- Support, Education and Advocacy



Why does this matter?

- Culture – inclusive workplaces where people thrive
- Staff morale
- Recruitment and retention
- Risk management
- Legal work requires clarity of mind and focus,
- Judgement and decision-making
- High regulatory and ethical standards
- Serve client needs effectively
- Reputation – firm and profession
- Sustainability



The legal environment – what do we know ?



Personality traits – the legal mindset

- High personal goals/expectations
- Competitive
- Rumination
- Over-thinking
- Perfectionism
- Self sufficient
- Pessimism
- Difficulty saying *no*
- Imposter syndrome
- Inner critic



The legal workplace

- Competitive/ pressured/deadlines
- Overload/multi-tasking
- Complexity
- Long hours
- Managing client expectations/weight of responsibility
- Hierarchical /bullying and harassment
- Isolation, lack of support/supervision



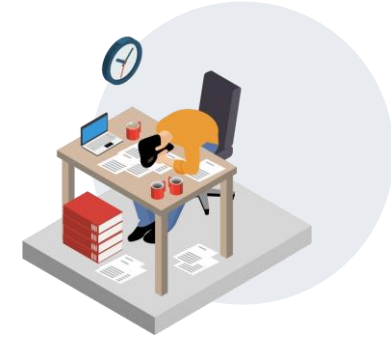
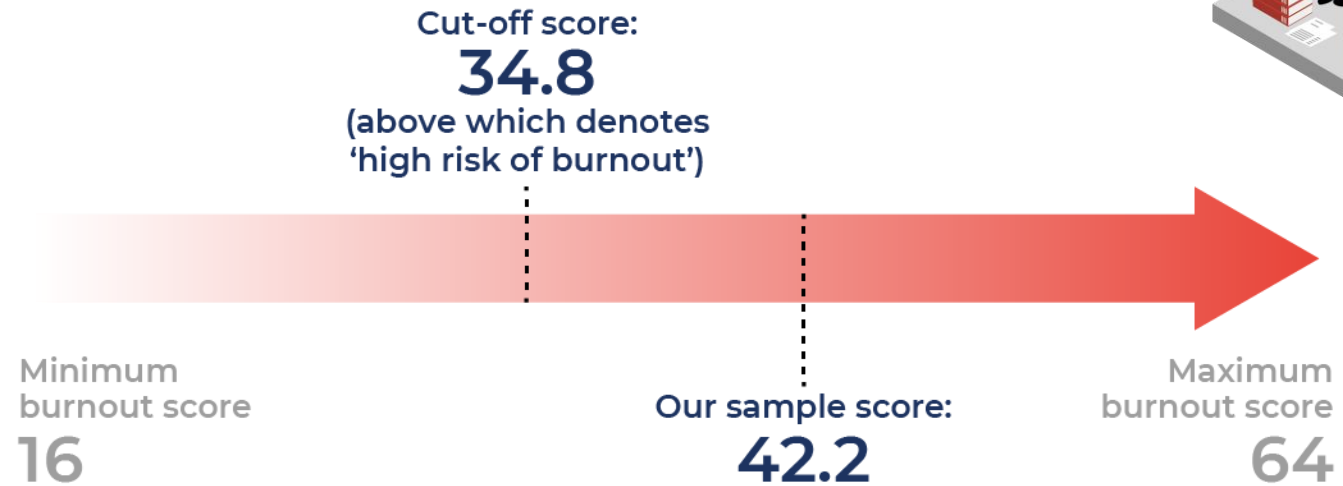
Life in the Law research - Key findings

- People in the legal sector are under strain
- Negative impacts of current working practices
- Multiple factors
- Need for effective work place measures and training
- Collective responsibility



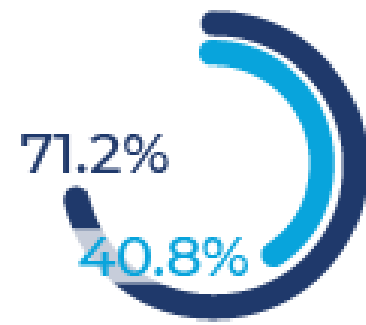
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Burnout

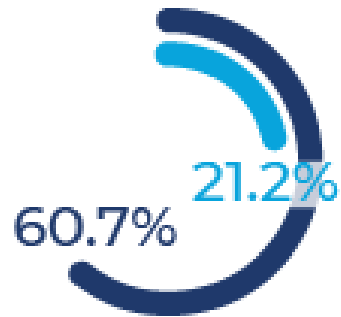


Existing workplace measures

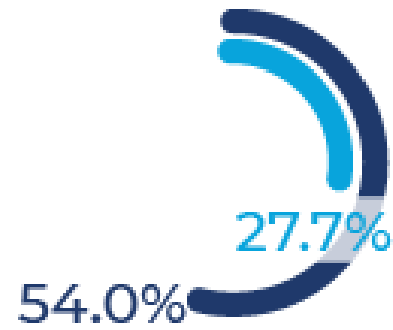
- Proportion who said this was provided at work
- Proportion who found it helpful to their wellbeing



