

PRESENTED BY

A REFRESHING APPROACH
REALM
TO LEGAL RECRUITMENT



2023

**WELLBEING
IN THE LAW**

INTRODUCTION

Here at Realm Recruit, we are passionate about using our position as an advisor to members of the legal profession, not only to help ensure that lawyers are matched with the right law firms, but that law firms are doing what they need to do to attract and retain the talent they want.

Our annual survey provides lawyers with a voice on issues including equality, flexibility and remuneration so that we can advocate on their behalf and champion positive change across the legal sector. Wellbeing at work also formed a core strand of our 2022 survey.

Unfortunately, in the legal profession, traditionally characterised by punishing workloads and long hours, stress and poor mental health are common. In the last few years, as mental health has become an important issue more generally within society, law firms have invested more than ever in this area and have taken steps to look after their employees. Despite this progress, our research revealed that mental health issues remain prevalent.

Sadly, our research showed that 62% of legal professionals had experienced burnout in the last 12 months. In addition, in our experience as recruiters, we are seeing burnout and stress being mentioned much more commonly as push factors by those seeking new employment.

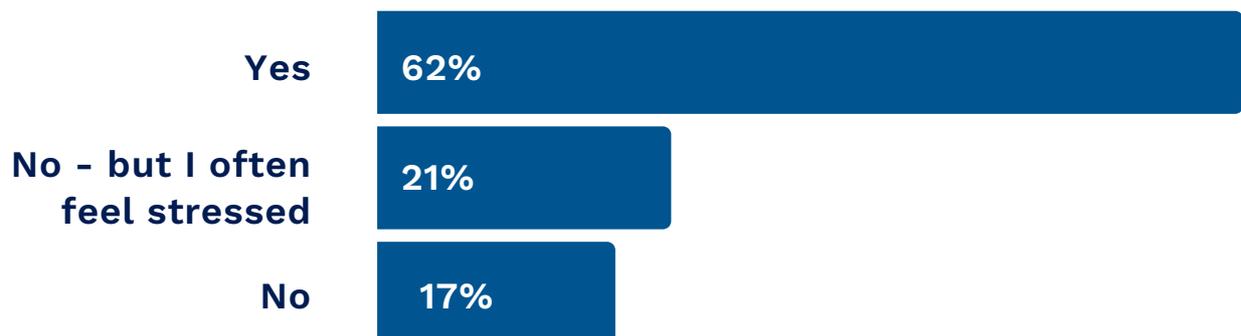
Looking after employee wellbeing has a positive impact on engagement, satisfaction, productivity and crucially, retention. But what are law firms doing in this area and how can employers go further? We'll explore each of these questions in the pages ahead.

BURNOUT AND STRESS

In comparison to stress, which normally happens in short bursts, burnout is a chronic and longer lasting response to stressful situations. Burnout can cause sufferers to feel tired, unenthused and short-tempered; they might also find it difficult to complete tasks they would usually find easy.

62% of lawyers said they have experienced burnout as a result of their work, with a further 21% saying they often feel stressed. This rings true with the fact that lawyers are overworked (9 in 10 lawyers said they'd move to a role that offered a more manageable caseload).

Have you experienced burnout from your work?

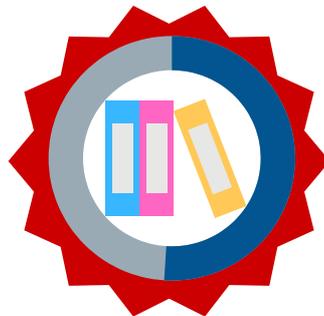


BURNOUT AND STRESS

Of those who said they struggled with burnout or stress, unmanageable caseloads (56%) and a lack of work/life balance (44%) were the most common primary stressors, followed by bad management (39%) and poor or unfair pay (a concern likely to be exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis) (31.8%).

What are your primary stressors at work?

