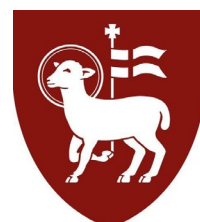
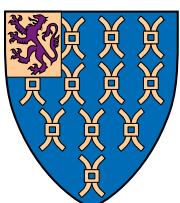




Wellbeing at the Bar

A Resilience Framework Assessment (RFA)
by Positive

April 2015



Wellbeing at the Bar

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Background

The Bar Council is keen to better understand levels of wellbeing across the Bar and to identify what interventions and resources might be put in place to support practising barristers' general wellbeing.

On this basis, The Positive Group were asked by the Bar Council to carry out a study exploring the level of wellbeing across the self-employed Bar and the employed Bar and the aspects impacting on the psychological health and performance of participating barristers.

Positive is a specialist consultancy focusing on the science of sustainable performance through psychological resilience expertise. Through a team of highly qualified experts in psychology, neuroscience and the medical sciences, Positive provides programmes to organisations and teams that deliver improved knowledge and understanding of the drivers of human behaviour, leading to more resilient and higher performing individuals and teams. Positive's work is based on the latest evidence and research, unpacking complex sciences to deliver accessible and practical tools to enable individuals to develop new adaptive patterns of thinking and behaviour.

Methods

A survey (appendix 1) was designed and developed between the Bar Council and The Positive Group. The survey carried evidenced based questions proven to test for levels of psychological health and performance. The questions were reviewed by a working group from the Bar Council, the four Inns of Court and the Institute of Barristers' Clerks to ensure suitability for the profession. Before its launch the survey was tested by a small group of employed and self-employed barristers from different practice areas. To encourage participation and to better disseminate the survey, it was recognized barristers should receive the survey link from a trusted source. Individual and prominent barrister champions were identified within the Bar Council, the four Inns of Court, the Specialist Bar Associations (SBA), the Circuits and the Institute of Barristers' Clerks. These champions were asked to share links to the survey and encourage their members/other barristers to participate. Accepting that by taking this approach some barristers might be approached several times (i.e. those who were a member of an SBA, Inn and Circuit); communications were designed to acknowledge this and to reinforce any message received from another body.

Most of the questions in the survey offered a choice of four answers – 'Not at all, Sometimes, Most of the time, All the time' or 'Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree'. Answers to these questions were grouped into two categories e.g. 'Not at all' was grouped with 'Sometimes' and 'Most of the time' was grouped with 'All the time'. The exception to this was the question 'My current mood is:', for which responses were grouped into 'Low' and 'Average' plus 'Good' plus 'Very Good'. The answers were grouped in this way primarily to make interpretation of the analysis results easier.

Having reduced the answers to each question to two categories as above, pairs of variables could be compared using 2x2 tables. The results presented come from these tables. Associations between pairs of variables were tested using the Chi squared test. The usual convention is to consider that a test shows statistical significance (in other words, that there is an association between pairs of variables rather than the responses to each being randomly distributed) if $p < 0.05$ (in other words, p is less than 1 in 20). Essentially, this means that if 20 statistical tests are carried out, one of these would be expected show the observed association just by chance. In other words, if multiple tests are done,

1 in 20 will yield a Chi squared test that is significant at $p < 0.05$, but some or all of these results will have arisen just by chance and the differences are in fact spurious. This can be managed by changing the level at which differences are considered statistically significant from 0.05 or 1 in 20 to a higher threshold. There are formulae which can be used for this purpose. However, in the results below, the level at which p is considered significant has been set at 0.001. In other words, one would have to do 1000 statistical tests to find one test showing the observed difference between two variables.

To determine whether answers to pairs of questions were associated, for example 'I am able to integrate the things that are most important to my life and work' and 'I have significant control over the content and pace of my work', the original four categories of answers were used, and Spearman rank correlations (Spearman rho) were calculated between the answers to the pairs of variables under study. Again, for the reasons outlined above, the level of statistical significance was set at 0.001.

Executive Summary

2456 responded to the survey, the demographic split of which is detailed within this report; overall respondents broadly reflected the makeup of the Bar.

