



How are you –
really?
Managing stress
in the legal sector

LawCare
Supporting the Legal Community

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Managing stress in the legal sector

Everyone feels stressed sometimes, and we all handle pressure differently. Some stress can be helpful, keeping us motivated. But if stress lasts too long or becomes too much, it can be overwhelming and affect both physical and mental health. Prolonged or intense stress can lead to more serious health issues, including anxiety, depression, and burnout.

Stress is one of the most common reasons people reach out to LawCare for support. Many people working and studying in the legal sector are hardworking perfectionists, which can make them particularly vulnerable to stress. The pressure, long hours, and high expectations can take a toll.

Stress often creeps up unnoticed, but here are some common warning signs:

- Sleep problems – Worries about work can lead to restless nights, making it harder to focus and perform well the next day.
- Physical symptoms – Stress can cause headaches, muscle tension, skin issues, digestive problems, or frequent colds.
- Unhealthy coping habits – Some people turn to alcohol, drugs, or excessive caffeine to manage stress.
- Changes in eating habits – Comfort eating or skipping meals altogether can be a sign of stress.
- Mood swings – Irritability, frustration, or sudden emotional shifts can occur, sometimes leading to conflicts with others.
- Panic attacks – These may happen suddenly, with symptoms like nausea, breathlessness, shaking, sweating, or feeling detached from reality.

People put off asking for help with stress because they worry it makes them look weak. But ignoring stress won't make it disappear. The sooner you deal with it, the better.

Managing stress: practical steps

If you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed, try these simple steps:

- ✓ Spot your stress triggers – Keep a diary to notice patterns and causes.
- ✓ Prioritise your workload – Learn to say no and break work down into manageable steps.
- ✓ Take breaks – Use your holiday entitlement, take proper lunch breaks, and step away from your desk.
- ✓ Talk about it – Speak to a colleague, mentor, or mental health first aider.
- ✓ Look after yourself – Eat well, exercise, and avoid relying on alcohol to cope.
- ✓ Get support early – Don't wait until stress gets too much. You don't have to deal with stress on your own.

LawCare is here to help

When you contact LawCare — whether via **our helpline, email, or live online chat** — you're speaking with someone who has first-hand experience of working in the legal sector. Someone who understands the pressures. Someone who knows what it's like.

"Every day, we hear from people across the UK legal sector about their experiences and challenges. Whether your issue is personal or professional, we're here to listen and support you. 2024 was our busiest year ever, with over 1,000 conversations taking place."
— Andy Darnton, LawCare's Support & Volunteer Coordinator

We know that **a conversation can change everything**. People often tell us that finally speaking to someone who understands brings a great sense of relief. One person shared:

"I am more confident seeking support to meet my work needs and I am grateful that I was able to receive support from LawCare — it has really helped change my life for the better, and I can continue working in the career that I love."

For over 25 years, we've been supporting the legal sector — including solicitors, barristers, judges, paralegals, legal executives, patent agents, costs lawyers, clerks, and their families.


Get in touch using our online chat

At LawCare, we know that talking on the phone isn't for everyone, especially when it comes to personal or sensitive topics. That's why we offer live online chat as an easy alternative. If you find it easier to type instead of talk, feel nervous about calling, or just want a more private way to get in touch, our online chat is here for you.

In 2024, demand for our live online chat surged by 35%, with many people telling us they wouldn't have reached out otherwise. It's a quick, convenient, and confidential way to get support in real time without the pressure of speaking out loud. We provide the same level of care and support via online chat as we do on our helpline. You'll still be connected with a real person with first-hand experience of law — no bots, just genuine support from someone who understands the challenges of the legal sector and is ready to listen.

 **Free, impartial and confidential helpline:** 0800 279 6888

 **Online chat and email support**

 **One-to-one peer support:** We can match you with a trained peer supporter who understands your challenges and can support you over weeks or months.

No judgement. Just someone who listens. Visit www.lawcare.org.uk to learn more.

