

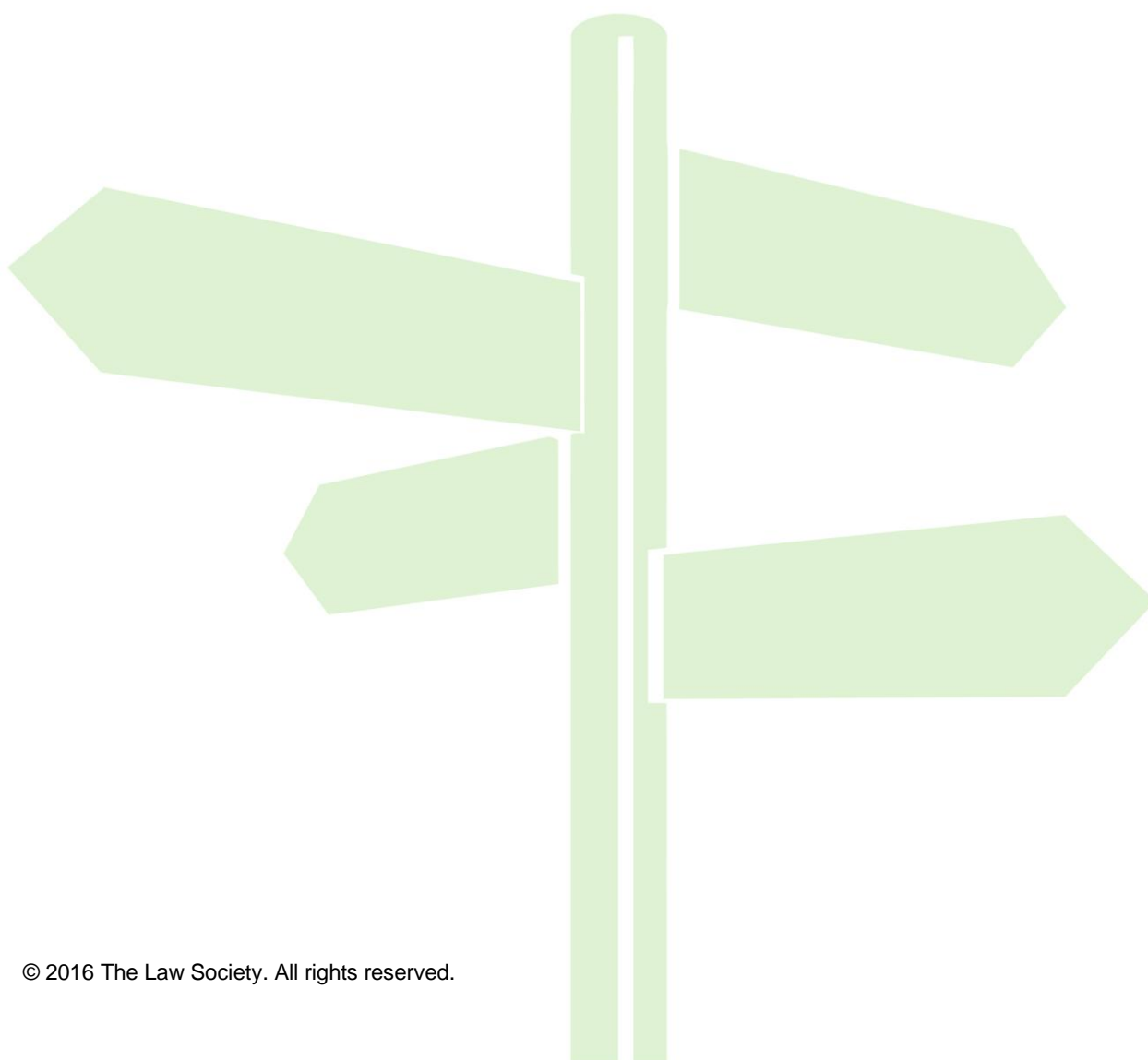


The Law Society

Resilience and wellbeing survey report

Junior Lawyers Division

April 2017



Junior Lawyers Division

Resilience and wellbeing survey report

In February 2017 the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) invited its members to complete a survey to understand and gather information on the resilience and wellbeing of junior lawyers in England and Wales.