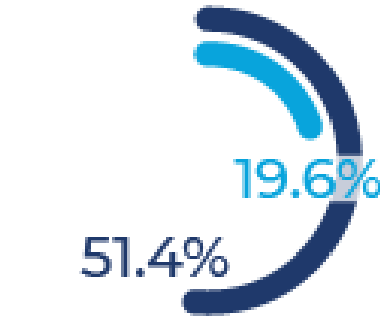
Regular
catch-ups /
appraisals



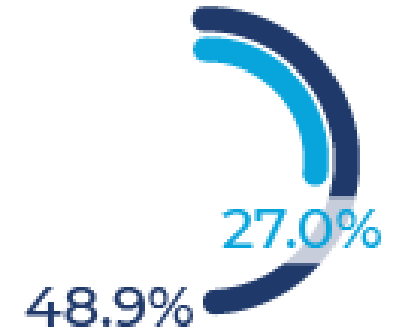
Mental
health
policies



Mental
health
wellbeing
and training



Signposting
to external
support



Private
health
insurance

Supervision

Only **47.6%**
of those in a position of
management or supervisory
capacity had received leadership,
management, or supervisory
training.



www.lawcare.org.uk

What do people contact us about?



What does LawCare support offer?

- Free, confidential support via helpline, webchat, and email
- Listening and exploring, non-judgemental and empathetic
- Information
- Signposting to other groups, charities, and organisations
- Peer Support
- Single Session Therapy (funding available where necessary)
- Additional Support Fund for ongoing counselling
- Don't wait until it's a crisis



www.lawcare.org.uk

LawCare Get Information How we help Latest News About Us Get Involved [Donate](#)

LawCare is the *mental wellbeing* charity for the legal community.

We offer free, confidential, emotional support to anyone working in the law



THE LEGAL MIND
LawCare

The Legal Mind Podcast: Toxic Productivity with Adam Carvalho

Podcasts 16 December 2021

Take a proper break this Christmas

Useful research on mental health and the legal profession



Life in the Law

Read our research study into how the culture and practice of law affect wellbeing.

[Download report](#)



Fundraising

How to raise money to support our work



Articles, stories, videos, information on mental health & wellbeing

FILTER BY TYPE FILTER BY TOPIC

Recovering from post-natal depression

How to talk about mental health in the legal profession

Worried about someone else?

Sexual harassment

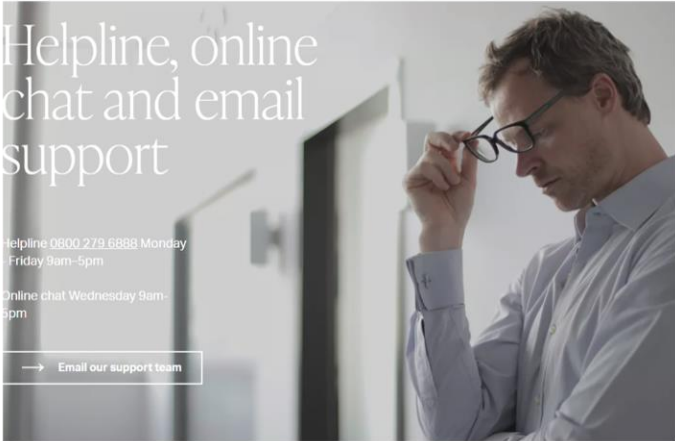
Stories Depression Article Workplace Article Worried about someone else Article Sexual harassment

Helpline, online chat and email support

Helpline 0800 279 6888 Monday Friday 9am-5pm

Online chat Wednesday 9am-5pm

[Email our support team](#)



Common indicators

- Irritability
- Lethargy, sleep problems
- Panic attacks, nausea
- Poor concentration and motivation
- Inability to switch off
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Less organised/effective/performance issues
- Distracted/less engaged/withdrawal
- Deterioration/tension in relationships



How can I look after my own wellbeing?



