

**Report**

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**Anxiety and Wellbeing Amongst Junior Lawyers: A Research Study  
[funded by Anxiety UK's Katherine And Harold Fisher Anxiety Research  
Fund]**

Background and Context of the Study

*Introduction*

On 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, World Mental Health Day, a conference ‘Making Mental Health Matter’ took place in London to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the legal charity *Lawcare*. Attended by organisations from across the UK legal community the event reflects what has become a growing interest internationally in the issue of the wellbeing and mental health of lawyers; an interest encapsulated in the UK in the establishment, in 2016, of a dedicated *Legal Professions Wellbeing Taskforce*. Across the legal professions an array of initiatives are being introduced seeking to better understand and tackle what a host of research studies indicate to be a pervasive problem of poor lawyer and, increasingly, law student wellbeing. Illustrating how fast this wellbeing agenda is developing in the law in October 2018, one year on from ‘Making Mental Health Matter’, the launch of a cross-profession *Mindful Business Charter* brought together leading law firms and their clients in making a “public commitment” to removing from the UK legal professions the “unnecessary sources of workplace stress”. In order to “promote better mental health and wellbeing in the legal community”, the Charter states, “we have a responsibility to try and do things differently”.

*Grounding the Research: The UK Context*

This research project took place against the backdrop of these debates and seeks to contribute to a growing body of work internationally that suggests significant problems exist around wellbeing for many lawyers. Lawyer wellbeing and issues relating to anxiety (see below) is the focus of now distinctive strand of legal scholarship internationally especially in the United States since the mid-1980s and, more recently, since the 2000s, in Australia (see for example the *Wellness Network for Law*, *Wellness for Law Forum* and the work of *Minds Count*, formally the *Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation* (IJMF)). It has also, over the past five years or so, become a subject of increasing significance in the UK, as well as elsewhere. Within the UK *Law*

*Society* Health and Wellbeing surveys, annual *Lawcare* data, research on the wellbeing of barristers, notably the 2015 report on *Wellbeing at the Bar*, the work of the Bar Council's Wellbeing at the Bar ('WATB') Group as well as research from various other bodies in the legal sector each draw a broadly similar conclusion. Encapsulating the theme of the 2017 Stevenson/Farmer Review of *Mental Health and Work in the UK* many lawyers, it would appear, seem to be 'surviving, but not thriving'. Within both the legal professional and national press a steady flow of articles is discussing the causes and scale of poor wellbeing amongst lawyers and law students alike, prompting much consideration of 'what can be done' to improve lawyer wellbeing. Alongside a wide range of legal professional events on the issue, meanwhile, personal accounts of mental illness within the legal sector, including in relation to anxiety, are drawing attention to the subjective and social costs of functioning as a lawyer over a period of time with poor wellbeing. The research, commissioned by charity Anxiety UK, arises at the interface of these debates and developments.

### *Why Junior Lawyers and Anxiety?*

Anxiety is a key theme in this international literature on both lawyer and law student wellness. There is also a growing concern about issues of anxiety in relation to the wellbeing of students and staff in the UK Higher Education sector (reflected, for example, in an emerging body of academic work on the idea of the 'anxious university'). Ideas about anxiety are being increasingly deployed not just within this legal literature but in studies of professional life more generally (see, for example, Richard Martin (2018) *This Too Will Pass: Anxiety in a Professional World*, London: Trigger). In looking to legal practice, more specifically, this project maps to and seeks to 'flesh out', via the undertaking of in-depth, semi-structured interviews (see below), recent surveys of wellbeing and resilience conducted by the *Junior Lawyers Division* of the Law Society (henceforth JLD), with the results awaited of the 2019 survey being undertaken at the time of this Report:

The 2017 JLD Survey found, for example, that over 90% of respondents stated they had experienced stress in their role with 26% experiencing severe/extreme stress; that over 25% had suffered a mental health problem in the last month and that only 23% felt comfortable informing their employer.

See Law Society (2018) *Supporting Resilience and Wellbeing in the Workplace: Guidance for Best Practice*, London: Law Society; Law Society (2017) *Resilience and Wellbeing Survey Report: Junior Lawyers Division* (London, Law Society); Kayleigh Leonie (2018) 'Taking care of business: talking about mental health at your work' <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/blog/taking-care-of-business-talking-about-mental-health-at-your-work/> In 2019 at the time of writing the JLD are undertaking a third resilience and wellbeing report survey by collecting practitioners' experiences: see

<https://surveys.concept.com/s/e010bbec39e7e555db39e81d933840069e11e69c> Also Max Walters (2019) 'Junior lawyers demand answers on firms' mental health measures' *Law Society*

*Gazette* 7 January 2019. <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/law/junior-lawyers-demand-answers-on-firms-mental-health-measures-/5068776.article?platform=hootsuite>

Key issues identified in the JLD studies include the need to ensure junior lawyers are not left feeling unsupported in the early years of their career and that a healthy working environment is fostered in which junior lawyers can develop and thrive. The 2018 JLD ‘Guidance for Best Practice’ draws particular attention, in looking to what organisations should be doing, to the ‘three core pillars’ of the importance of workplace *Culture*, addressing the *Support* provided to junior lawyers and the need for appropriate *Education and Training* in mental health literacy (see further below).

## The Anxiety UK Research

The funding awarded supported a focused empirical study based on 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews (each c.1 hour) with practising solicitors across a range of firms and areas of legal practice in the UK. The precise aim has been to interrogate individual experiences and professional/organisational responses to anxiety related problems amongst junior lawyers in the legal profession (defined here as up to 5 years post-qualification experience, and including trainees). The research has produced rich original data about what is happening ‘on the ground’ by addressing anxiety in relation to a group of lawyers in areas of practice hitherto under-explored in these debates (where much of the discussion to date has tended to focus, rather, on larger corporate commercial ‘City’ law firms). This has involved junior lawyers at varying stages of their careers, as above, working in private practice law firms, as In-House lawyers and in law centres. Framed by the issues set out in the JLD surveys, as above, core research questions included (and are not confined to):

- How is anxiety experienced and understood in this context e.g. in relation to the debates now taking place around lawyer wellbeing? More specifically, what workplace practices and cultures, in particular, are seen as linked to anxiety difficulties in law?
- What organisational attempts are being made to promote improved awareness of anxiety and support for staff who do face difficulties?
- What is, and might be, the role of professional-related bodies such as (amongst others) Lawcare, the Law Society and the Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA) in this area?
- What knowledge exists of charities such as Anxiety UK regarding support provision and information on anxiety? What mechanisms would establish best practice and provide further opportunities for joint working and collaboration?