The key themes arising from the results provide a view of the level of wellbeing at The Bar and are summarised here.

In terms of results reflecting positive responses in relation to factors known to be protective of psychological health and performance, social support both within the work place and out, is of a good level as is the level of engagement within the employed Bar. The deepest level of support within the self-employed Bar is reported as coming from others within Chambers. This is further endorsed by the qualitative results which show a collegiate peer level bonding in relation to a shared experience of the role. Often individuals form close bonds when they share adverse or challenging situations or events – the challenge and emotions associated becoming the relationship glue. In our experience of the legal profession this is often the case although further exploration would be required as this is not immediately evident in the responses.

In terms of the factors supporting intrinsic motivation, perceived work place fairness and the opportunity for learning and challenge were both positively reported, albeit less so by those in the employed Bar. Additionally, the confidence to express one's opinions and having the skills to carry out the role are positively reported. The sense of purpose is reported as very high, a factor which correlates directly to engagement and performance.

Each of the above aspects are supported by the free text responses from those in the self-employed Bar which indicate that the best things about working for the Bar include purpose, a sense of belonging, challenge and variety and a sense of professional standing.

Other aspects are not so encouraging. The impact of engagement on performance is well researched and reported. Disengagement leads to diminished performance and risk to a profession. Whilst 62% of the employed Bar report they are engaged at work this leaves over a 1/3 of respondents disengaged. The self-employed Bar results are far less positive with over half reporting disengagement. Whilst this is representative of the national level of engagement, the results are notable and a cause for concern.

Importantly, those in the employed Bar, within their free text responses, noted the lack of autonomy and reduced sense of status relative to those in the self-employed Bar as being particular challenges. Both status and autonomy - a perceived sense of control, are correlated to psychological health and performance.

Rumination and self-critical perfectionism, whilst not at an unusual level for a professional services profession, are at notable levels and most respondents reported that a loss of a client affected their confidence. Additionally, the qualitative results listed as the most challenging things about working at the Bar, provide a strong sense that the pressure coming from standards expected of oneself and from others for continual excellence and perfection is considerable. Perfectionistic pressure will positively drive performance to a certain extent but at levels such as reported here are indicative of what is termed as unhealthy perfectionism which, not only leads to diminishing returns on performance, is strongly correlated to psychological ill-health and burnout.

For the majority, leadership role models were only sometimes or not at all evident. This result is

significantly negative. The absence of respect in one's leadership indicates an environment of low trust which in turn is highly correlated to disengagement and reduced performance. Compounding the low trust environment is the result in relation to genuine mistakes being seen as opportunities for learning - a similar majority reported that this was only some of the time or not all the case.

Only a minority reported that they were able to integrate both work and the things of priority to them outside of work or had significant control over their work. Free text responses support these results with workload, competing demands between home and work and time pressures being significant challenges. The perception of choice and capacity to be able to integrate priorities in one's life is again highly correlated to psychological health.

In terms of levels of negative stress the main source of pressure is reported as associated with work with only a third reporting that their current levels of stress had no impact on their work. The results indicate that approximately 300 to 350 individuals are experiencing significant levels of distress indicative of emotional exhaustion. This level is close to the current societal levels but remains a significant number of individuals for whom the correct signposting to support is needed. The level of workplace stigma around stress is also reported as high and can be a blocker to individuals seeking help. Preventative practical steps such as those suggested in the identified opportunities within this report, will help to reduce stigma.

Significantly, over half of the respondents report that they do not enjoy refreshing, good quality sleep and only a minority reported that they were able to take breaks throughout the day. The free text responses listed fatigue, lack of time to eat/hunger and lack of breaks as being key factors in mood shift. Again, these factors will play a part in performance reduction and challenges to psychological and physical health.

Financial concerns linked to fee levels, cash flow and gaining work were noted as key to the challenges of working at the self-employed Bar and those at the employed Bar listing lower remuneration as a challenging factor.