The JLD has flagged the wellbeing of its members as one of its key concerns for 2017 and hopes to use this data to produce guidance to assist both its members and employers in this regard.

The survey was carried out online and a link to the survey was sent to the [JLD's newsletter](#) mailing list (which consists of 65,000 individuals – not all of whom are necessarily JLD members). The survey was also promoted on the JLD's various social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and the [JLD's website](#)).

The JLD represents:

- LPC students (including paralegals who have undertaken their LPC)
- trainee solicitors
- solicitors with up to five years' post qualification experience.

Membership of the JLD is free and automatic for those who fall within the above groups.

This survey received **214** responses from JLD members. The JLD has over 70,000 members so these findings are indicative of the JLD's membership, rather than representative. The responses and analysis are set out below.

Question 1

Please confirm which category of JLD member you fall into

Answer	Overall
LPC students (including paralegals)	14.0%
Trainee solicitors	32.2%
Solicitors with up to five years' post qualified experience	53.7%

214 people answered this question.

Question 2

Please confirm your gender

Answer	Overall
Female	72.9%
Male	26.6%
Non-binary/third gender	-
Prefer not to say	0.5%

214 people answered this question.

Question 3

Please confirm what type of organisation you work for

Answer	Overall
Private practice	90.7%
In-house	5.1%
Government	2.3%
Third sector	0.9%
Other (please specify)	0.4%

214 people answered this question.

STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Question 4

How often in the last month have you felt unable to cope as a result of stress?

Answers	Overall	Male	Female	LPC	Trainee	0-5 PQE
Regularly	15.5%	5.3%	19.3%	27.6%	11.9%	14.2%
Occasionally	39.1%	31.6%	41.3%	42.4%	31.3%	42.5%
Rarely	29.0%	36.8%	26.7%	24.1%	34.3%	27.4%
Never	15.9%	24.6%	12.7%	6.9%	22.4%	15.9%

207 people answered this question.

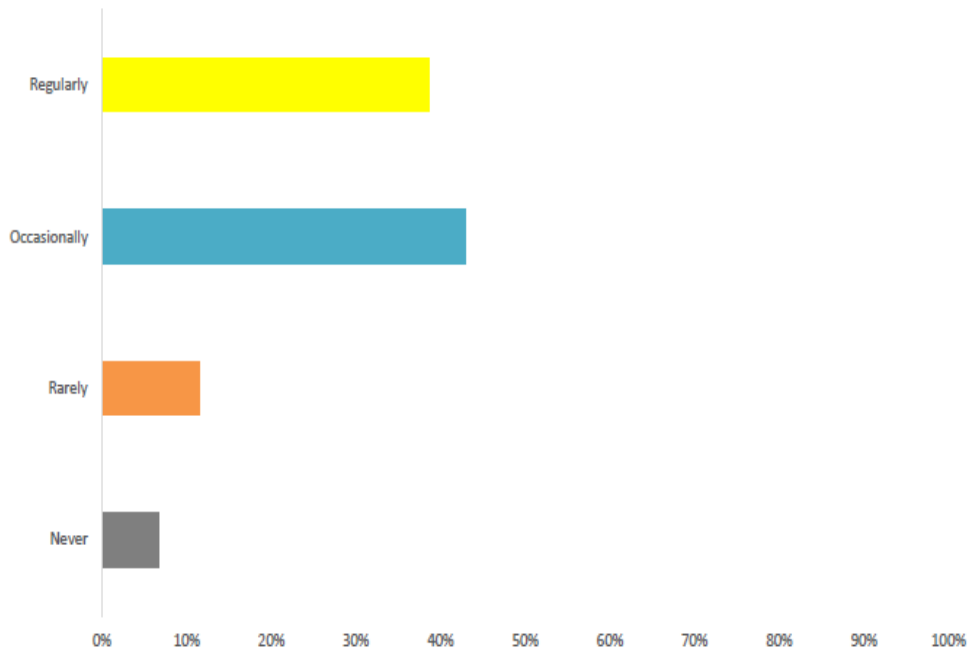
Question 5

How often in the last month have you felt stressed (defined as being under too much emotional or mental pressure) as a result of work?