In keeping with the qualitative tradition, the interview method was seen as ideal in gathering data and eliciting information mapping perceptions of how legal practice,

organizational cultures and structures link to understandings of anxiety. All interviews were preceded by information gathering (e.g. publications, web presence) and the project has been governed by the ethical codes of the Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) and Newcastle University with full ethical clearance obtained prior to commencement. The JLD, Law Society of England and Wales and Lawcare have each been highly supportive of this project (see Engagement, below) and advertised calls for respondents via their social networks, mail-lists and other means:

see e.g. <http://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/junior-lawyers/news/wellbeing-and-the-law-junior-lawyer-research/5064489.article> : <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/well-lawyers-cross-examined-anxiety-uk-announce-latest-research-fund-recipient/>).

With regard to methodology, it is to be noted that this self-selected sample has, of course, as is widely recognised in relation to projects of this kind, the potential impact to skew opinion towards negative interpretations of wellbeing in law; the criticism being that many respondents may be those individuals who are already disaffected to varying degrees by their experiences and, in particular who have experienced past or ongoing problems around anxiety and wellbeing. Contra to such a view, these are the very individuals whose insights are invaluable in developing an appreciation of what is happening in this field and the rich level of analysis that a qualitative study of this kind can provide facilitates a deeper understanding of problems and key concerns in the area. The project has accordingly used a set of textual responses in such a way to advance understanding of the research questions above, adding texture and complexity to our understandings of anxiety and wellbeing in this employment context. Of the 12 interviewees it is to be noted that 11 were female and one male, a point I discuss further below. This split itself mirrors the marked gender disparity evident in other studies of lawyer wellbeing.

## Findings

*\*Please note* - within the word constraints of this report I will only refer sparingly to the very rich data that has resulted from the interviews. Detailed quotes from interviewees, mapping to the core themes discussed below, will be central to the published work arising including the international refereed journal articles deriving from the study listed below under *Outputs & Dissemination* (with analysis of transcriptions ongoing at time of writing in relation to 1 interview).  
***The support of Anxiety UK is being acknowledged in all publications and other dissemination activities e.g. conference papers arising.***

### *Key and Recurring Themes [Selected]*

The research confirms the findings of other studies, including the recent JLD surveys (above), in finding that specific aspects of legal workplace cultures and practices are being perceived as having a deleterious impact on the wellbeing of junior lawyers in particular ways including, importantly, with regard to experiences of anxiety. Whilst the factors seen as productive of anxiety can be seen to cut across the legal community (encompassing legal practice and legal education and training) it is important to note how, the research suggests, individual experiences and engagements with the law's recent turn towards wellness are mediated by the specific **legal professional contexts** in which lawyers work; how distinct workplace cultures can impact in different ways on the subjective experiences of wellbeing and anxiety in relation, for example, to corporate lawyers, solicitors working in 'High Street' practices, legal aid, sole practitioner solicitors, legal executives, In-House lawyers and lawyers in concentrated urban or more isolated rural locations.

The research draws particular attention to the following as **key recurring themes** and contributory factors in understanding the subjective experiences of poor wellbeing and anxiety described in the interviews:

- The presence of a perception that across law firms and areas of practice that, whilst it is recognised things may be changing to degrees in positive ways (see below), and that there is certainly a greater visibility of wellbeing and mental health agendas in the profession, there remains a pervasive cultural **stigma** around disclosing mental health problems in the legal community. In addressing stigma, and here supporting the findings and themes within the recent JLD Surveys and Guidelines, all interviewees saw it as essential that understandings of mental health, including difficulties around anxiety, be separated from ideas of weakness:
- Notwithstanding what were seen as very welcome moves in recent years across the legal profession to address problems, noting varying awareness amongst interviewees of specific initiatives being introduced (see below), some **particular difficulties were seen to face junior lawyers** in 'speaking out' about their experiences of mental health, including in relation to anxiety, and around admitting they may be struggling within the context of the hierarchical organization of a law firm. This aligns to other work suggesting junior lawyers, in particular, may be fearful of revealing mental health problems to employers, describing a need to be 'bullet-proof' in coping with work demands notwithstanding the subjective costs of maintaining such a coping identity over a period of time:

- The perceived causes of anxiety amongst junior lawyers appear **multi-layered** and emerge at the interface of both **individual/biographical** factors (e.g. via reference to the idea of lawyer personality attributes, see below) and **structural/cultural issues** in the profession (e.g. around the billing, organisation and allocation of work). Within the interviews there is, more specifically, a recurring concern with the following **causative factors and themes**:
- Concern about **high workload** and a belief that **poor work-life balance** is commonplace in the law, marked by a lack of flexibility in working arrangements, the need to respond to at times **urgent deadlines** and, especially in certain areas of legal practice and departments within law firms, the requirement to work frequently unpredictable long hours: at the same time, however, this was seen as part of the **'package deal'** a junior lawyer would buy into in the route to becoming a 'proper' lawyer, and a relationship between 'work' and 'life' that would be likely to continue into their legal careers (although see below):
- A concern with the personal impact of what could be, at times, difficult **client relationships** and, more generally, **client demands and behaviour** set within a highly competitive and fragmented/segmented global marketplace for legal services; and a broader culture in law in which it was accepted as being at times inevitable that self-care could easily come second to the 'bottom line' of profits and maintaining client satisfaction:
- An emphasis on the **low decision latitude, lack of control** over work and **limited workplace autonomy** experienced by many junior lawyers, coupled with broader concerns about **levels of pay, fairness** (e.g. in value for work undertaken, undertaking unpaid overtime), recognition/reward and how these issues can link to a broader sense of 'living with' anxieties relating to a constant need to **'prove oneself'** in the course of qualification as a lawyer (see further discussion of 'the lens of anxiety' below):
- The important role **lawyer personality attributes** and **self-expectations** can play in relation to wellbeing, and recognition of what was seen by these interviewees as the distinctive characteristics of those who enter the law; and how this, in turn, can relate to poor subjective wellbeing and experiences of anxiety in the course of legal careers (noting frequent references across all the

interviews to a *fear of making a mistake* and ideas of *perfectionism*, *'imposter syndrome'* and of being an *'insecure overachiever'*.