Further analyses of the results were carried out to explore response associations. Notably with regard to work pressure, life satisfaction and mood, there was no significant difference in gender, disability or caring responsibility. Those working within the Criminal Bar however, reported higher work pressure, significantly higher rates of low mood and lower levels of life satisfaction. In terms of age, the highest work pressure, lowest mood and life satisfaction were between the years of 35 to 55 – an age bracket generally associated with lower life satisfaction. The number of years in practise showed no clear stepwise changes in any of these variables, although those with more than 20 years practise reported lower incidence of loss of confidence in losing a client, albeit still at a significant level.

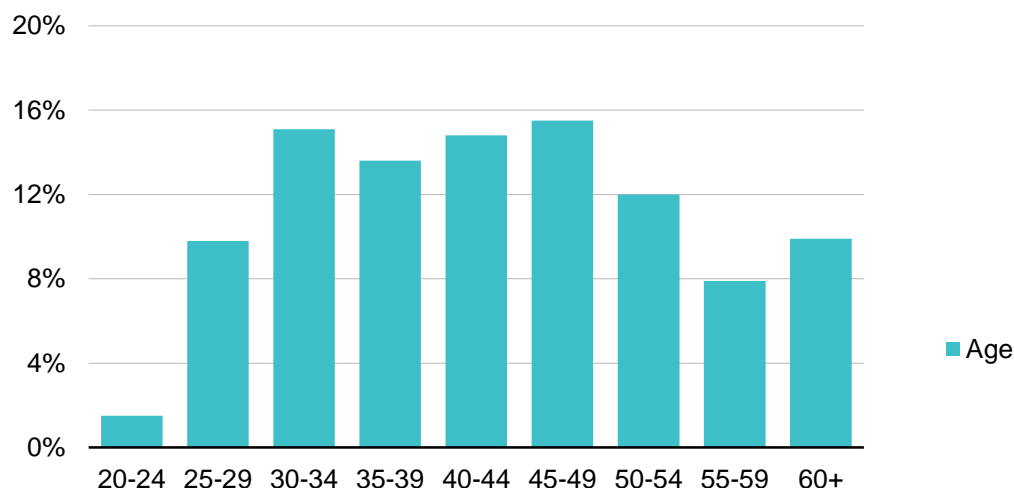
Importantly, whilst very few reported they were formally or informally mentored, those that were, showed lower levels of work place stress and were significantly less likely than others to report their mood as low. This finding, in our opinion, represents a valuable opportunity to leverage and extend this form of support across the profession.

The results from this study provide areas for focus and opportunity to strengthen the protective factors already in play and to mitigate the risk from the less positive outcomes. Opportunities for progression are detailed at the end of this report.

The sample

There were a total of 2456 respondents. Of these, 1004 (41%) were female. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were aged 45 years or less (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Age distribution



Respondents' declared ethnic backgrounds are summarised in Table 1.

Six hundred and twenty respondents (25%) said that they were the primary carer for one or more children under 18 years old. Regarding providing help or support for family members with health problems or disabilities, 480 respondents (20%) said they did this for up to 19 hours weekly, 43 respondents (2%) for 20-49 hours weekly, and 16 respondents (0.7%) provided more than 50 hours weekly of care and/or support. Regarding day-to-day limitations due to illness or disability likely to last a year or more, 189 respondents (8%) said that their activities were limited a little, and 47 (2%) said that they were limited a lot. One hundred and twenty three respondents (5%) endorsed that they had a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act (2010).

Table 1: Respondents Ethnicity

British/English/Welsh/Northern Irish/Scottish	1910	77.8
Any other White	86	3.5
Asian/Asian British	88	2.8
Irish	67	2.7
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	32	1.3
White and Asian	31	1.3
Pakistani	23	0.9

Table 1: Respondents Ethnicity

Any other ethnic background	23	0.9
Chinese	19	0.8
Indian	17	0.7
Any other Mixed/Multiple	17	0.7
Other Asian	15	0.6
Bangladeshi	13	0.5
Caribbean	12	0.5
White and Chinese	9	0.4
No ethnicity declared	10	0.4
White and Black Caribbean	8	0.3
Any other Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	5	0.2
Gypsy/Irish traveller	4	0.2
African	2	0.1
White and Black African	3	0.1
	N	%

Regarding their employment status, 2150 respondents (88%) were self-employed.

