

LawCare News

Welcome

to the summer edition of *LawCare News*.

We have had a very busy, and exciting, quarter, particularly with Mental Health Awareness Week, which ran from May 8-14. The theme this year was Surviving or Thriving? and the campaign sought to uncover why too few of us are thriving with good mental health.

We ran a very successful communications campaign during MHAW, and were particularly pleased with the publication in the legal media of a number of articles we wrote about thriving: exploring the importance of building resilience and top tips on how to do it. We were also very active on social media, and had great support from our fellow members of the Legal Professions Wellbeing Taskforce, most of whom got involved.

The Legal Professions Wellbeing Taskforce also supported the This is Me Green Ribbon Campaign. The aims of This is Me are to reduce stigma, talk without fear, and dispel the myths around mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. This is Me provides a platform for employees who have experienced mental health problems to share their stories with others. The Green Ribbon campaign invites employees to wear green ribbons to show support for those with mental health issues, and we supported the campaign on our website and on social media.

We also took part in the London Legal Walk again this year, on Monday 22 May. We were a band of 23 people walking, and we're delighted to have raised over £4,700. The walk itself, organised by the London Legal Support Trust, broke all records, with 12,000 people walking in 702 teams. The LLST works with the Access to Justice Foundation to support pro bono and advice agencies, ensuring funds can be distributed where needed most throughout England and Wales. It's a very important cause that we are proud to support and, as a legal charity, half the funds we raised come to us.

We are also excited to be well into the planning stages for our 20th anniversary, which we will celebrate in style on World Mental Day, Tuesday 10 October. The theme this year is Mental Health in the Workplace, which is very fitting for us at LawCare as two of our goals are raising awareness and tackling stigma. We are organising a half-day conference and birthday celebration, and I look forward to welcoming our volunteers, funders and other stakeholders.

I hope you have a good quarter, and a great summer.

Do visit our website www.lawcare.org.uk to access details of the support we provide and the information and resources we have available.

Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO



facebook.com/LawCare



[@LawCareLtd](https://twitter.com/LawCareLtd)



LawCare Top Tip: Share How You Feel

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

Download our Top Ten Tips for good mental health and wellbeing at www.lawcare.org.uk/top-ten-tips

New Volunteers Drive Reaps Rewards

LawCare has had a great response from a drive to recruit volunteers during June. The call for both helpline volunteers and peer supporters went out during Volunteers' Week, which is run by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations from 1-7 June each year. The week runs throughout England & Wales, Northern Ireland (Volunteer Now NI) and Scotland (in partnership with Volunteer Development Scotland).

"Volunteers' Week was timely for us this year," said Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO of LawCare. "It provided a great opportunity for us to thank our current volunteers, who do such a great job of supporting legal professionals with personal or professional issues via our network of peer supporters and our Helpline, as well as call for new volunteers.

"We ran a social media campaign throughout the week, and Legal Cheek also published an article for us. We're very pleased to say we have 25 new volunteers as a result." LawCare peer supporters are people who currently work in the legal profession who may have been through difficult times themselves, and can offer one-to-one support,



friendship and mentoring to helpline callers referred to them. If you're interested in being a volunteer for LawCare, please contact admin@lawcare.org.uk for more information, or call **01268 771333** for a chat about what's involved.

Equality Means Business in Scotland

Trish McLellan, LawCare Coordinator for Scotland and Northern Ireland, spoke at the 'Equality Means Business' conference organised by Law Society of Scotland, and held at their offices in Edinburgh on 5 May.

There were approximately 60 attendees, and the overall topic under discussion was the business case for equality and diversity. After a welcome from LSS President Eilidh Wiseman, the keynote session was delivered by The Rt Hon Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland.

The first session 'Equality Means Business' consisted of brief presentations from four panellists focusing on the commercial case for robust E&D, before the Chair took questions from the audience.

Ms McLellan was one of two panellists involved in the second session, 'Creating an Inclusive Workplace'. She presented on the merits of this from an employee perspective before Kate Dodd, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant at Pinsent Masons, explored it from the employer's perspective. "This was followed by questions from the delegates, with one audience member asking how employers can better equip themselves to identify mental health issues in employees,"



says Ms McLellan.

"As well as explaining some indicators, I signposted to Mental Health First Aid training and our resources.