- The issue of perfectionism chimes with studies in other areas of law such as at the Bar which have found significant numbers of barristers exhibiting unhealthy levels of perfectionism and worry. At the same time, it was suggested in one interview, law firms have actively sought to select people who may doubt their own worth, who may not necessarily recognize successes and, in particular, be driven by a need to exceed expectations, characteristics fostered in work environments marked by intense competition around appointment and promotion.
- With regard to specific **interventions** (see further below) and seeking to **promote change** and improve lawyer wellbeing, the interviews highlight particular concerns about **ineffective/poor management** (or lack of management); the importance of, and arguments relating to the need for, adequate **line/senior-manager training** in dealing with mental health matters when they do arise for junior lawyers; the need for managers to be **approachable** and have regular **'check-ins'** in developing a better understanding in firms of what can be the quite specific experiences of trainees and early career lawyers. This links to concerns around the desirability of promoting greater **mental health literacy** in law firms generally, mapping to the JLD themes of Support and Education, above (e.g. in relation to manager/supervisor ability to identify 'early warning signals' when an individual may be under stress).
- Significant concerns linking experiences of subjective anxiety to concerns about widespread **job insecurity, precarity** and **uncertain professional futures** within the legal services sector; for example, around the need to secure a job and pay off debts exacerbated, in some areas of law especially, by dwindling resources, financial cuts and broader structural and technological changes seen as impacting on junior lawyers. Many law students can face pressures on completing university when faced with self-funding the next stage of entering the profession in a context of uncertainty around their progression (e.g. securing in a training contract and the transition and, for some, moving from being paralegal to trainee solicitor). Interview comments depict this has a highly *anxiety-inducing* environment.
- Enmeshed with this sense of insecurity, within some interviews experiences of anxiety were linked to a concern about what was seen as the 'purpose' of the legal work undertaken on occasion by junior lawyers within the market for legal

services; and around the **balancing of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards** at a particular stage of the life course (in this context, and for these interviewees, notably a **transition from Higher Education**) which some had found difficult and which raised particular problems for junior lawyers in navigating their way through the processes of credentialization and qualification (see below):

- Building on the above, several interviews provided powerful descriptions of the process of **qualification as a lawyer** as something that was itself being experienced through ‘**a lens of anxiety**’ in the course of the move from education to employment; that is, for these junior lawyers the process of career progression into the law, and of ‘becoming’ a ‘proper’ lawyer, was seen as interlinked with a pervasive, deep-rooted and ongoing **sense of subjective anxiety** (raising particular issues, the research suggests, for Paralegals and early career lawyers); that is, a process of ‘jumping through the hoops’ and ‘never knowing if you’ll get ‘there’’. From law school through to qualification some interviewees described what was, in effect, seen as the presence of an **anxious culture** in law
  - Note: Linking to discussion below of the role of law schools in supporting and easing this transition into the workplace, recent initiatives such as those introduced by the City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA), an alliance of City law firms and businesses, were seen in several interviews as highly desirable, although it was recognized that such interventions tended to be focused only on certain areas of practice. The CMHA 2017 Guide ‘Thriving at Work’, for example, appears a welcome intervention in helping better manage this transition from Higher Education and training into legal employment and to ensuring lawyers can ‘thrive from the start’:

See <http://citymha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CMHA-Thriving-at-Work-Guide-final-PDF.pdf>). Note also other initiatives globally such as the Australian based TJMF ‘Workplace Wellbeing Best Practice Guidelines’ as a resource and guide for young lawyers, alongside material from other bodies similarly seeking to provide practical advice and guidance to junior lawyers: TJMF Workplace Wellbeing: Best Practice Guidelines for the Legal Profession, Available at <http://mindscount.org/wp-content/uploads/TJMF-Legal-Workplace-Guidelines.pdf> ; also Law Society of New South Wales, NSW Young Lawyers and the Australian National University (2016) *Being well in the Law: A Guide for Lawyers* Available at <https://www.lawsociety.com.au/sites/default/files/2018-08/Being%20Well%20in%20the%20Law%20Guide.pdf>
- Building on the above, several interviews highlight specific concerns around the links between **lawyer anxiety and stress, vulnerability and vicarious**

**trauma**, especially for those junior lawyers working within areas of practice dealing with **vulnerable clients** (whether by virtue of mental or physical health, age, lack of capacity, experience of trauma, being in custody or for other reasons); and in areas of law in which relatively low remuneration was combined with a sense that these fields of practice tended to be invisible in much recent discussion of wellbeing in the legal profession: e.g. particular reference was made to family law, immigration, mental health and criminal legal aid work. It was recognised across the interviews that the legal profession, especially in relation to certain areas of work, can be emotionally taxing in ways that can exacerbate existing mental-health conditions for some lawyers, including in relation to anxiety, resulting in what had been for some interviewees particular work-related episodes of poor mental health:

- The ‘double edged’ impact of **new technologies** on junior lawyers in relation, for example, to their attempts to maintain a better balance between ‘work’ and ‘life’ and how these technologies are themselves reshaping in complex ways traditional understandings of lawyering skills and professional autonomy;
- The identification, more generally, of **other issues** as productive of anxieties amongst junior lawyers, with reference made in the interviews to broader concerns around issues such as being asked to deal with matters **beyond level of experience**; the impact of frequent **team and staff changes**, including support staff; negotiating firm expectations around **business development**; and in some cases, **unsupportive colleagues** and a **lack of training and development opportunities**;
- A general concern with the subjective impact, and related implications for experiences of anxiety, of working in what was acknowledged, for all interviewees, to be a **high pressure and demanding working environment** marked by a ‘bottom line’ of **financialization/profit maximisation**; and, especially, specific concerns about the dominant **structure, organisation, allocation and form of billing** of much legal work; the latter, in particular, was seen as serving to heighten pressures on junior lawyers in ways that had implications for experiences of social connectedness, subjective wellbeing and professional commitment and identity.
- Finally, and without exception, all interviewees saw addressing wellbeing and related problems around anxiety in law as **a core business issue for law firms**: taking this seriously would have clear and evidenced benefits not just for

lawyers themselves but their law firms, clients and the wider legal profession in terms, for example, of cost, retention and recruitment.

### *Analysis - Further Observations & Issues Arising*

#### 1. Understandings of Anxiety and the Importance of Context

- Frequent reference was made in the interviews to how, just as mental health is a broad term, it was important to recognize there was no ‘one’ experience of anxiety. Interviewees, rather, interpreted the term in a variety of ways and anxiety was, generally, seen as an issue subsumed within a far wide set of concerns around the problem of wellbeing and mental health in the legal profession; placed in the interviews alongside, notably, concerns around stress related depression and, in some instances, what had been specific experiences of anxiety during the life course.
  - Reference was made by several interviewees, for example, to their own personal experiences of what was acknowledged to be disproportionate and intense/distressing feelings of worry in relation to work demands; to low mood; worries about lack of focus/concentration; fatigue and feeling physically sick, panic attacks, chest pains, irritability, insomnia/disrupted sleep and emotional exhaustion; problems relating to vicarious/secondary trauma; detachment, social anxiety and feelings of low accomplishment and broader concerns around being ineffective at work. Given this diversity there is a need to cautious, the interviews suggest, in speaking of a mental health problem amongst junior lawyers in the round and that there is a need to recognize **diverse experiences and understandings of anxiety**; the interviews reveal how anxiety can manifest itself in different ways.
- Linked to the above the research suggests that **interventions and strategies** aimed at addressing poor wellbeing within the legal community, as noted above, do not play out in the same way across the legal profession and there is a crucial need to be **context-specific in discussing problems around wellbeing and anxiety in the law**:
  - Several interviews drew attention, for example, to how the kinds of descriptions noted in the legal wellbeing literature of an acute individualism and intensive competition as being somehow embedded in the culture of large corporate law firms did not necessarily translate to

the more collegial and supportive, if equally demanding, cultures of other areas of law. At the same time, it could not be assumed that the kinds of pressures at play in law firms mapped to those working as an In-house lawyer.