Approximately half of the sample had been in practice for 15 years or less, with 886 respondents (36%) having been in practice for 20 years or more (Figure 2).

Respondents' specialties are summarised in Table 2, and their circuits in Table 3.

Figure 2 - Years in Practice

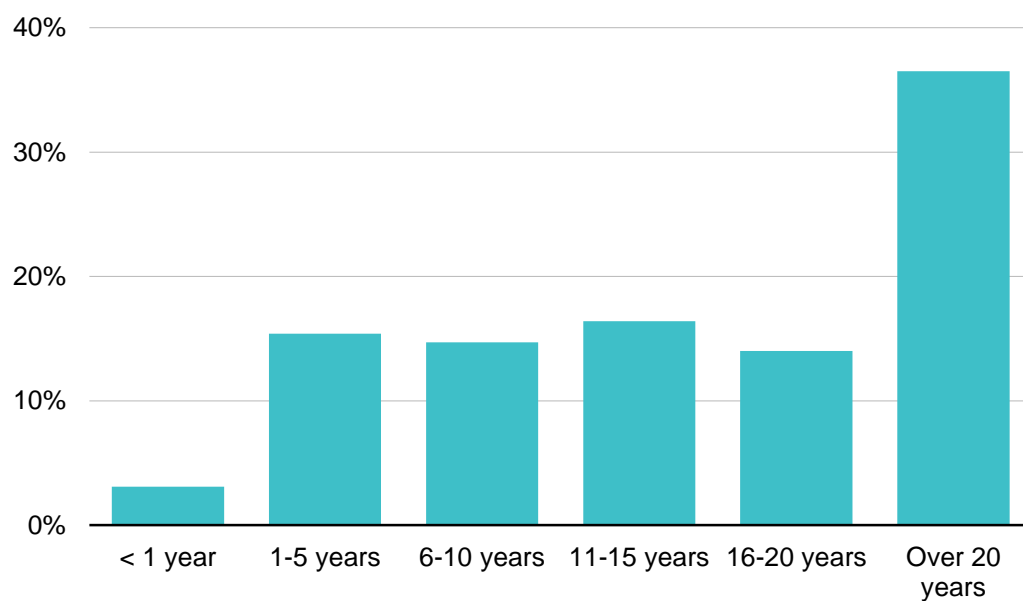


TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' SPECIALTIES

	N	%
Commercial and Chancery	156	6.4
Civil and Personal Injury	126	5.1
More than two other specialties	122	5.0
Commercial	112	4.6
Chancery	97	3.9
Personal injury	91	3.7
Civil	88	3.6
Other single specialty	78	3.2
Criminal	562	22.9
Civil and Commercial	70	2.9
No specialty declared	299	12.2
Family	287	11.7
Other two specialties	269	11.0
Civil and Landlord/Tenant	36	1.5
Civil and Chancery	34	1.4
Other	29	1.2

TABLE 3: RESPONDENTS' CIRCUITS

	N	%
South Eastern	1189	48.4
Northern	248	10.1
Midland	211	8.6
North Eastern	112	4.6
Western	205	8.3
Wales & Chester	54	2.2
European	34	1.4
None	400	16.3

Protective performance results

Individual Resilience

Social Support

Social support is highly protective and crucial for resilience. Within the workplace healthy functioning teams and individuals represent a source of social connection and support and as such represent a vital link to optimal performance. 1778 respondents (73%) endorsed that there was a sense of cooperation and collaboration in their work environment most or all the time. Three quarters of respondents (N=1854) endorsed that they enjoyed good support from their friends and social network most or all the time. Peers and clerks were sources of support most or all the time for 1389 respondents (66%). Support by colleagues, line managers or senior managers received similar endorsement from those in the employed Bar.

