

LawCare

Supporting the Legal Community



IMPACT REPORT 2023

Time for collective change

Elizabeth Rimmer
CEO LawCare



It has been said that we overestimate what we can achieve in a year, but we underestimate what we can achieve in a decade.

And here we are more than a quarter of a way through this decade, which so far is shaping up to be one of the most disruptive to date. When we look out at the world around us, there is a lot to navigate – the big picture concerns such as the impact of geopolitical conflict and climate change, and the rapidly changing

world of work driven by increased digitalisation and the challenges faced day to day in meeting the evolving expectations of clients, staff and legal regulators. We see this reflected at LawCare by an increase of 14% in people reaching out to us for mental health support in 2023.

The first quarter of this decade may feel like we have already had more than a decade's worth of disruption, and there is no doubt that there is more to come. As challenging as this thought may be, it provides us with an opportunity to work out what future changes we can expect (and want to see) in our sector, and how we can use these as springboards to create a healthier, happier, and sustainable profession. How we can ensure we have the human capital skills we need to turn disruption into solving well-known problems. And one of these problems is poor mental health.

We have the chance before us now to protect the mental health of those working and training in the law. At LawCare, we are advocating for a preventative approach to work-related mental health concerns.

“We want to see the accepted practice of supporting an individual when a problem has arisen widened to embrace organisations taking responsibility for identifying the risks to mental health in their workplaces and then taking positive steps to mitigate these.”

We have started on our journey towards this as you will see in this year's impact report.

We want to empower collective change across our sector. We want to enable each person, each organisation, to make choices every day that lead to a sector that truly values its people, that creates that sense of belonging and purpose, as it is this that is going to generate the creativity and innovation we need to get to the end of this decade and achieve the change we want to see now.

Our mission

We provide free and confidential emotional support, peer support and information about mental health for anyone working in the law in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

We offer training, educational resources and research that promotes positive change in legal culture and practice to support mental health.

We work with legal educators, regulators, professional bodies, special interest groups and legal practices to encourage healthy legal workplaces that support mental health and challenge the stigma that can make it hard for some people to seek help.

Our vision

A legal sector that supports and promotes good mental health and where people thrive.

2023 Highlights

LawCare is the
mental health charity
for the legal sector

We've been
supporting legal
professionals for
over 25 years.



2023 was
all about...

1

Changing

the way we work – instead of supporting people with work-related mental health conditions once problems have arisen, our goal is to create mentally healthy workplaces which prevent them developing in the first place.

2

Supporting

the increasing number of people in the legal sector who are reaching out to LawCare for support with their mental health – the number of people getting in touch for emotional support is up 14%, with a significant increase in the number of people primarily getting in touch because of workplace bullying.

3

Encouraging

mental health allyship – allies learn more about mental health, which allows them to better support their colleagues and help reduce mental health stigma in the legal workplace.

We held a series of **round table discussions** with legal profession regulators across the UK to identify how we could work collaboratively to provide support to those under a disciplinary investigation and experiencing bullying and harassment.



We continue to attract talented volunteers from all branches of the legal sector at different stages in their careers and from a range of age groups, genders and ethnic groups, reflecting the diversity of lived experiences in the legal sector across the UK.

730 people joined our free **“Let’s talk about...” lunchtime webinars** and heard directly from legal professionals about their experiences of anxiety, imposter syndrome and neurodiversity.



Our **reverse mentoring project** saw aspiring lawyers, current trainees and junior lawyers mentor more senior colleagues who are responsible for trainee recruitment and organisational wellbeing, and spark meaningful conversations around the connections between diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.

We are reaching more people via LinkedIn. We have gained over **2,800** new followers this year, and we also launched a monthly LinkedIn newsletter about ‘Life in the legal workplace’ which has over **3,200** subscribers.

Changing the way we work

Instead of supporting people with work-related mental health conditions once problems they have arisen, our goal is to create mentally healthy workplaces which prevent them developing in the first place.