Answers	Overall	Male	Female	LPC	Trainee	0-5 PQE
Regularly	38.7%	37.5%	38.7%	69.0%	25.4%	38.7%
Occasionally	43.0%	37.5%	45.3%	20.7%	44.8%	47.8%
Rarely	11.6%	14.2%	10.7%	6.9%	17.9%	9.0%
Never	6.8%	10.7%	5.3%	3.4%	11.9%	4.5%

207 people answered this question.

Answered: 207 Skipped: 7



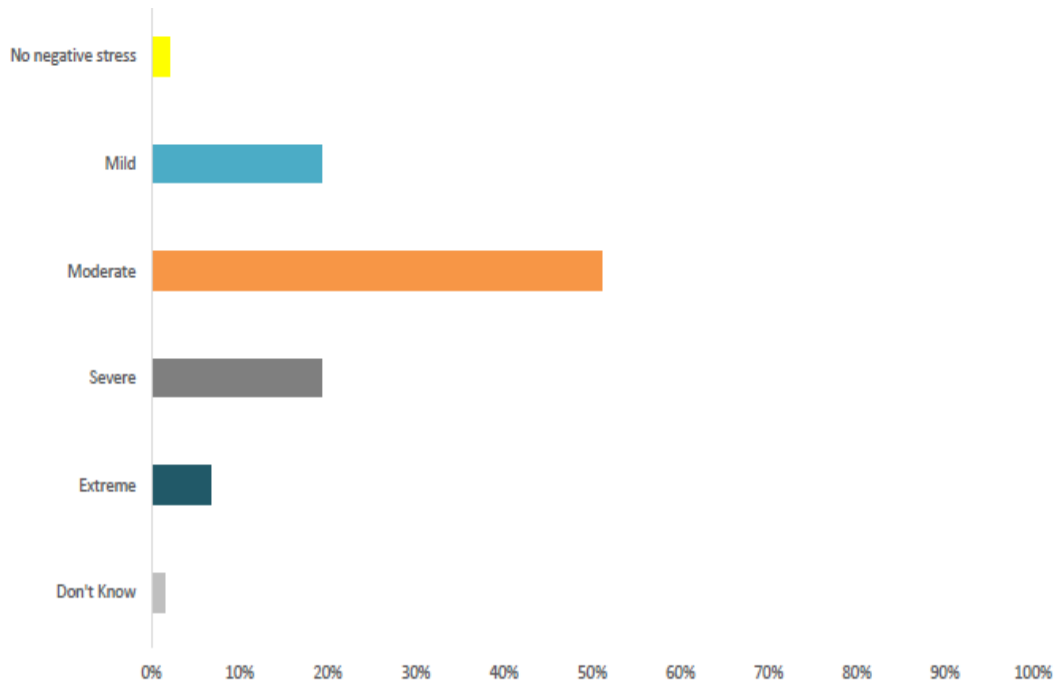
Question 6

If so, how would you describe the level of stress?

Answers	Overall	Male	Female	LPC	Trainee	0-5 PQE
No negative stress	2.1%	6.0%	0.7%	-	5.1%	21.9%
Mild	19.3%	16.0%	20.6%	17.9%	25.4%	16.2%
Moderate	51.0%	56.0%	49.0%	42.9%	50.9%	53.3%
Severe	19.3%	12.0%	22.0%	25.0%	11.9%	1.0%
Extreme	6.8%	8.0%	6.4%	10.7%	5.1%	6.7%
Don't know	1.6%	2.0%	1.4%	3.6%	1.7%	1.0%

192 people answered this question.

Interestingly, the proportion of JLD members reporting 'severe' or 'extreme' levels of stress is 26% which is higher than the profession as a whole. In 2015 and 2016 the practising certificate holder surveys, 21% of practising certificate holders reported experiencing 'severe' or 'extreme' levels of workrelated stress.