- ‘Self-care’ strategies referred to in the interviews as being personally helpful in dealing with anxiety included the importance of exercise (various); connecting with others such as friends, family and, to a lesser degree, colleagues; taking ‘time out’ and regular breaks, as much as the working day would allow; undertaking specific courses and utilising the resources that were available (e.g. with frequent mention made of mindfulness); addressing poor sleep, improving diet and staying hydrated at work; and, for one interviewee, engaging in practices relating to faith. Anecdotally, mention was also made of other mechanisms amongst junior lawyers in dealing with anxiety and work demands notably alcohol consumption, self-medication and tendencies to overwork/work long hours to complete tasks. Three of the interviewees stated they already knew of Anxiety UK and had visited the website in the past and six had heard of or already had contact with Lawcare. None of the interviewees had come across ‘wellbeing objectives’ or a ‘wellbeing matrix’ as an embedded part of performance reviews. There is more that can be done, the interviews suggest, to promote awareness more generally of the work of key organisations such as Lawcare and Anxiety UK.

## 2. Promoting Change: Interventions

- The research suggests organisational responses to problems in this area should be **multi-dimensional** and, mapping to and endorsing the broad conclusions of both the 2017/2018 JLD studies and the Guidelines produced by the Australia-based Minds Count (previously the TJMF), should seek to encompass (amongst others); attempts to promote improved wellbeing and mental/physical health **Awareness** amongst junior lawyers via **Education and Training**; to encourage greater **Practical Support** for staff who do face difficulties (beyond that provided by Human Resources and Employee Assistance programme (EAP) when available); and the need to change aspects of workplace **Cultures** in ways that would help combat problems around stress and anxiety related depression in the legal profession whilst, at the same time, encouraging lawyers who are experiencing problems to self-disclose and seek help (e.g. by challenging stigma):

The TJMF Guidelines, cited above, for example, identify 13 key workplace factors as critical to psychological health in law, highlighting the importance of the **organisational culture** (whether in relation to the specific law firm or legal profession generally): the

need for **psychological and social support** for lawyers mental health concerns; **clear leadership and expectation**; **psychological competencies and requirement issues** (see, e.g., discussion of emotional competency, below); individual **growth and development** issues (e.g. alignment of values); need for **recognition and reward**; good **involvement and influence by staff** in discussions about work and decision making; **workload management**; **engagement** e.g. feeling motivated and connected; **balance** (e.g. between work and personal life); **psychological protection**; and **protection of physical safety**. These interviews, to varying degrees, and as discussed in this Report and fleshed out below, can be seen to track to these themes in the TJMF Guidelines.

- It was seen as especially important that practical measures and resources supportive of junior lawyers who may be struggling, including access to Human Resources, Occupational Health, EAP and Counselling services where available are **easy to find, visible and readily accessible**, something which would only come about, it was suggested, with a cultural change in legal workplaces whereby lawyers at all levels felt more able to speak about their mental health (with information not ‘tucked away, kind of shamefully hidden’ on the firm intranet or in handbooks); further, that junior lawyers as employees should be **involved and engaged** in developing this agenda;
- Looking to **‘what works’** and **specific interventions** that might better address the wellbeing of junior lawyers the following were referred to in the interviews as highly desirable examples of initiatives: the **‘showcasing’** of lawyers, in particular senior employees such as law firm Partners, who had experienced periods of mental ill health in their career; visible signs of law firm commitment to improved wellbeing via the signing of workplace **wellbeing charters** where present and, related to this, the **‘role modelling’** of greater openness around mental health difficulties, including anxiety; the need to embed culturally **wellbeing-congruent behaviour** (so helping challenge stigma and serving to normalize at a cultural level ‘speaking out’); and the introduction of **training and wellbeing workshops** and accessible and approachable **mental-health first-aiders (MHFAs)**, **wellbeing mentors** and **‘champions’** as features of law firm culture:
  - Less frequently, reference was made to an awareness of law firm liaison with external bodies such as mental health charities (e.g. via visiting speakers) and events structured around national and global key mental health days. There was, in particular, alongside support for Health Promotion generally, some scepticism about initiatives such as such as occasional ‘health and wellbeing’ weeks and days; and, especially, developments described anecdotally as taking place in larger firms such as the provision of ‘wellbeing rooms’, yoga, tai chi and self-knowledge classes, spirituality and mindfulness taster sessions, ‘digital detox’ periods

and, in some cases, the bringing of animals into work. One interviewee referred such initiatives as ‘just sticking plasters’ on a more substantial problem (see below).

### 3. The Importance of Emotion and Emotional Competency

- In drawing attention to the presence of distinctive life course and career-specific issues as of particular importance for junior lawyers (see findings above), several interviewees raised the issue, and showed an awareness of, recent discussions in the profession around concerns about the **emotional competency** of lawyers (note e.g. recent Lawcare/Open University #FitForLaw’ research and planned online resources): <http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=3476>. In better supporting junior lawyers, in short, a greater understanding of the stages/moments in a career at which lawyers will require emotional competency was seen as highly desirable (ranging from questions about, for example, handling difficult clients, dealing with losing cases, experiencing rejection and engaging in difficult interactions with others whether colleagues/clients).
  - Note: Emotional competency is here understood as encompassing the importance of utilising and recognising the place of emotion in legal practice in such a way as to improve mental wellbeing, including in relation to anxiety, and enhancing working practices. This includes issues around, for example, identifying, understanding, analysing and reflecting on emotions and managing emotional responses.
  - This theme links directly to the role of legal education and training in this area (see further below). In two interviews reference was also made to the issue of emotional competence in legal practice in the context of concerns about the regulation of solicitors and understandings of the implications of poor junior lawyer wellbeing and related anxiety problems for regulators such as the **Solicitor’s Regulation Authority (SRA)**, exemplified by the responses to recent 2018 cases involving junior lawyers before the Solicitor’s Disciplinary Tribunal [noting also in the context of competency requirements the role elsewhere in law of the Bar Standards Board and the Chartered Institute for Legal Executives (CILEx) Regulation]
- Linked to the above at times interviewees, reflecting on their own legal education, questioned aspects of what it meant to ‘think like a lawyer’ and how this related to developing a better understanding of their own mental health.