"The audience was very engaged, which is not surprising given that it mainly comprised people with E&D roles and responsibility in the legal community in Scotland."

Being Yourself, Being Successful

Oxford Women in Law (OWL) held a panel discussion 'Being Yourself, Being Successful - creating wellbeing and mental resilience in the workplace', hosted by Travers Smith in London on 24 April.

OWL is a networking group for graduates of the University of Oxford working in the law to discuss career issues, particularly those facing women. This event was in response to member feedback, and was the most oversubscribed to date.

The panel was made up of Kate Armstrong, a management consultant at McKinsey & Co, also a novelist, who shared her experience of a breakdown in 2011 which led to a two year break, during which she wrote a novel based on her experiences; Emily Clark a partner at Travers Smith, a co-lead on graduate recruitment for the firm, who talked about how she balances being a partner with family life; James Petkovic,



a barrister from One Essex Court who has made good use of the resources provided by the Wellbeing at the Bar website for meeting the demands of a busy legal career, and Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO of LawCare, who gave an overview of LawCare's role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing in the legal community.

The discussion was then thrown open to the floor. A range of issues was covered: how can young lawyers adopt a balanced approach to work when the culture in their firm or chambers may not be conducive to this; the role of mentors in providing support; the perfectionist approach many lawyers have and the difficulties this, and overthinking, present in practice; should mental health and wellbeing be a component of the

GDL and LPC curriculum, and what role experienced lawyers have in helping the newly qualified to see issues from their client's perspective as a tool for managing what requires thinking time and what doesn't.

"What struck me from listening to the panel and the discussion, was that we need to help lawyers recognise the importance of looking after themselves – eating well, socialising, drinking in moderation, getting some exercise and a good night's sleep – as simple tools to help manage the demands of a legal career. Too often, when the going gets tough, the tendency is to cut back on the things that actually support and maintain our wellbeing," says Ms Rimmer.

JLD Presents Survey Results at Annual Conference

This year's Junior Lawyer Division [JLD] Annual Conference, which held on 8 April in London, hosted a keynote address by the Rt Hon Lord Justice Hickinbottom, who spoke positively about what can be achieved as a lawyer. President of the Law Society, Robert Bourns, also addressed the conference, which included a number of breakout sessions and a panel discussion.

The highlight of this year's JLD event was the presentation of a survey they conducted into members' resilience and wellbeing, with a focus on stress and mental health in the workplace.

The results were presented by Chetna Bhatt of Being Lawyers, and the headlines are: over 93 per cent of respondents had experienced stress in the month before completing the survey, with 26 per cent of those individuals being severely/extremely stressed; the key stress factors for junior lawyers are high workload, lack of support, client demands/expectations and ineffective management, while 73 per cent said that their firm could do more to support stress at work.

Looking specifically at mental health, over 25 per cent of respondents said that they had experienced a mental health problem in the month before, and fewer than 24 per cent of those individuals had made their employer aware of it. Over 73 per cent of respondents stated that their employer did not provide any help, guidance or support to employees in relation to mental health in the workplace or that they did not know whether their employer did. Over 50 per cent felt that their organisation could do more to provide help, guidance and



support in relation to mental health in the workplace.

"We followed the results with a presentation about why our service is so important, which was appropriate given the survey results," says Ann Charlton, LawCare Coordinator for England and Wales. "I told the audience what we do and how we do it and the message was well received. It was a really worthwhile conference, both from our prospective and the JLD's, as it let the attendees know what to expect from their profession and how to deal with some of the challenges."

Download the JLD survey here:

<http://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/Uploads/g/x/g/jld-resilience-and-wellbeing-survey-report-2017.pdf>

Read more of our news at www.lawcare.org.uk/news

Tuesday 10 October is World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day, which is organised by the World Federation for Mental Health, is observed on 10 October every year. It has the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilising efforts in support of mental health.

This year's theme is Mental Health in the Workplace. Mental health issues have been shown to cause employee absenteeism, lower rates of productivity, and increase costs. This year's theme will contribute to taking mental health out of the shadows in the workplace, so that people and companies have the tools to help employees and increase the overall mental health of all their employees.

www.fmh.global/wmh-day/wmhd-theme-2017/