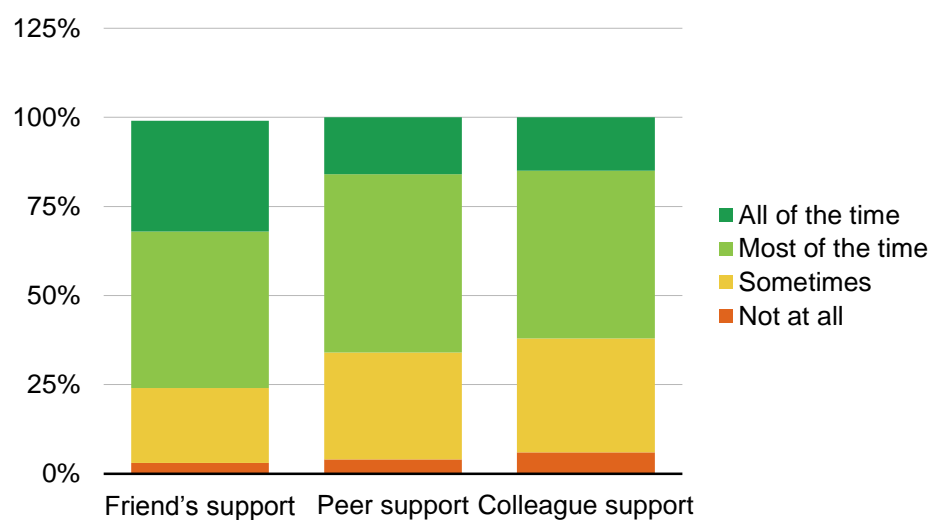
The extent of support endorsed by respondents is listed in Table 4, and sources of support in Table 5 and Figure 3. Regarding mentoring, only 385 respondents (16%) said that they participated in formal or informal mentoring at work.

Table 5 shows not only sources of any support (those given any endorsement by respondents) but also supports that were particularly valued (rated by respondents as 4/5 or 5/5). All respondents cited the Bar Council as a source of support, but only 5% rated this support highly. Apart from the Bar Council, other members of Chambers were not only the most frequently endorsed source of support, but also most frequent among highly rated support sources. Clerks, other barristers and Heads of Chambers were also frequently cited as sources of support, but in comparison with other members of Chambers, fewer of these were rated highly.

TABLE 4: RESPONDENTS' SUPPORTS			
		N	%
I enjoy good support from my friends/social network :	Not at all	74	3%
	Sometimes	528	21%
	Most of the time	1083	44%
	All the time	771	31%
	Total responses	2456	100%
I am supported by my peers and clerks	Not at all	91	4%
	Sometimes	638	30%
	Most of the time	1059	50%
	All the time	330	16%
	Total responses	2118	86%

I am supported by my colleagues/senior managers/line manager	Not at all	18	6%
	Sometimes	92	32%
	Most of the time	134	47%
	All the time	44	15%
	Total responses	288	12%

Figure 3 - Friend, Peer and Colleague Support



	Any support		Support rated 4/5 or 5/5	
	N	%	N	%
Colleagues	157	6	120	5
Line manager	160	6	86	4
Head of Chambers	1201	49	552	23
Other members of Chambers	1332	51	1090	44
Other barristers	1223	50	428	17
Clerks	1315	53	814	32
Inns	1020	41	98	4
Circuit	894	36	93	4
SBA's	844	34	119	5
Bar Council	2456	100	50	2

Cognitive Style

How we think, our cognitive style, impacts our neurochemistry, physiology and behaviour. Our patterns of thinking lead us on to either vulnerable or resilient circuits. How we perceive our level of control, dealing with change and uncertainty and our optimistic or pessimistic view will determine which circuit we enter.

The majority of respondents (N=1409, 57%) said that they tended to focus on things they could change rather than worrying about things they could not influence most or all of the time. However, this also implies that 43% of respondents found themselves worrying much of the time about things they could not influence.