This connects directly to recent work in legal studies internationally concerned with the **place of emotions in legal practice and education**, and to questions about the nature of a 'legal mindset' and potential subjective consequences of a suppression of emotion in legal work: that is, how law as a discipline and practice was seen by interviewees as continuing, in many ways, to disregard emotions (see further Emma Jones (2018) 'Transforming Legal Education Through Emotions' 38(3) *Legal Studies* 450-479).

#### 4. 'But It's Not All Bad ...': A Complex Picture - Stress, Anxiety and the Pleasures of Legal Work

- Notwithstanding at times powerful descriptions of specific problems relating to poor wellbeing and anxiety the interviews also provide rich data on the **pleasures, rewards and satisfactions** of a career in law; and, at the same time, several accounts of **good practice** in the law firms in which interviewees either did or had worked, including instances of practical support provided by managers and peers.
- This suggests a **complex and contradictory picture** with regard to the nature of professional identity formation (what it meant to 'be a lawyer'), here supporting the finding of Bleasdale and Francis's 2018 study of Millennial Lawyers that legal workplace cultures can be simultaneously seen by junior lawyers as "the single best thing about the [law] firm" alongside "a clear acceptance ... *that stress and anxiety were simply part of the DNA of the profession*" (Lydia Bleasdale and Andrew Francis (2018) *Millennial Lawyers: Challenges and Opportunities for Law Firms in Leeds* Leeds Law Society/University of Leeds, my emphasis). The research further supports Chan's (2014) suggestion that **legal culture** can have a role "in sustaining the paradox of satisfied lawyers under working conditions that may be conducive to stress" [Janet Chan (2014) 'Conceptualising Legal Culture and Lawyering Stress' 21(2) *International Journal of the Legal Profession* 213-232].
- This depiction of the pleasures and joys of legal work was linked to a recognition that a successful career in law could, for many lawyers, if not all, bring relatively high financial rewards and status in due course; repeated reference was made, for example, to a perception on the part of family and friends that being a lawyer continued to be a desirable and high-status occupation. Looking to the interface of legal practice and legal education the interviews in this regard support the suggestion by Paula Baron that both

lawyers in training and lawyers in practice can “...tend to be ‘weighed down’ by the demands of others, **trying to live up to ideals** *that are initially externally, and later internally, imposed*”. Paula Baron (2016) ‘The Persistence of Distress’ in R. Field, J. Duffy and C. James (eds) *Promoting Law Student and Lawyer well-being in Australia and Beyond* (London Routledge 2016). This supports the proposition being made within the international legal wellbeing literature that **“perfectionism and competition amongst law students contribute to the development of distress”** (p 45).

## 5. Is Change Happening? A Contradictory Picture

- Notwithstanding frequent reference to how specific problems/issues could face junior lawyers, the research supports the suggestion that this is a field in which the general debate is now **shifting rapidly and in positive ways**, reflected in the interventions and developments discussed above. Several interviewees acknowledged that, in looking to their own experience in the legal profession, and those of their cohort, **more lawyers appeared to now be seeking to be honest and open** about difficulties and able to seek help.
- This supports the view that there may in fact be a **generational change** taking place, reflected in the greater willingness on the part of Millennials to be open about mental health issues; and that this is a key factor driving the contemporary wellbeing debate and, with it, understandings of anxiety in law. Several interviewees observed, for example, that networks were forming and conversations taking place about mental health in the legal community, including an openness around anxiety that would be difficult to imagine even ten years ago.
- This places discussion of anxiety and wellbeing of junior lawyers in a **broader social context**. More specifically, one in which, it was acknowledged by interviewees, not only were mental health problems now seen as endemic across societies, reflected in extensive media reporting, new diagnostic categories and **an increased awareness of wellbeing** amongst populations had changed the contours of this debate and the ‘visibility’ of anxiety culturally.

## 6. The Role of University Law Schools and Legal Education and Training

- Underscoring the themes discussed above, as noted, the interviews raise difficult questions about the **role of University law schools and providers of vocational education and training** in supporting junior lawyer wellbeing. This issue can be located as what part of what Angus Lyon refers to in his book *A Lawyers Guide to Wellbeing and Managing Stress* (2016, Ark Publishers) as a matter of **‘prehab’**; that is, in seeking to protect against problems before they arise, what happens within law schools is itself interlinked to what may happen later in legal careers; if “rehabilitation provides the setting for recovery ....” “the idea of prehabilitation, or ‘prehab’ for short, describes a programme of training leading to the development of healthy practices to enhance wellbeing...” (Lyon 2016, p 17).
- Reflecting back their own experiences of law school, none of the interviewees said they had encountered dedicated sessions on the topic of wellbeing and specific discussion of anxiety as part of the law curriculum itself. It was recognised, however, that this position may have changed in recent years as more UK law schools are actively engaging with the wellbeing agenda and addressing issues around student anxiety. In recognizing that that not all lawyers go to university, and that it is important to address needs of those who enter law through a different route, this links to **three more specific issues** that, the interviews suggest, are important but to date neglected elements of contemporary discussion of the wellbeing of junior lawyers. These are:
- First, the need to locate a discussion of anxiety amongst junior lawyers, and in particular trainees, within the context of what has become a growing concern about the **wellbeing and mental health of UK university students** generally; and in relation to which an array of recent sector wide initiatives (such as the Universities UK ‘Step Change’ framework, the 2018 Mental Health Charter and 2018 ‘Student Mental Health Research Project’ (SMARTEN)) are developing a ‘whole university approach’ towards wellbeing and the promotion of good mental health; and

See for example Universities UK 2018; *#stepchange: Mental Health in Higher education*, available at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/stepchange> :  
<https://www.smarten.org.uk/students.html> :  
<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.html>
- Second, how these debates about junior lawyers, on closer examination, raise questions about the **role and nature of the law curriculum** in supporting wellbeing and the desirability (or otherwise) of curriculum reforms that might integrate wellbeing issues, including in relation to anxiety, as part of **core**

**competency requirements.** This is a complex debate and one that is particularly advanced in Australian legal education. There are clear signs, however, it is also becoming a topic of increasing concern within the UK (see for example R.Field, J.Duffy and C.James (eds) *Promoting Law Student and Lawyer Well-being in Australia and Beyond* London Routledge 2016). This involves questions about **the potential role of law schools** that go beyond the university provision of counselling, mentoring and personal tutor support and embrace concerns about how, more precisely, questions about mental health, including issues of anxiety, can be better integrated into the law-school curriculum (in the provision, for example of clinical components, via discussion of ethical issues, approaches to dispute resolution, recognition of the value of diverse styles of communication and the broader interconnections between law and emotion, as above).