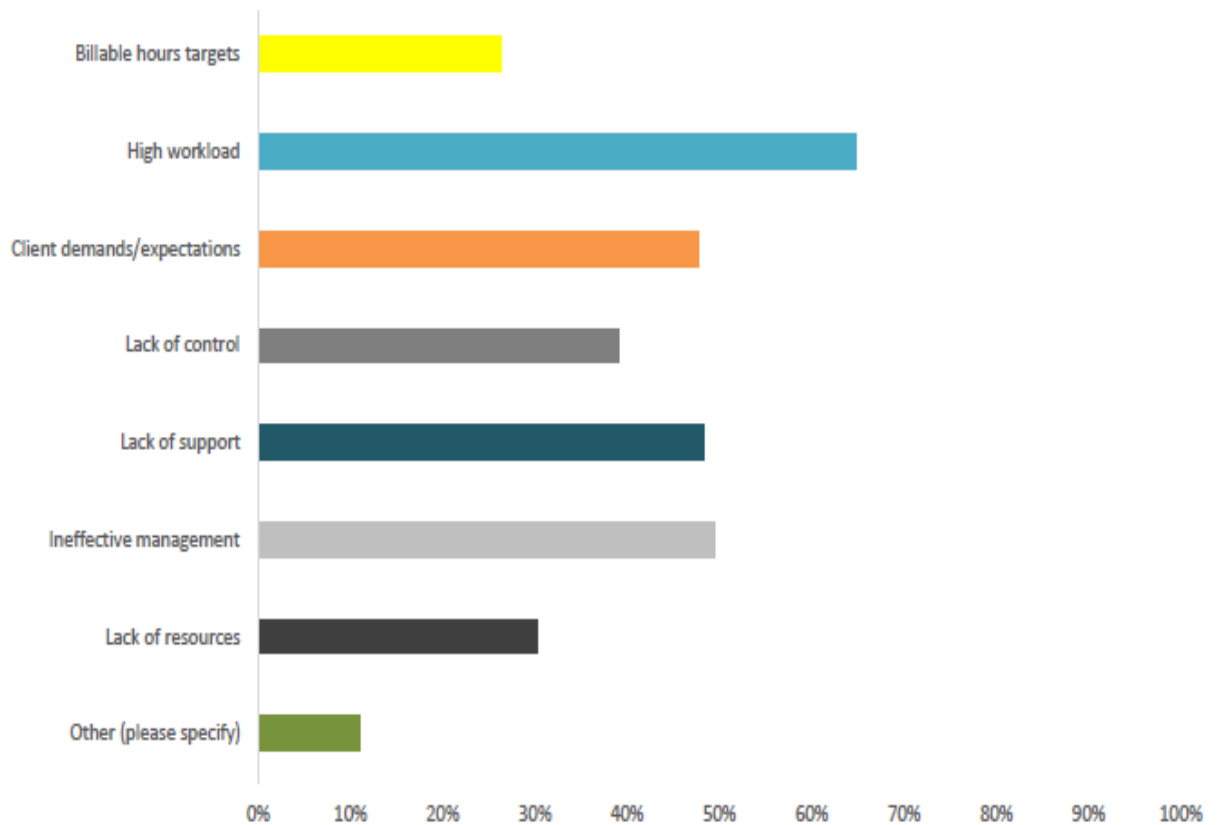


Question 7

If so, what do you consider to be the cause of the stress at work you experience?

Answer	Overall
High workload	64.8%
Ineffective management	49.5%
Lack of support	48.4%
Client demands/expectations	47.8%
Lack of control	39.0%
Lack of resources	30.2%
Billable hours targets	26.4%
Other	11.0%

182 people answered this question.