In 2023 LawCare...

Advocated for a risk-based approach to mental health at work; our second 'Building a better life in the law' conference in November explored the psychosocial risks in legal workplaces and how to mitigate these. **100% of attendees providing feedback said that their participation inspired them to take action to improve the culture of their workplace.**



Strengthened our engagement with legal regulatory bodies across the UK, through a series of round tables sharing insights and experiences.

Responded to sector consultations with our knowledge and perspectives.

“The feedback and insights from LawCare on our proposed rule change around treating colleagues fairly and with respect was helpful and appreciated.”

Juliet Oliver, General Counsel, Solicitors Regulation Authority

Developed new resources for managers about anxiety, bullying, and creating healthy workplaces. These are practical guides to help managers be proactive in creating respectful, supportive and healthy workplaces that protect people's mental health.



Reverse mentoring

Our reverse mentoring project saw aspiring lawyers, trainees and junior lawyers mentor those responsible for trainee recruitment and organisational wellbeing within their law firms. The aim was to spark meaningful conversations in the profession around the connections between diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. The project is now finished and a toolkit will be available mid-2024.



Mentee

“I thought I knew that coming into law from an under-represented background was hard but hadn't appreciated before how all-consuming this could be and that makes [me] feel quite ashamed, almost embarrassed about how little people in a more privileged position understand about these struggles.”

Mentor

“The role reversal made me feel that I can contribute more to the conversation and made the power dynamic a little more balanced which is helpful in navigating a sensitive topic like inclusivity... this project helped me to gain a bit of confidence, especially in the end because I could see that I was the one introducing the questions, and I was the one giving more input than I was in the beginning.”

What's coming up in 2024

- Ongoing work with regulators
- Reverse mentoring toolkit and training

Support

We provide free and confidential mental health support for anyone struggling with the pressures of a career in the law. People can call our helpline, email or use our live online chat every weekday (except bank holidays).

We have provided emotional support to

633
people

That's **14%**
more than
last year

People contacted us about a variety of issues including:

Stress
22%

Career concerns
13%

Anxiety
13%

Workplace bullying & harassment
14%

Who contacted us

Gender



- Female **(72%)**
- Male **(26%)**
- Not known **(2%)**
- Trans/fluid/non-binary **(0.3%)**

Age



- 21-30 **(25%)**
- 31-45 **(34%)**
- 46-60 **(34%)**
- 61+ **(7%)**

Ethnicity



- White British **(57%)**
- (British) Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi **(16%)**
- White other **(9%)**
- (British) Chinese or other Asian groups **(7%)**
- Black African/Caribbean or Black British **(5%)**
- Mixed or multiple heritages **(5%)**
- Any other ethnic group **(0.5%)**

Disability

12% of our support service users identified as having a disability.



Anika's story

Anika was experiencing abusive and discriminatory behaviour from her boss. She did not want to raise a grievance or to report it to the regulator. She had spoken to a recruitment agency and was hoping to move to another firm but, in the meantime, she was feeling upset by the behaviour.

Our helpline helped Anika to identify safe communication strategies and discussed ways to protect her mental health. She was also matched with a LawCare peer supporter for ongoing support until she was able to move to a different firm.

15 people were approved for counselling funding from LawCare's Additional Support Fund.

We provided 70 people with ongoing peer support

“My peer supporter has been amazing, and I've found her immensely helpful. I think there were some fragile days and she really helped me through them. Thank you so much for this really valuable service.”

What's coming up in 2024

- Meeting the increasing demand for support
- Launching our new disciplinary peer support programme



Building our community

We are reaching more people than ever before. More people know about the support we offer, about the importance of learning more about mental health, and about how to be a mental health ally in their workplace.

730 people joined our **webinars** and heard from legal professionals about anxiety, imposter syndrome and neurodiversity.



We have gained over **2,800** new followers on LinkedIn.



We had **58k** visitors to our **website**.