- Third, the research draws attention to what interviewees routinely described as a **culture of intense competition** in the process of becoming a lawyer, not just in the process of qualification itself (for example, around securing a training contract) but also within the context of law schools and legal education. This was seen as linking directly to the **marketisation of Higher Education** and, in particular, the **costs of training** in ways that added to the pressures on law students by fostering a culture marked by considerable subjective anxieties, as discussed above. Several interviewees described what was, in effect, a **vortex of forces** serving to heighten pressures on university students generally but perhaps especially, it was suggested, those on vocational courses such as law.
  - The factors underscoring why so many law students appear to be experiencing problems in relation to anxiety were seen as multiple, encompassing an array of issues about, for example; funding, financial stress e.g. around repaying Legal Practice Course (LPC) loans and uncertainty around future careers; the nature of the law curriculum and its assessment processes, as above; the competitive cultures of law schools; the cohort attributes of those who study law; social issues relating to the transition to university, including difficulties around relocation and concerns around friendship/peer relationships; and wider structural, economic and cultural shifts impacting on the experiences of students.
- This **supports calls by the JLD** and others for a minimum salary and the need to address the issue of student debt (with interviewees expressing no clear view as to whether the proposed two-stage SQE (Solicitors Qualifying Exam) will

address these concerns). Two interviewees in particular raised questions about the role of law schools in (a) highlighting how a focus on **intrinsic motivation** is linked to positive wellbeing and (b) whether, as part of an **ethical obligation** to their law students, and as part of developing this wellbeing agenda, law schools and providers of legal education and training more generally should **challenge the dominant employability narrative** within universities and send more **realistic messages about the nature of the legal labour market** awaiting law students.

## 7. The Interconnections Between Wellbeing and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Agendas in Law: The Example of Gender

- In looking to understandings of anxiety in the legal community this study supports the argument made within wider legal professions research that specific life experiences and choices pertaining to legal careers can be mediated in complex ways by the attributes of the individual and the **intersections** of, for example, background and **social class, gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality and health**. Two interviewees made explicit reference in discussion of the links between inclusion/diversity and wellbeing of the specificity of their own experiences as BAME lawyers. One noted how lawyers with disabilities could face particular difficulties in workplaces where ableism is endemic.
- With regard to gender, as noted above, it is significant in this context that 11 of the 12 interviews for this study were female [the 2017 JLD Survey of 214 responses, meanwhile, also reported 72.9% female respondents, 26.6 % male with 0.5 % preferring not to say: the 2018 Survey similarly reported, of 959 respondents, 73.1% female and 25.7 % male].
- With regard to the intersections discussed above, and in considering the life experiences described in the interviews, this maps to what can be seen as, on closer examination, some specific but neglected **gendered dimensions** of these debates about wellbeing in the contemporary legal profession and questions therein about:
  - (a) Why it should be the case that it is **women lawyers**, in particular, who would appear more willing than men to engage in research projects and, more generally, to ‘lead’ on this topic and to speak out about experiences of problems in the course of their careers (although this is not to claim men are not actively engaged in leading on this agenda); and

- (b) Related to this, the issue of **the relative reluctance of men**, especially senior men, to seek help themselves at times of personal difficulty (noting in this regard the 2017 JLD Survey finding that none of the male respondents who had suffered from a mental health problem had told their employer); and
- (c) How, if it is indeed the case that this is a wellbeing agenda in law being driven to a greater degree by women lawyers rather than men, what the consequences of this may be for attempts to **engage men in gender equality and wellbeing projects** generally and to facilitate/encourage men to exhibit behaviour that aligns with, rather than runs counter to, the delivery of the ‘good wellbeing’ message and provide role models.

Seeing workplaces as a ‘value-chain’, those in leadership positions who are experiencing poor wellbeing are likely to adversely impact the wellbeing of those ‘further down’ the value chain. In this regard, recent men’s health and masculinities research suggests men who endorse dominant norms of masculinity may be more likely than other men to experience particular health risks and less likely to engage in help-seeking behaviour in ways that are associated with conformity to these norms of masculinity (noting here in relation to recent work on anxiety in the legal profession, for example, the narrative of ‘male burnout’)

- Within several of the interviews specific examples were provided of personal experiences of anxiety that were linked to **equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** issues in the legal profession and, in particular, concerns around questions of fairness, discrimination and equality in the law. In some interviews specific examples were given of sexual harassment and of the gendered nature of workplace cultures set in the context of a discussion of the pervasive nature of sexist attitudes in the contemporary legal profession. Interviewees were aware, for example, of recent media reporting of male lawyers who had harassed junior lawyers and, although it was felt to be far less common than in the recent past, examples were provided of what were still seen as corrosive and uncivil workplace cultures in particular firms/departments.

## 8. Reframing Poor Wellbeing and Anxiety as a ‘Force for Change’ in the Legal Profession: Learning from Anxiety?

- Underscoring the interviews, on closer examination, is what can also be characterized as a **positive framing** of these contemporary concerns around

wellbeing and anxiety in law; in relation to which, more specifically, a greater openness around these issues in recent years (exemplified by the Anxiety UK project itself) was positioned as part of developing a **counter narrative to current ways of working in law**. That is, a greater willingness to speak of and engage with issues of anxiety was seen as part of a broader debate about a changing legal profession in which heightened recognition of rates of stress and problems around anxiety and depression could itself be a **“force of change” within law** (see for example Chan, 2014).

- In four interviews, for example, attempts that are being made to develop **new ways of working in law**, and of ‘being a lawyer’, involving a challenge to traditional models of billing, work cultures and organisational structures, were explicitly foregrounded as **wellbeing and quality of life issues**, with associated implications for anxiety in the profession. Interviewees suggested that a growing concern with employee wellbeing has itself become a key part of policy debates taking in the law around, for example, attempts to position flexible working as a way of both boosting productivity and improving work-life balance. This was linked to broader concerns around the desirability of law firms **monitoring** the wellbeing of their staff e.g. via surveys, appraisals and undertaking stress and risk assessments.