Top two answers	Answer 1	Answer 2
Overall	High workload	Ineffective management
Male	High workload	Lack of control
Female	High workload	Client expectations
LPC students (including paralegals)	High workload	Lack of support
Trainee solicitors	High workload	Ineffective management
Solicitors with up to five years' post qualified experience	High workload	Client demands/expectations

Other

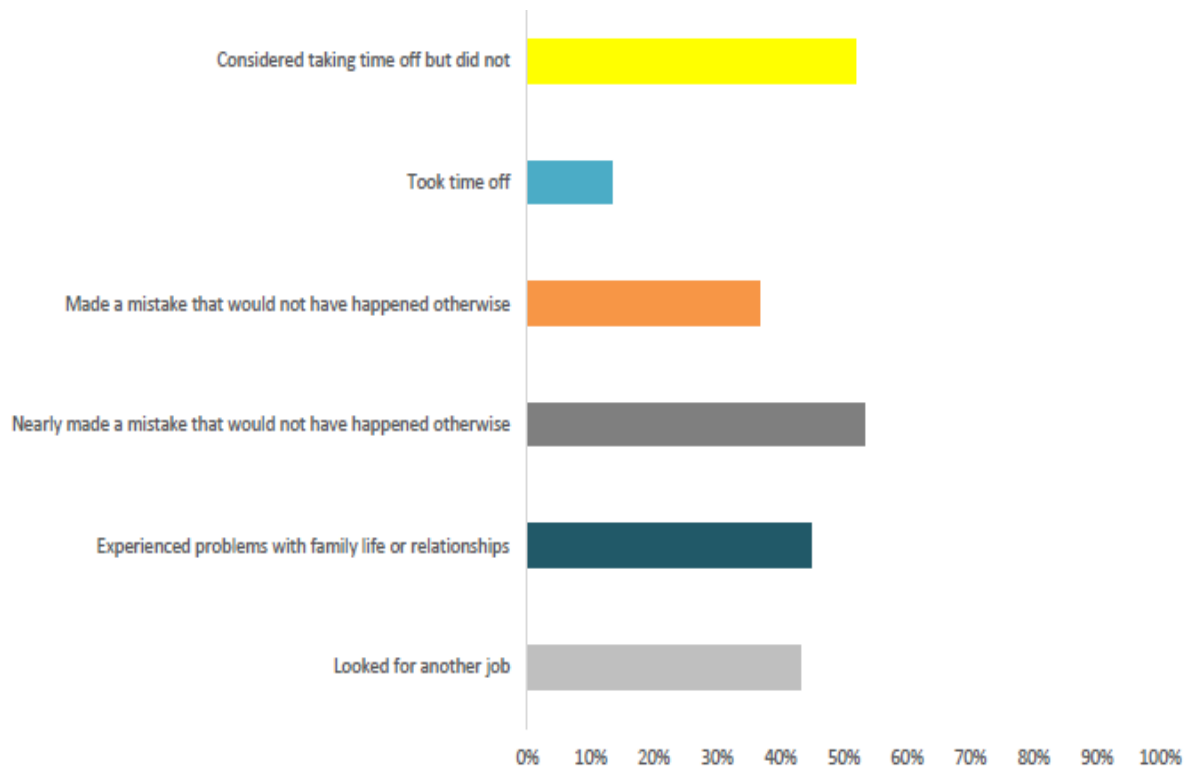
- Office politics
- Business development expectations
- Covering other people's work
- Urgent deadlines
- Job uncertainty
- Lack of time for studying
- Repayment of LPC loan
- Feeling that you're being taken advantage of
- Team changes (seat moves and support staff leaving)
- Dealing with complicated issues beyond experience level
- My expectations of myself

Question 8

In the last month, have you experienced any of the below situations as a result of work-related stress?

Answer	Overall
Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	53.1%
Considered taking time off but did not	51.9%
Experienced problems with family life or relationships	44.9%
Looked for another job	43.0%
Made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	36.7%
Took time off	13.2%

158 people answered this question.



Top two answers	Answer 1	Answer 2
Overall	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	Considered taking time off but did not
Male	Considered taking time off but did not	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise
Female	Considered taking time off but did not	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise
LPC students (including paralegals)	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	Experienced problems with family life or relationships
Trainee solicitors	Considered taking time off but did not	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise
Solicitors with up to five years' post qualified experience	Considered taking time off but did not	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise

Question 9

What strategies or mechanisms do you have in place to manager or reduce your stress levels?