Unmanageable caseload



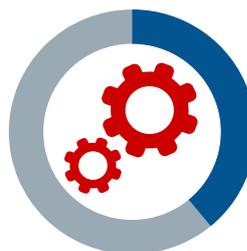
57%

Lack of work/life balance



42%

Bad management



39%

Poor or unfair pay



32%

Lack of flexibility



27%

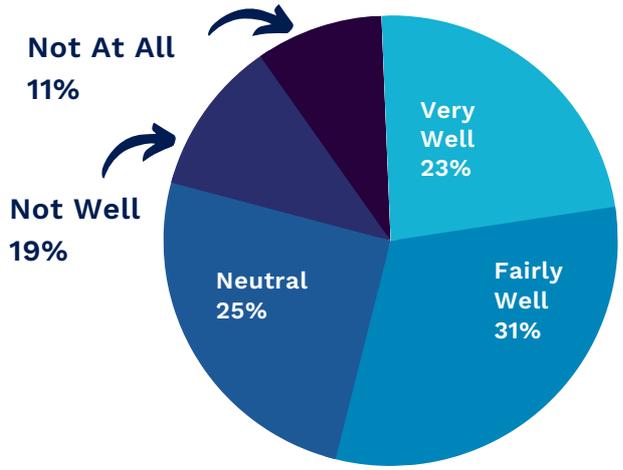
Difficult commute



19%

HOW FIRMS ARE ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES

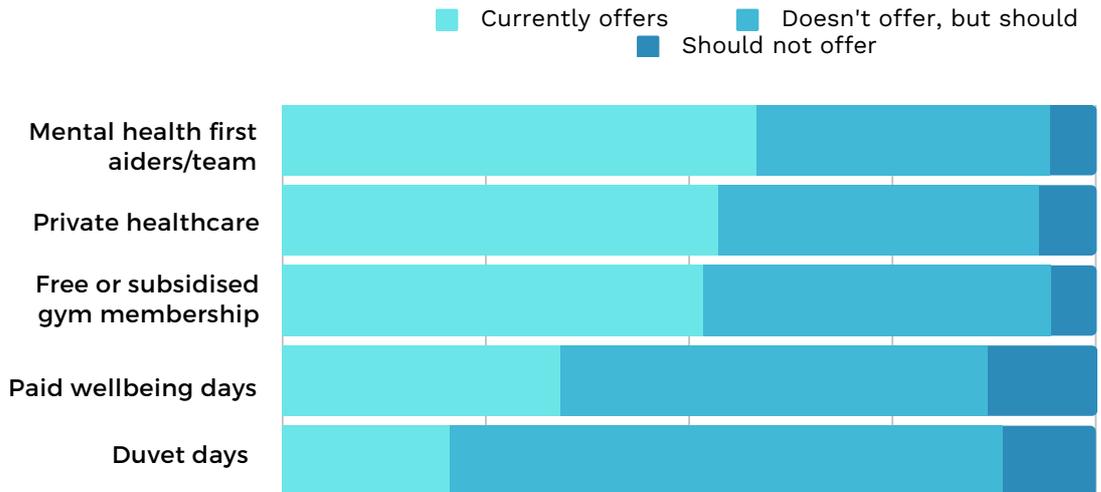
How well do you feel your employer looks after your mental health/wellbeing



Thankfully, firms do appear to be working harder on this front, with more people than last year saying that their employer contributes fairly well or very well to their health or wellbeing; 55% said so, compared to 40% in 2021.

We also asked lawyers about the wellbeing measures offered by their employers.