## 9. ‘It Can’t Just Be About the Individual, it’s a Problem for the Profession as a Whole’

- Finally, concerns were raised regarding what was described across the interviews as a common tendency, within certain iterations of the legal profession’s ‘wellbeing turn’ at least, to **individualise responsibility** for ‘dealing with’ difficulties; doing so in such a way that, in particular, poor wellbeing and problems around anxiety were framed primarily in terms of individual pathology or located solely in a medicalized framework (and to be approached via individual, self-help solutions, for example by engaging in mindfulness or other self-care activities). One result of this, it was suggested, was a cynicism about how seriously the profession was taking problems in this area (the ‘sticking plaster’ approach). In recognising the responsibility of the individual lawyer to attend to their own wellbeing and ‘be responsible’, and noting the ultimate limitations of what law firms could do to address problems in this area given the economic ‘bottom line’, it was nonetheless seen as important within the interviews not to lose sight of the **structures and**

**cultures in law productive of experiences of poor wellbeing in the first place**, as discussed above.

- The effectiveness of individual level action in addressing lifestyle issues, for example, was seen as dependent on how behavioural changes would be supported and seen by the management of law firms. This maps to the findings of the JLD Surveys and, in Australia, the TJMF Guidelines in suggesting that it is only once **a culture of cooperation** between employer and employee has been fostered that specific initiatives may successfully impact on individual wellbeing (see also New Economic Foundation, *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, London NEF). This links to a recognition of the important role and **legal and ethical duties managers and professional bodies** have in helping junior lawyers meet professional requirements, as discussed above e.g. in communicating the importance of ‘down time’ and taking annual leave.
- This supports the argument that the growing concerns around anxiety in the legal profession that we are seeing in these legal wellbeing debates must be set in the context of **broader transitions in the legal profession** resulting from increasing global competition for legal services, economic insecurities and pressures for continuously increased productivity. It further suggests that problems around anxiety and poor wellbeing generally may usefully be **characterised as a ‘wicked problem’** in that proposed solutions – improved work life balance in law firms, for example, reducing stigma, dispelling myths about mental health and anxiety in the workplace, encouraging self-disclosure, talking without fear – may each themselves have unintended consequences for law firms that, in turn, require a re-resolution in a new problem.

## Outputs and Dissemination

*Publications in Print or Preparation* (accepted, contacted and scheduled) incl:

- Monograph: *Wellbeing, Law and Society: Politics, Policy and Practice*, contracted by Cambridge University Press in 2018 (Law in Context Series), paperback and hardback and to be published internationally. Publication by CUP in first print paperback format will significantly impact on potential sales and the book is to be aimed at both an international academic and legal professional audience. This monograph draws on both this Anxiety UK funded research and a recent Leverhulme Trust funded project of wellbeing in law (2018) and the detailed

findings of the Anxiety UK work will form the focus of one chapter of the book.

***A copy of the monograph will be sent to Anxiety UK by post as soon as it is published, and Anxiety UK will be fully acknowledged in this and all other publications and work arising from the project.***

- Article: (to be submitted March 2019): ‘Surviving or Thriving?: Wellbeing and Mental Health in the Legal Community – Making the Connections Between Legal Practice and Law Schools’ to *Legal Studies: the Journal of the Society of Public Teachers of Law* (c. 11, 000 words)
- Article: ‘Fatherhood, Gender and the Making of Professional Identity in Large Law Firms: Bringing Men into the Frame’ (2018) *International Journal of Law in Context* (published paper acknowledging the support of Anxiety UK)  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744552318000162>
- Article: (in progress): ‘Wellbeing, Mental Health and the ‘Unhappy Lawyer’: Rethinking Resilience and Emotional Competence in the Law’ (working title) for submission to the *Journal of Law in Society*
- Article: (in progress) ‘Exploring Anxiety and Wellbeing in the Legal Professions: A Study of Junior Lawyers’ for submission to either the *International Journal of the Legal Profession* or *Modern Law Review*.
- Article: (in progress) ‘Good Intentions and Sticking Plasters: Wellbeing and Mental Health in the UK Legal Professions – On the ‘Wicked Problem’ of Lawyer Wellbeing’, for submission to either *Political Studies* or *Sociology*.
- Book chapter (commissioned): for the book *Wellbeing in a Changing World: The Impact of Technology and innovation on the Legal Profession*, J.Chan and P. Vines (eds) (see dissemination, below). Submission 2019.

Other publications directly related to this project:

- Book Chapter (in progress): Invited contribution to the *International Lawyers in Society Project* (resulting book H.Sommerlad, O.Hammerslev, R.Abel, eds, Hart, Oxford), chapter entitled ‘Men, Masculinities and the Legal Profession: Interrogating the ‘Man’ of Law and Legal Practice Thirty Years On.’

- Book Chapter (submitted): “Rethinking Men, Masculinities and the Legal Academy: Or, Whatever Happened to the ‘Natty Professor?’” in U.Schultz (eds) *Gender and Careers in the Legal Academy* (Oxford, Hart, in press 2019).
- Book Chapter ‘Interrogating Transnational Masculinities, Fatherhood and the Institutions of Men: Rethinking Gender Equity in Global Finance and Large International Law Firms’ (co-written with Helen Longlands), invited contribution to book *The Unsustainable Institutions of Men: Interrogating Transnational Centres, Institutions and Power* Editors: Jeff Hearn, Winifred Poster, Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila (2019)
- Invited Online Article on ‘Lawyer and Law Student Wellbeing’ commissioned by *Legal Cheek*, a major UK site covering issues of interest in the legal professions (forthcoming) : discussions under way as to a podcast recording on the topic.
- Online report: ‘Anxiety and Junior Lawyers’, *Anxious Times* December 2018 edition)

In addition, and as the findings of the project including interview data are being written up, further articles are planned in the legal professional and Higher Education press containing discussions of wellbeing and mental health issues raised by the work (including publications by local law societies). I have previously given interviews to a range of newspapers including the *Times* and *Guardian* regarding the project which have informed articles on wellbeing and mental health in the legal profession.

See for example:

Interview, in Abby Young Powell (2018) ‘The Toxic, Cut Throat: The Work Culture awaiting Junior Lawyers’ *The Guardian* 13 December 2018.

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2018/dec/13/toxic-vile-cut-throat-the-work-culture-awaiting-junior-lawyers>

Interview, in Catherine Baksi (2018) ‘Help us at hand for students struggling with Mental health’ *The Times Brief: Student Law Week* 19 February 2018

<https://www.thetimesbrief.co.uk/users/39765-catherine-baksi/posts/30357-help-is-at-hand-for-students-struggling-with-mental-health>

Lining to my work as a member of the UK *Legal Profession Wellbeing and Mental Health Taskforce*, I have recently (January 2019) been invited to serve as a member of the Advisory Board of the *Mental Health Institute of the Legal Professions*, Spain. This will provide a further opportunity to publicise the work and support of Anxiety UK to an international legal audience.

