

Participant Information Sheet

Investigating lawyers' wellbeing as perceived by leaders, managers and human resource professionals within legal workplaces

You are being invited to take part in an interview as part of a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the project is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Should you wish to take part, you should also download a copy of this information sheet so that you can refer back to it. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please contact the lead researcher Dr Emma Jones (emma.j.jones@sheffield.ac.uk). Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

This research project builds on the project team's existing research into mental wellbeing in the legal profession. The findings of this earlier research were used to develop the [Fit for Law](#) set of free, online educational materials with the charity LawCare. This current project aims to understand the perceptions of those with leadership, management and/or human resources roles within law firms. The findings of this project will be used to develop a further [Fit for Law](#) course, aimed at providing training and guidance specifically for employers. The findings will also be published in academic papers, other publications and presented at conferences.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because we understand you have either a leadership, management and/or human resources role within a law firm.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign an online consent form but you can still withdraw at any time up to the point at which the interview is transcribed without any consequences to you and you do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the project, please contact Dr Emma Jones on emma.j.jones@sheffield.ac.uk.

Please note that by choosing to participate in this project, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

1. What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to take part in an interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. This will be conducted by a member of the project team. The interview will be conducted online via Google Meet or Microsoft Teams, unless you indicate a strong preference for a face-to-face interview.

The interview will include questions on topics including:

- Your perceptions on the importance of wellbeing and current levels of wellbeing within your workplace/sector.
- The structural and cultural issues within legal workplaces that are either detrimental to wellbeing or foster better wellbeing, with a particular focus on the post-Covid legal landscape and hybrid working.
- Any policies, initiatives and changes within your workplace/sector directly and indirectly related to wellbeing.
- The extent to which you feel supported to deal with wellbeing-related issues and what support or resources could facilitate this.
- Your perceptions on the future development of the legal workplace and the implications for wellbeing within the legal profession.

You do not have to answer any questions which you feel uncomfortable with or share any information about your personal wellbeing.

2. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The focus of this project is on organisational approaches to wellbeing within the legal profession, rather than on the experience of individual lawyers.

However, you may find it distressing to discuss issues relating to wellbeing and mental health if you have experienced, or are experiencing, challenges or vicarious trauma.

Should challenges arise, the charity [LawCare](#) provides a range of online resources to support legal professionals. Its services also include a free helpline on [0800 279 6888](#) open Monday - Friday 9am–5pm and online chat on Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 9am-5pm

24 hour support is also available through the Samaritans, who you can call on the freephone number 116 123 (UK and Republic of Ireland).

3. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute to a greater understanding of wellbeing in the legal profession, including informing the development of a further [Fit for Law](#) course, which will be offered for free to all legal professionals and those working in the legal sector.

4. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

Any information that you share during the course of the project will only be accessible to members of the project team and a third-party transcription service (the Google Meet/Microsoft Teams own transcription tool will be used where available, if unavailable a university-approved transcription service will be used).

You and your individual firm will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications or [Fit for Law](#) materials. If mentioned, personal names and individual firms will be removed at the point of transcription to ensure that no individuals can be identified.

5. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance

of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

6. What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the project?

The project team will have access to the data collected. The project team are Dr Emma Jones of the University of Sheffield, Dr Neil Graffin, Dr Rajvinder Samra and Dr Mathijs Lucassen of The Open University and Niamh Warnock of LawCare.

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed into written form by a third-party transcription service (the Google Meet/Microsoft Team's own transcription tool will be used where available).

Any data and recordings will be stored securely and password-protected where possible. Any data collected will be stored for a period of three years from the launch of the next Fit for Law course.

Information and quotations from the interviews will be used in anonymised form in academic papers, other publications and at conferences.

7. Who is organising and funding the project?

The research is organised by Dr Emma Jones, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Sheffield. This project itself is unfunded, but LawCare are funding the development of the [Fit for Law](#) materials.

8. Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

9. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the School of Law.

10. What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the project or report a concern or incident?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Dr Emma Jones (emma.j.jones@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the School of Law, Dr Richard Kirkham (richard.m.kirkham@sheffield.ac.uk). If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

11. Contact for further information

If you have any other questions about the research project we would be very happy to answer them. Please contact Dr Emma Jones by email on emma.j.jones@sheffield.ac.uk.

Thank you for your time in reading this project information sheet and for your interest in this project.

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