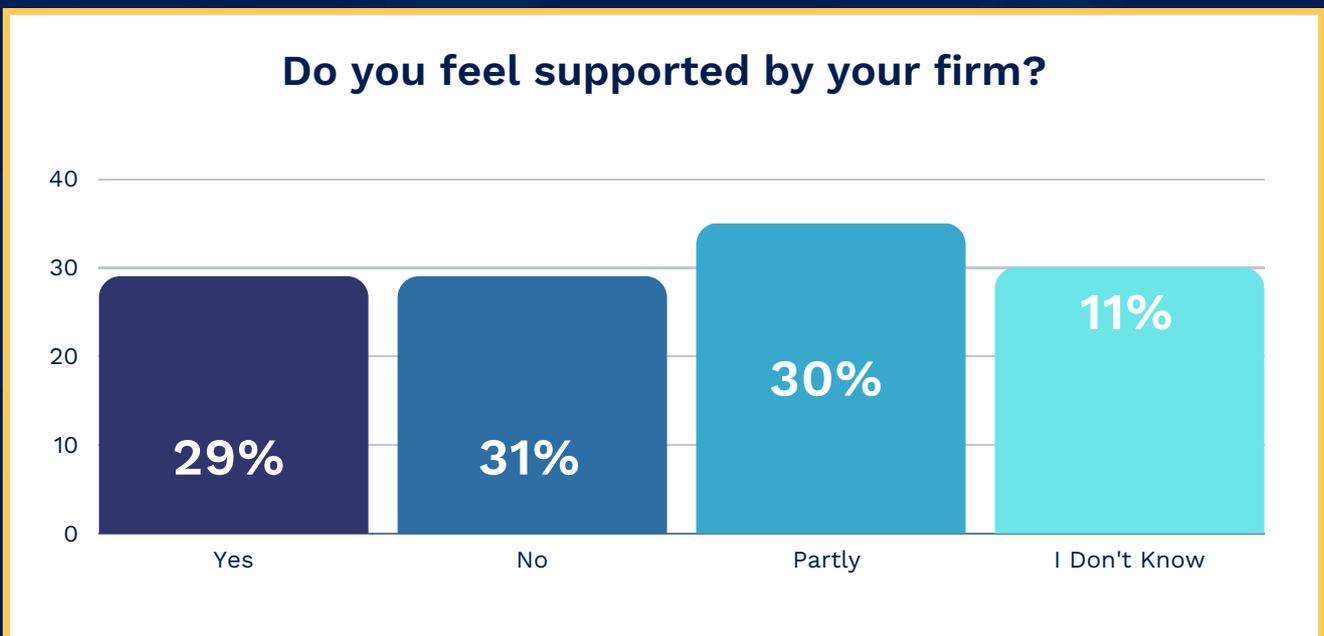
Which if any of the following wellbeing measures does your employer currently offer?



Mental health first aiders, free or subsidised access to a counsellor and private healthcare, were the most common wellbeing-related benefits. More than two-thirds said they thought their firm should offer paid wellbeing days, with 53% saying their firm should offer free or subsidised gym membership.

HOW FIRMS ARE ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES

Despite these measures, only 28% of lawyers said they feel supported by their firm, with a further 30% saying they felt partly supported and 31% saying they didn't feel supported.



CONCLUSION

There's undoubtedly a correlation between good mental health and employee satisfaction, engagement and productivity, so it makes good business sense for law firms to look after the mental health of their staff. While things appear to be moving in a positive direction, the results of our survey indicate that there is still work to do in this area.

Things like free fruit and wellbeing champions are steps in the right direction, but there are certainly more impactful things law firms can do to improve in this area.

In our state-of-the-market report, workload emerged as a key pain point for lawyers, with 91% saying a more manageable caseload would be a top priority for them if they were to enter the jobs market. Law firms that don't overburden their lawyers with unrealistic caseloads are not only likelier to have happier employees but are more likely to retain those individuals who might otherwise have felt they had no option but to leave.

Having control over when and where you work can also have a positive impact on your wellbeing. While flexible working is no longer the top priority for lawyers looking to move, according to our research, it's still important to 80% of lawyers, with 89% saying it helps them achieve a better work-life balance and 79% saying it makes a workplace more inclusive, both of which are likely to have an effect on job satisfaction and, consequently, wellbeing.

By fostering a supportive, open and flexible culture, providing lawyers with a realistic workload and ensuring they pay their employees fairly, law firms will be able to more tangibly affect employee wellbeing and satisfaction. Not only will this help to attract and appeal to the very best talent, but will ultimately have a positive commercial impact.

If you have any questions about the contents of this report, or if you'd like tailored advice on salaries, how to improve your employer brand or attraction and retention strategies from a wellbeing perspective, Realm Recruit's specialist team are ready to help.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us on 03300 245 606 or email hello@realmrecruit.com

ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM BURNOUT OR POOR MENTAL HEALTH?

If you're finding things tough at the moment, it's really important you don't struggle alone. Reaching out to someone you trust, whether it's a colleague, friend or family member to let them know how you feel.

If you don't feel comfortable opening up to someone you know, there are charities and organizations that can help.

LawCare offers free, confidential, emotional support to anyone working in the law. You can call their helpline on 0800 279 6888, email support@lawcare.org.uk or go to www.lawcare.org.uk.



A REFRESHING APPROACH

REALM

TO LEGAL RECRUITMENT



03300 245 606



HELLO@REALMRECRUIT.COM



WWW.REALMRECRUIT.COM