Work Environment

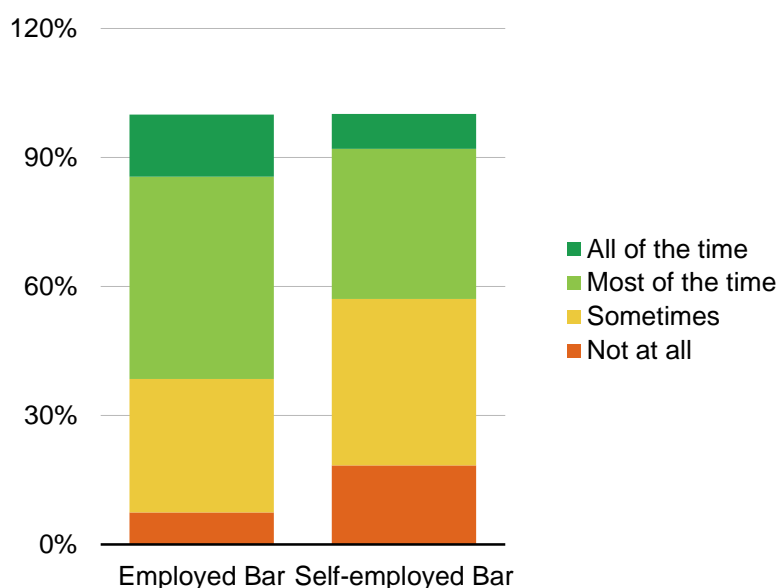
Respondents' appraisals of their work environment are summarised in Table 6.

Work place Advocacy and Engagement

Robust research shows that work place engagement delivers significantly higher performance and innovation. Engagement is a mind-set representing the psychological contract, the positive result of which is discretionary effort.

61% of respondents say they would recommend the employed Bar as a place to work most or all of the time. Whilst this figure is a good level it remains that 39% have responded with only some of the time (31%) or not at all (8%) to this question indicating a significant number of disengaged individuals. This is in contrast to the self-employed Bar where this same question showed significantly less positive results. 43% report that they would recommend the self-employed Bar as a place to work (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: I would recommend the Self-Employed/Employed Bar as a place to work.



Leadership and Culture

Good leadership is strongly associated with several core psychological competencies. Furthermore, it is widely recognised that the work environment, the culture and climate at work and different management styles can optimise, or deplete, an individual's energy, morale, engagement, performance and productivity.

2296 respondents (93%) said that they were mostly or always trusted to deliver, and 1583 respondents (65%) said that the value of their work was understood and recognised most or all the time. Of 2138 respondents who answered the question whether individuals were treated fairly in Chambers, 1741 (81%) endorsed that this applied most or all the time. This same question fared less positively within the employed Bar however with 59% responding as perceiving individuals treated fairly most or all of the time within their organisation.

The majority of respondents said that they had the opportunity to learn within their job/profession (59% employed bar and 70% self-employed Bar).

The results positively support the intrinsic motivational drivers for trust by others in oneself, significance, fairness and learn and challenge.

Appraisal of Work

Respondents' appraisals of their work are summarised in Table 7.

The level of work we have and how the work is structured will impact on our performance.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that being a barrister provided them with a clear sense of purpose or meaning (82% self-employed/75% employed Bar). However, 76% of respondents disagreed that the most important things in life happen at work.

Almost all respondents (N=2358, 94%) said that they understood what was expected of them at work. Most respondents (N=1910, 79%) considered that they had the capacity to carry out their work as expected most or all the time, and 1604 respondents (65%) endorsed that they found their work manageable most or all the time. Most respondents (N=1664, 67%) said that they were comfortable to express their opinions and ideas at work and 89% reported that they had the skills and tools to carry out their role.

The above results positively support the intrinsic motivational drivers for purpose, certainty, control and voice.

Risk factors

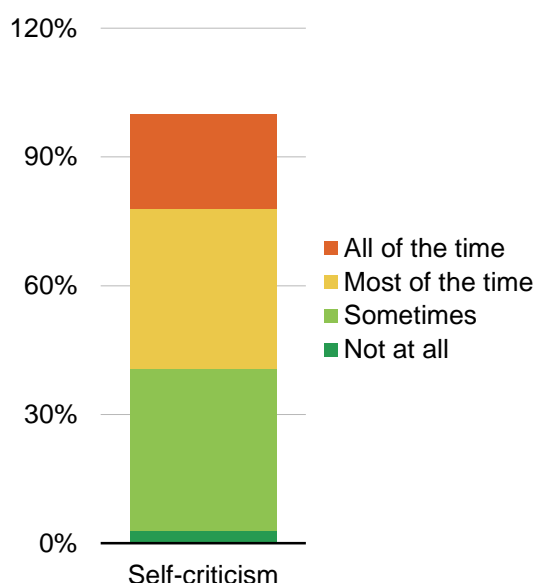
Individual Resilience

Cognitive style

A substantial minority of respondents (N=1029, 42%) endorsed that in times of uncertainty, they never or only sometimes expected things to work out satisfactorily. Most respondents (N=1507, 70%) said that losing a client or case had an impact on their confidence. Only a few respondents answered the question about the effect on their confidence of a work project going badly but of these, the majority said that this would affect their confidence.

