

## **Calling time on the booze culture in Law**

**Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO, LawCare**

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## **Alcohol and the culture of law**

- Networking, recruitment, socialising with clients, team building done over drinks
- Normalised
- Work pressures can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms
- Contributes to workplace bullying and harassment
- Led to the creation of LawCare

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## It's making the national media

*'Law firm alcohol culture is damaging mental health'*

**FT January 6 2020**

*'Lawyer who spent night with drunk female colleague escaped ban because it was a 'one off' Ryan Beckwith's judgement "had been affected by the amount of alcohol he had consumed", a tribunal found'* **The Telegraph February 4 2020**

*'Baker Mckenzie boss 'propositioned' junior lawyer at 3am after night of drinking'* **City Am December 2 2019**

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## The facts

- US ABA 2016 study: 1 in 3 lawyers reported problem drinking
- Law Society's JLD survey 2019 – 1800 respondents, 93% reported stress and many said they used alcohol as a coping mechanism
- Lawyers have higher rates of stress, anxiety and depression than the general public

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## **‘Thinking like a lawyer’**

- High personal goals/expectations - competitive
- Prudent
- Reactive
- Over-thinkers
- Perfectionists
- Self sufficient
- Pessimists
- Difficulty saying no
- ‘Insecure overachievers’

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## **The legal workplace**

- Competitive
- Pressured
- Long hours culture
- Managing expectations
- Hierarchical
- Negative emotion
- Bullying and harassment – IBA survey 2019
- Vicarious trauma

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## Signs of poor mental health

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Can't switch off
- Sleep and memory problems
- Difficulty in concentration
- Irritability
- Aches and pains
- Cancelling plans/loss of interest

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## Why this matters ?

- Individual - legal work requires clarity of mind and focus, high ethical standards -integrity and honesty
- Workplace – reputation, risk, recruitment, retention, productivity, bottom line
- Wider community – sustainable, reputation

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## Your mind is one of your greatest assets

- Look after your mind
- Make time to support your wellbeing
- Make it a habit
- Talk to someone
- Ask for help, its not a weakness

## Look After Yourself

Top 10 Tips for Good Mental Health and Wellbeing

**LawCare**  
Supporting the Legal Community



Keep Active



Take a Break



Sleep is Important



Eat Well



Drink in Moderation



Keep in Touch



Share How You Feel



Give Back



Be Mindful



Ask for Help

## What is LawCare?

- The charity that promotes and supports good mental health and wellbeing in the legal profession
- Established in 1997
- UK and Ireland
- All branches of the legal profession and all those training and working in it
- Funded by professional bodies but independent
- We understand life in the law

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## About LawCare [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk)

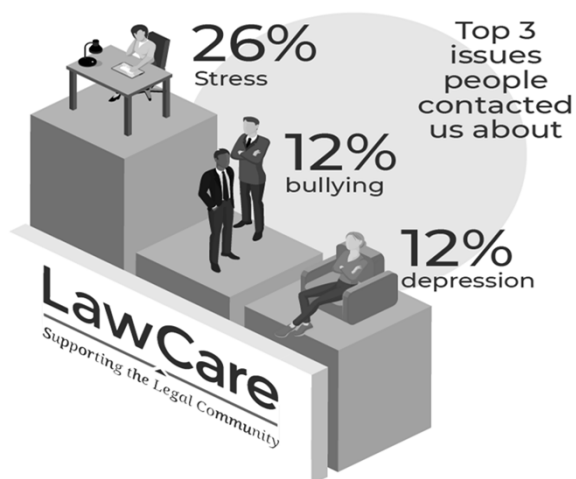
- **Support** – helpline, peer support, webchat
- **Education and prevention** – raise awareness, tackle stigma, information, training
- **Research** – understand the impact the culture and practice of law has on wellbeing
- **Create change** – drive positive change in education, training and practice

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## Support – Helpline, webchat, email

- Free, independent, confidential
- Discuss concerns
- Listen without judgment, with empathy
- Trained staff / volunteers have worked in the law
- Signposting
- Best practice standard

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## Prevention and education

- Website [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk)
- Factsheets including alcohol
- Practical wellbeing tips
- Workplace hub
- Real life stories and blogs
- LawCare News and events
- Awareness campaigns to tackle stigma
- Training, events, talks

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## FitForLaw

*Emotional Competence and Professional Resilience*

- Understanding emotions and stress
- Practical strategies
- Activities, videos
- Free, online resource
- 2-4 hours in bite sized chunks
- Evidence based
- Partnership with the Open University
- [fitforlaw.org.uk](http://fitforlaw.org.uk)

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## **Research and creating change**

- LawCare champions
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Research planned for 2020

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## **Positive steps to create change**

- Look after our minds and adopt healthy habits
- Mentally healthy workplaces
- New approach to alcohol – JLD guidance
- Challenge stigma
- Get senior leaders on board
- On the agenda for educators, professional bodies, regulators, practice
- Build the social capital in the legal community

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## Get involved

- Sign up to our newsletter
- Follow us



- Fundraise/Donate
- Be the change!
- [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk)
- Helpline **0800 279 8888** email [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk)

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