- Asking for help
- Exercising/walking/meditation/yoga
- Spending time with friends and family
- Creating lists/prioritising workload
- Delegation
- Taking drugs (both illegal, prescription & alternative medication)
- Paying for private therapy
- Completely shutting off at weekends & during holidays
- Constantly being on guard/not trusting anyone
- Looking for another job
- Discussing with colleagues and maintain strong working relationships
- Hydrotherapy/acupuncture/massage
- Sleeping/taking regular breaks
- Eating healthy food
- Drinking alcohol
- Self-reflection/mindfulness

Question 10

Do you think your organisation could do more to provide help/guidance/support to employees in relation to stress at work?

Answer	Overall
Yes	73.8%
No	26.2%

170 people answered this question.

If yes, please provide details on what your organisation is not doing and what it could do more of.

- Training
- Policies and procedures in place but need to trickle down to departments/wider advertisement of what the employer offers in support
- Providing yoga/mediation/counselling/courses on coping with stress
- Stress for in-house positions is not recognised
- Better management/partners too busy to supervise/more active supervision
- Reduce workload
- Attitude of "I went through it - so should you"
- More regular checks on employees wellbeing
- Employers to appoint 'wellbeing champions' in each office

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Question 11

Within the last month, have you suffered from a mental health problem (whether formally diagnosed or not)?

Answers	Overall	Male	Female	LPC	Trainee	0-5 PQE
Yes	25.7%	20.0%	27.9%	43.5%	19.0%	26.9%
No	74.3%	80.0%	72.1%	56.5%	81.0%	74.2%

172 people answered this question.

Question 12

Was your employer aware that you were suffering from a mental health problem?

Answers	Overall	Male	Female	LPC	Trainee	0-5 PQE
Yes	23.9%	-	29.7%	-	18.2%	36.0%
No	76.0%	100%	7.3%	100%	81.8%	64.0%

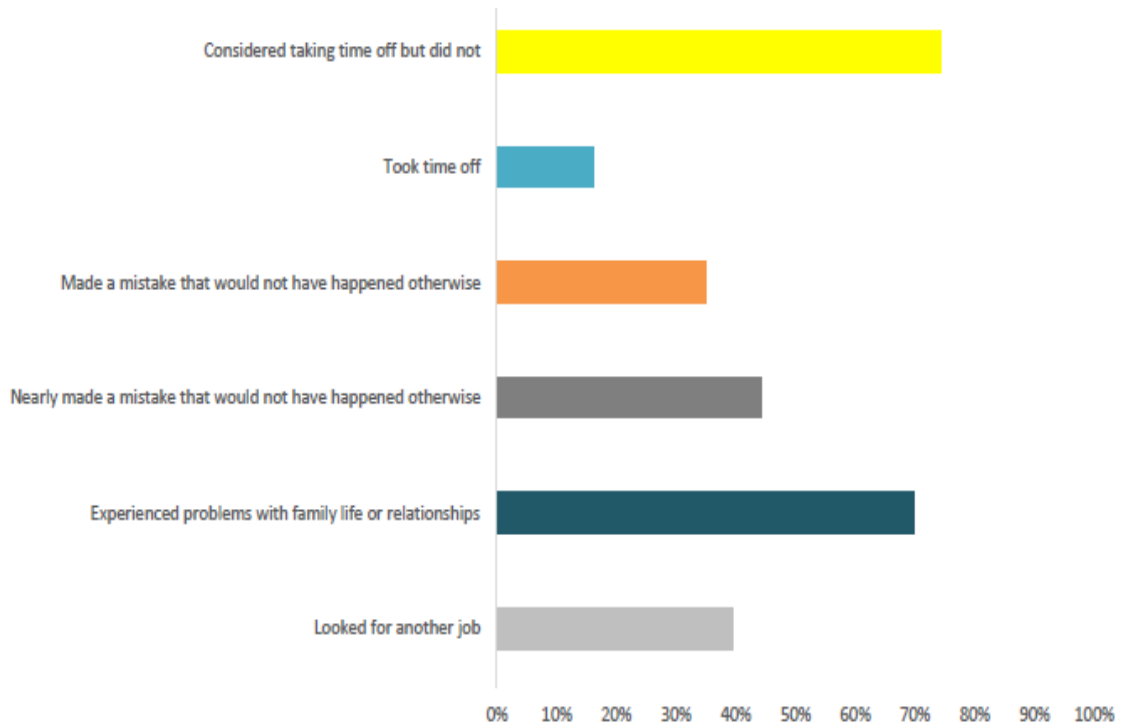
Of the 45 people that answered 'Yes' to question 11, all 45 answered this question.