*Dissemination of Results of Research Taken Place or Planned (e.g. lectures, seminars etc).*

- Forthcoming: Keynote Speaker at the 2019 UK *Future of Legal Education and Training Conference*, London, where I have been asked to address issues of wellbeing and mental health in the legal professions including the questions around anxiety and junior lawyers raised by the Anxiety UK research. This is a major cross-professions event and attracts considerable press and social media attention in law. See speaker announcement: <https://www.legalcheek.com/2018/11/first-speakers-announced-for-future-of-legal-education-and-training-conference-2019> / Also: <https://www.legalcheek.com/conference/>
- November 2019: Invited keynote speaker, paper entitled ‘The (Un)Happy Lawyer: Surviving or Thriving? Wellbeing and Mental Health in the UK Legal Community: Making the Connections Between Legal Practice and the Legal Academy’ at the *Wellbeing in a Changing World: The Impact of Technology and Innovation on the Legal Profession* conference, November 2018, University of New South Wales, Australia [*due to family illness and caring responsibilities unable to attend in person but full submitted paper, with slides, was delivered on my behalf and in absence by another scholar*]
- Forthcoming: Invited keynote speaker at the Committee of Heads of University Law Schools (CHULS)/Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London special workshop on wellbeing in law. CHULS is the organisational body comprising the senior management of all UK University Law Schools. I have been invited to speak about the research to a special meeting of CHULS in 2019 on the research and developments around wellbeing and mental health in the context of UK universities and their law schools, and this will refer to and acknowledge the Anxiety UK project.
- Forthcoming: Paper Presentation, Social and Legal Studies Association Annual Conference, Leeds University 2019
- Forthcoming: Paper Presentation, Society of Legal Scholars Annual Conference, University of Central Lancashire 2019.

- September 2018: Invited keynote speaker at *The Futures of Legal Education and Practice* Conference, Open University, Milton Keynes, 20 September 2018
- September 2018: Paper presentation on the Political Economy of Wellbeing in Law and UK Universities, delivered at the *Research Committee for the Sociology of Law bi-annual meeting*, Lisbon, Portugal 10-13<sup>th</sup> September
- September 2018: delivery of paper ‘Wellbeing in Law: Legal Practice and the Legal Academy – A Picture Not So Different?’ at the annual conference of the Society of Legal Scholars, Queen Mary College, University of London, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September
- May 2018: Invited keynote paper ‘Surviving or Thriving: Wellbeing in the Law’ delivered at the Gendered Globalization of the Legal Professions conference, Geneva, 24- 25 May.
- May 2018: Invited paper ‘Wellbeing in the Legal Community’ delivered at the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, ‘*There’s More to Life...’: Work Life Balance, the Value of the Arts and Wellbeing*’ conference [\*LTRF funded £314.54 (Travel: £161.00: Accommodation £115: Subsistence: £38.54)]
- October 2017: Invited presentation ‘What Do We Know about Mental Health in the Legal Community?’ at the *Making Mental Health Matter: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference and Celebration*, Bethnal Green Town Hall, London, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 [funded].

## Engagement and Collaboration

Engagement and networking with research users has been extensive and ongoing throughout project, including, as noted, via my membership of the UK *Taskforce on Wellbeing and Mental Health in the Legal Professions* spearheaded by Lawcare and the Law Society of England and Wales. The Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society, as noted above, have publicised the Anxiety UK project via their network, as well as other bodies. Whilst no formal collaboration was structured into the project the research questions have thus been framed by, and have benefitted considerably throughout from, an ongoing input through established contacts with key stakeholders and the discussions that have taken place at the wide range of meetings and events detailed below. Being ‘embedded’ in these legal wellbeing debates has meant that outputs detailed above, and in particular the monograph, have the

potential to shape conversations around wellbeing and anxiety not just within the specific context of law in the UK and internationally and more generally with regard to contemporary debates around wellbeing in society.

Selected research and engagement activities *directly relevant to this project* include (all funded by other sources than the AUK award):

October 2018: Launch of the Legal Professions Mindful Business Charter Law Society London, Launch of the SMARTEN Student Mental Health Research Network Kings College, Research Work and Interviews, London:

November 2018: Invited attendee via Wellbeing Taskforce ‘Creating Mentally Healthy Workplaces’ Symposium, London, and Research

May 2018: Legal Professions Wellbeing Taskforce Research Co-Ordination Meeting and Interviews/ Research, London:

April 2018: Legal Professions Wellbeing Taskforce Meeting, Law Society London

March 2018: Health and Wellbeing at Work Annual Meeting, Birmingham

February 2018: Open University/Lawcare Focus Groups on Emotional Competence and Wellbeing in the UK Legal Professions / Research work, London

Discussion is presently under way with regard to both (a) my role as a national co-ordinator of a research group on wellbeing and mental health in law and (b) the development of a major research conference focused on wellbeing and mental health in the legal professions, with other research meetings bringing together scholars and legal professional from across the sector. *Again, the support of Anxiety UK will be fully acknowledged and badged in all these forthcoming activities.*

## Statement of Expenditure

In the original application the research expenses requested was £888.20. This was supplemented by a subsequent award of £350 to cover unforeseen transcription costs, with my own University Law School contributing a further £150 for support. All receipts have or are been processed for claim via the research account, broken down into category spend as appropriate (e.g. travel, accommodation). I hope that, with the total award of £1238.30 from Anxiety UK, this is an award that has provided real *value for money* and produced significant insights and outputs that have the potential to shape debates and understandings of anxiety in this area.

## Summary

This project has sought to advance a richer and more nuanced understanding of anxiety within a professional community in which particular problems have been identified, doing so in ways that will produce potential benefits for diverse research users, including charities, professional and commercial bodies and the academy. Set against the original proposal submitted to Anxiety UK I believe the research has *gone beyond what was originally envisaged* in terms of scope, engagement, range of outputs and depth of interviews. The research has produced a set of discrete findings that suggest pressures and concerns relating to experiences of anxiety are shaped not only by stage of life and career of junior lawyers but also the understandings of legal professionalism that shape the distinctive habitus in which these lawyers work. Looking to the discussion of core findings and key themes arising, detailed above, the project has produced knowledge that has the potential to assist the provision of high quality, accessible, innovative services within the professional and educational context of law.

*The support of Anxiety UK will be acknowledged in all publications, dissemination activity and other outputs arising from the research which seeks to further enhance Anxiety UK as the leading authority on anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression.*

Professor Richard Collier, Newcastle Upon Tyne, March 2019

END

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