Keep Active

Find a physical activity you enjoy and make it part of your life, you will feel better and boost your self-esteem



Take a Break

Use your lunchbreak to get away from your desk. Step outside for just a few minutes, it can re-energise you



Sleep is Important

Sleeping well can improve concentration and refresh you



Eat Well

A balanced diet rich in nutrients is good for both your mental and physical health



Drink in Moderation

Stay within the recommended alcohol limits: heavy drinking affects brain function and can cause disease



Keep in Touch

Maintain good relationships with friends, family and your wider community: strong connections can help you to feel happier



Share How You Feel

Talk about your feelings, it can help you cope with problems and feel listened to



Give Back

It has been proven that giving – time or money – can make you feel valued and give you a sense of purpose



Be Mindful

Mindfulness – positive emotions and paying attention to the present – can help you enjoy life more



Ask for Help

Asking for help is a sign of strength, and can lead to the right support for you, whatever you're going through

How can I look after the wellbeing of others?

- Advocate for good mental health practices in your workplace
- Be aware of the workloads and challenges of others
- Look for those who are withdrawn, not achieving, defensive, not themselves
- Express your concern and support
- Suggest they seek help and signpost them to relevant organisations

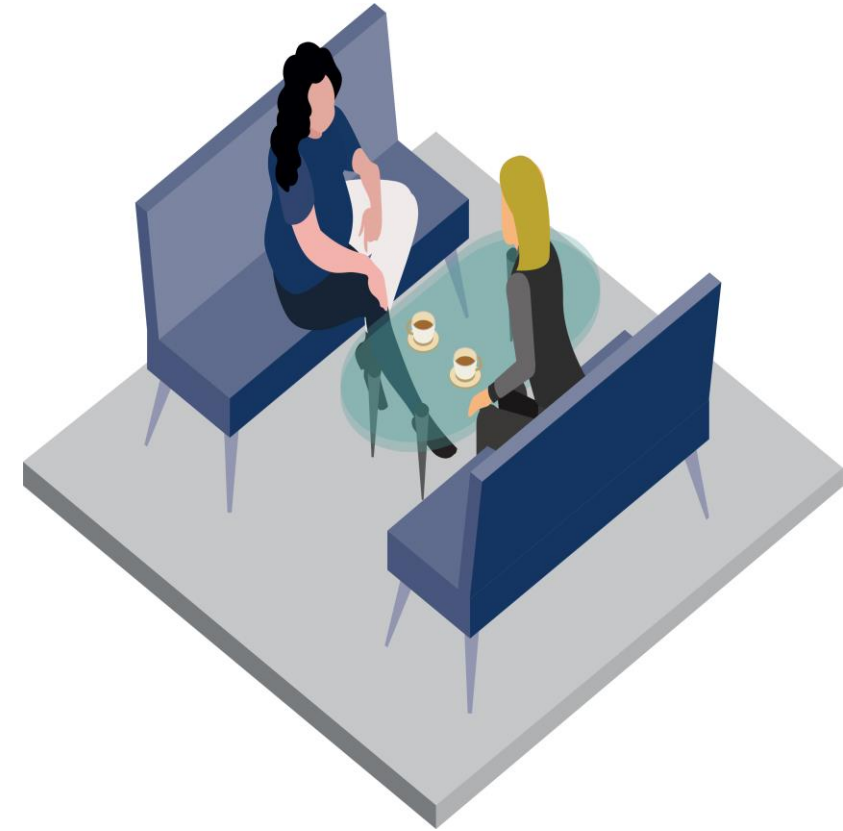
Workplace risk factors to mental health

- Long hours
- Lack of control over workload
- Time pressure
- Lack of support
- Poor communication and relationships
- Bullying and harassment
- Conflicting demands of work and home



Steps to manage mental health at work

- Shift from the individual to the organisational
- Prevention and protection
- Identify the risks, take steps to mitigate them
- Leadership commitment and accountability
- Management training
- Foster a positive work environment
- Take action/respond to concerns raised
- Awareness



LawCare resources

Sue's story

When I qualified, I moved to London from a different part of the country. The weight of responsibility, as an assistant solicitor, hit me like a freight train. With little help or support, and no-one outside friends and family to whom I could confess my terror of messing up, I battled on.

With greater experience came more confidence, and I eventually made it to partnership. Of course, that meant more responsibility, a heavier caseload and greater pressure to continue to perform. The answer, I thought, was simply to put in more hours. My working day grew longer, my weekends shorter and my holidays, much less relaxing.

Guidance for leaders and people managers on workplace anxiety



Anxiety is a common concern for legal professionals and is one of the top three reasons people turn to LawCare for support.

There are steps individuals can take to reduce their feelings of anxiety but it's important for leaders and employers to be proactive in helping staff manage anxiety. By doing so staff are less likely to experience work related

- + I'm being investigated by my regulatory body
- + I don't know if law is for me
- + I'm being bullied
- + I'm feeling worn down, tired and negative

LawCare
Supporting the Legal Community

MAY 2022

Factsheet: Worried about a Colleague?