Question 13

In the last month, have you experiences any of the below situations as a result of your mental health problem?

Answer	Overall
Considered taking time off but did not	74.4%
Experienced problems with family life or relationships	67.8%
Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	44.2%
Looked for another job	39.5%
Made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	34.9%
Took time off	16.3%

Of the 45 people that answered 'Yes' to question 11, 44 answered this question.



Top two answers	Answer 1	Answer 2
Overall	Considered taking time off but did not	Experienced problems with family life or relationships
Male	Experienced problems with family life or relationships	Considered taking time off but did not
Female	Considered taking time off but did not	Experienced problems with family life or relationships
LPC students (including paralegals)	Nearly made a mistake that would not have happened otherwise	Experienced problems with family life or relationships
Trainee solicitors	Considered taking time off but did not	Looked for another job
Solicitors with up to five years' post qualified experience	Considered taking time off but did not	Experienced problems with family life or relationships

Question 14

Does your organisation provide any help/guidance/support to employees in relation to mental health at work?

Answer	Overall
Yes	26.1%
No	39.1%
Don't know	34.8%

Of the 45 people that answered 'Yes' to question 11, all 45 answered this question.

Question 15

Do you think your organisation could do more to provide help/guidance/support to employees in relation to mental health at work?

Answer	Overall
Yes	50.4%
No	49.6%

171 people answered this question.

If yes, please provide details on what your organisation is doing and what it could do more of.

- Employers should provide more information, guidance, training and support
- Information is buried in a manual and needs to be better advertised to employees
- Employers need to do more to raise awareness and promote understanding

- Training on mental health to be made compulsory by the Solicitors Regulation Authority
- Ensure employees have regular meetings with managers/informal chats
- Employers to appoint 'wellbeing champions' in each office
- Employers should do more to encourage employees to ask for help
- Absence on the grounds of mental health isn't discussed in the workplace
- Time-out area in the office and encouraging employees to take breaks
- Employers need to acknowledge that there is a problem

Question 16

Do you know of any organisation that are there to help you if you want to discuss stress at work or any other mental health issues?

171 people answered this question.

Answer	Overall
Yes	50.3%
No	49.7%

Support and advice

- www.lawcare.org.uk
Charity providing support for lawyers suffering stress or other related conditions (0800 2796888)
- www.sba.org.uk
Charity that helps solicitors in serious financial need as a result of illness, accident, redundancy or other adversity (020 8675 6440)
- www.mind.org.uk
Mental health charity
- www.samaritans.org
Support for depressed individuals, in particular those considering suicide
- www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk
Aims to help create a society in which people with mental health problems enjoy equal chances in life
- www.neweconomics.org
Practical advice about wellbeing
- www.hse.gov.uk/stress
Guidelines for managing stress at work
- www.depressionalliance.org
Information and support for sufferers
- www.tacklementalhealth.org.uk
Mental health information for employers
- www.rethink.org
De-stigmatising mental illness
- www.ias.org.uk
Education charity providing advice on alcohol consumption
- www.downyourdrink.or.uk
Advice on alcohol consumption
- www.time-to-change.org.uk
De-stigmatising mental illness
- www.standtoreason.org.uk
Fighting discrimination and stigma around mental illness