In August we launched our **monthly LinkedIn newsletter about 'Life in the legal workplace'** and this has over **3,200** subscribers.



Our **podcast** has been downloaded **3,274** times

“I loved how open the panel members were, not something you hear often in the profession. This is needed more.”

Attendee at the **Let's talk about anxiety** webinar in May

We delivered our 20-minute introductory presentation about the support LawCare offers **40** times.



We delivered **34** training sessions to over **1,000** people and we were involved in a further **65** awareness raising opportunities.

We delivered **14** sessions of **Vicarious Trauma training**.

In March we launched our new **Fit for Law online course** for legal professionals about working with others.*

We have been building better relationships with the legal sector's diversity and inclusion groups across the UK.

Our **press releases and articles** were featured in The Law Society Gazette, Counsel magazine, The Writ and many other legal publications and newsletters.



In September we launched our **training about compliance with the new SRA rules on workplace culture and behaviour**.

“Both presenters were extremely knowledgeable and displayed real insight into the challenges we face as solicitors in complying with the evolving regulatory landscape.”

Attendee at the SRA training webinar in December 2023

** Fit for Law is a collaboration between LawCare and academics at the University of Sheffield and The Open University.*

What's coming up in 2024

- Four more “Let’s talk about...” webinars
- Strengthening our relationships with diversity and inclusion groups

Thank to you all our volunteers

We are fortunate to have an incredible team of 142 volunteers who play a crucial role in running LawCare's helpline, email support, and live webchat every weekday.

Whether it's offering a listening ear, providing information, or helping people navigate challenging situations, our volunteers create a safe space for people to seek help for their mental health.

In 2023 our volunteers spent 206 hours providing support on our helpline.

All our volunteers work, or have worked, in the law so they really understand the pressure people working in the legal sector face.



Laurie, helpline volunteer and peer supporter

“Once per fortnight I man the helpline for half a day. I also peer support an average of two to three people at any given time.

LawCare was a perfect fit for me. Coming to the end of my legal career, I just wanted to give back. I wanted to be the person I needed to speak to so often when I was struggling as a solicitor, but did not have. I have experienced what so many of the callers and people needing peer support have experienced. I genuinely care about their wellbeing because it is a calling, a desire to help, to give back.

I think I get as much out of volunteering as those I speak to. I love to see the progress made by people, sometimes in one call, almost always during peer support. I am proud of these people, and they should be proud of themselves.”

Thank you to our Trustees and Champions

A huge thank you to our **12 dedicated Trustees** who play such a crucial role in guiding our work and development. We appreciate the time and expertise our Trustees share with us, and the positive influence they have on our work.

Thank you also to our **32 Champions** for their commitment, passion and enthusiasm in raising awareness and sharing their insights. We are so fortunate to be supported by such a wide range of legal professionals who advocate for LawCare.

James, LawCare Champion

“Having already been a big supporter of LawCare, I knew becoming a LawCare Champion would allow me to become more actively involved in the great work the charity does. I am delighted to contribute to LawCare’s efforts to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the legal profession as a whole.”



LawCare Champion, **Sam Jardine**, did a fantastic job speaking about mental health in the law at the **15th Panhellenic Conference of Legal Services Lawyers** in Athens.



What's coming up in 2024

- Conference for our volunteers, Champions, funders and supporters
- Trustee and staff strategy day in July

Fundraising

Thank you to our funders and supporters who donated a total of

£379,625



The Scottish Young Lawyers Association raised over **£1,200** for LawCare at their Spring Ball

Our **Legal Walk teams in London and Birmingham** raised over **£2,600**



Travelers kindly gave **£5,000** in sponsorship of the information hub on our website



We were delighted to once more be the charity at the **Law Society Rugby Sevens** event raising over **£1,400**



The Addleshaw Goddard Foundation donated **£5,500**

We received a fantastic **£6,248.67** as the beneficiary charity of the **Women & Diversity in Law Awards**