If you are working with someone who appears to be struggling, is frequently anxious, short-tempered or low and may be depressed, please get in touch with LawCare, we can help.

How do I know there's a problem?

Out-of-character behaviour may include:

- ▶ Irritability, mood swings, anger and short temper
- ▶ Lack of energy, concentration and motivation
- ▶ Frequent bouts of illness
- ▶ Failure to achieve targets despite apparent commitment and long hours
- ▶ Overconfidence despite making mistakes
- ▶ Withdrawal from normal social interaction
- ▶ Deteriorating relationships with managers and/or colleagues
- ▶ Neglect of personal dress and hygiene
- ▶ Coming into the workplace smelling of alcohol
- ▶ Over-reacting when challenged

Consider asking your colleague in private what is wrong and how you might help. Support them to discuss the situation with a trusted colleague in chambers or in the office, with HR or understanding supervisor and encourage them to phone LawCare's confidential help line.



Peer support: why it's good to talk



Sleep tips for legal professionals



How I coped with sleep problems



Top tips for sleep

colleague's behaviour, including:

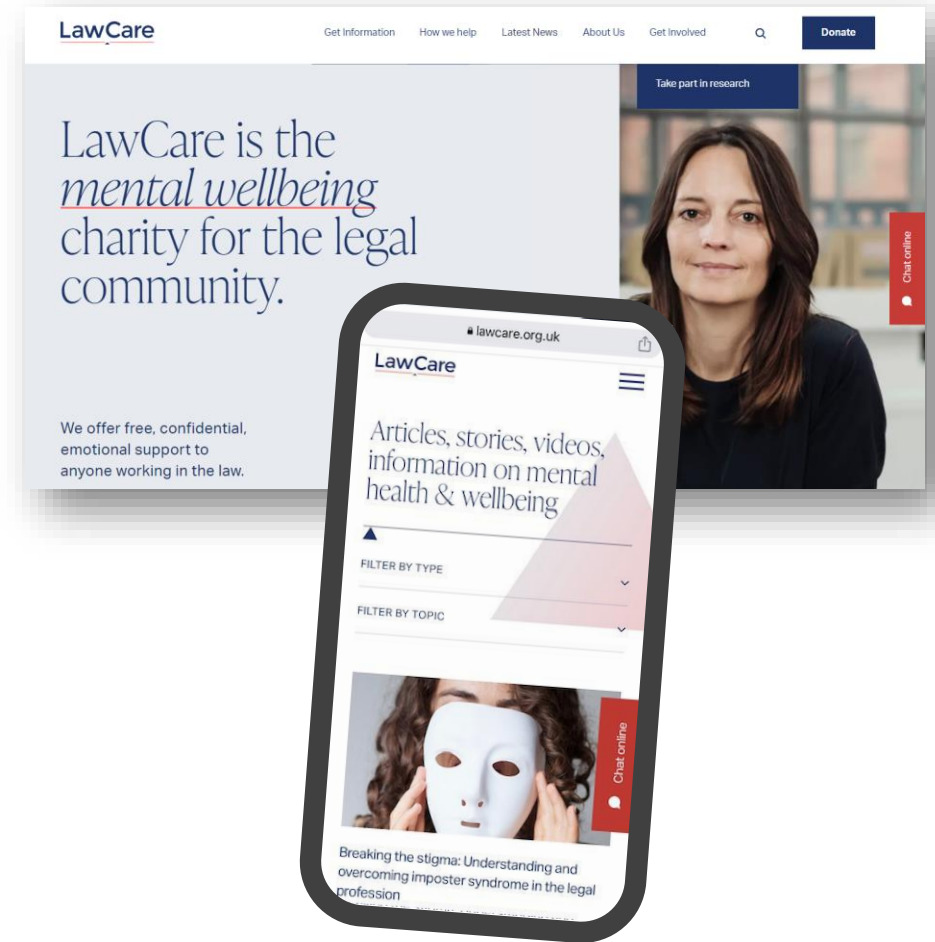
Stress

Colleagues under stress can be short-tempered and will often not be doing their best work despite putting in long hours. A review of their workload can help. Ideally with supervisors or senior staff, to ensure the colleague is not being expected to do more than is feasible.

LawCare Support Channels

Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

- Helpline: 0800 279 6888
- Live chat via www.lawcare.org.uk
- Email to support@lawcare.org.uk



LawCare
Supporting the Legal Community

What you can do for us

- Spread the word
- Share our socials
- Encourage colleagues to contact us
- [Sign up to our newsletter](#)
- [Volunteer](#)
 - Helpline
 - Online chat
 - Peer Support
- Use LawCare for your training
- Fundraise/Donate