Our **Big Give Christmas Challenge 2023** raised a grand total of **£9,402.25**

We were the beneficiary charity at **Juro's conference for in-house lawyers**, and received **£375**

We were the beneficiary charity at the **Legal Geek conference**, and received **£1,000**

We benefited from the **Lincoln's Inn Chapel Collection** who donated over **£1,500** to LawCare

Old Square Chambers supported LawCare with a donation of **£4,540**

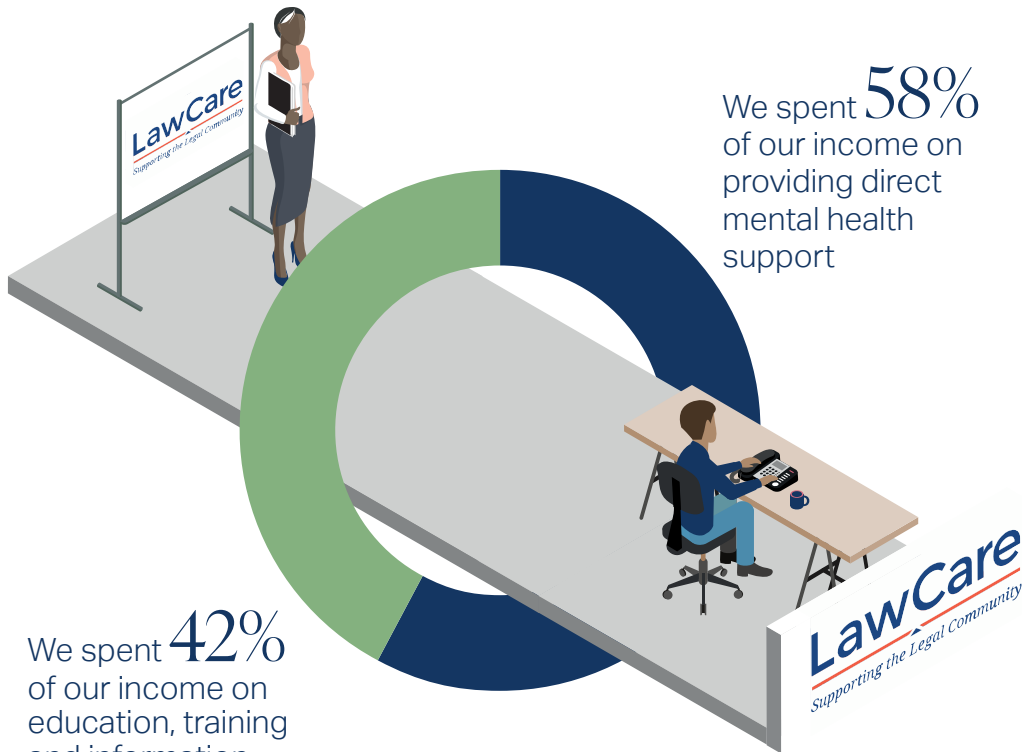
The Council of Employment Judges donated **£500**



The **Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury** donated **£1,000**

Thank you to everyone who made personal donations or took on a challenge to raise money for LawCare – we had many people walking and running all over the UK!

What we spent the money on



It costs **£575** per day to run our support service

It costs **£790** to train a LawCare volunteer



It costs **£50** to fund one counselling session

Thank you to our fantastic funders...

The Bar Council of England and Wales
The Bar of Northern Ireland
The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives
The Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys
The Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys
Costs Lawyers Standards Board
Council for Licensed Conveyancers
The Faculty of Advocates
The Isle of Man Law Society
The Judicial Office of England and Wales
Law Officers of the Crown (Guernsey)
The Law Society of England and Wales
The Law Society of Jersey
The Law Society of Northern Ireland
Law Society of Scotland
The Notaries Society
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
The Solicitors' Charity

A special thank you to Macfarlanes for providing us with meeting room facilities in London throughout the year.

We would also like to thank our outgoing patron, the former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, The Right Honourable, Lord Burnett of Maldon for his support and encouragement.