Rumination and self-critical perfectionism are very significant factors in psychological health and highly predictive of burnout. A substantial minority (N=811, 33%) said that they had difficulty most or all the time controlling their worrying. A similar proportion of the sample (N=865, 35%) said that they tended to dwell on their mistakes most or all the time, but a majority of respondents (N=1448, 59%) said that they were very critical of themselves most or all the time (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 - 'I tend to be very critical of myself.'



Work Environment

Respondents' appraisals of their work environment are summarised in Table 6.

Leadership and Context

Other aspects of the work environment were not as encouraging. For example, role models were only sometimes or not at all evident. For this question the self-employed Bar figures are 53% only sometimes, 11% not at all and for the employed Bar they are a little less positive still with 42% some of time but 21% not at all. Also, only 597 respondents (24%) said that in their work environment, genuine mistakes were seen as opportunities for learning.

These results are indicative of diminished trust in leadership which will serve to inject a level of threat into the environment which in turn will impact on and inhibit performance. These items highlight,

perhaps more than others, the fact that the answers reflect respondents' appraisals, and may not accurately reflect the actual situation. Nevertheless, such appraisals are valid in that they are likely to influence barristers' resilience and stress more directly than the objective reality of the work environment.

Appraisal of work

Respondents' appraisals of their work are summarised in Table 7.

Regarding the nature and form of their work, respondents were less positive. Thus only 915 respondents (38%) said that they were able to integrate the things that were most important to their lives and their work, only 1058 (43%) endorsed that they had significant control over their work most or all the time, and only 513 (22%) said that their work was predictable most or all the time. Only a minority were able to take breaks throughout the day, but the majority said that they were able to get on with their work uninterrupted.

These factors will impair concentration, cognitive ability and the intrinsic motivational driver for autonomy and choice. Additionally, the perceived lack of control within one's work/life integration is highly correlated to reduced psychological wellbeing.

TABLE 6: RESPONDENTS' APPRAISALS OF THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT

		N	%
Within the environment in which I work, there is generally a sense of cooperation and collaboration	Not at all	105	4%
	Sometimes	573	23%
	Most of the time	1299	53%
	All the time	479	20%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
I see role models amongst those in a leadership capacity at the Bar	Not at all	236	11%
	Sometimes	1135	52%
	Most of the time	655	30%
	All the time	138	6%
	Total Responses	2164	88%
In my work environment, I see role models amongst those in senior management	Not at all	64	22%
	Sometimes	122	42%
	Most of the time	86	29%
	All the time	20	7%
	Total Responses	292	12%

I have significant control over the content and pace of my work :	Not at all	397	16%
	Sometimes	1001	41%
	Most of the time	903	37%
	All the time	155	6%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
At work I spend my time dealing with interruptions rather than getting on with my job :	Not at all	193	8%
	Sometimes	1747	71%
	Most of the time	467	19%
	All the time	49	2%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
I am able to take regular breaks throughout the day :	Not at all	571	23%
	Sometimes	1014	41%
	Most of the time	740	30%
	All the time	131	5%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
I am able to integrate the things that are most important to my life and work :	Not at all	337	14%
	Sometimes	1204	49%
	Most of the time	824	34%
	All the time	91	4%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
I am expected to work as the need arises	Not at all	37	2%
	Sometimes	311	13%
	Most of the time	1127	46%
	All the time	981	40%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
Within the environment in which I work, genuine mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning :	Not at all	798	32%
	Sometimes	1061	43%
	Most of the time	523	21%
	All the time	74	3%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
Within the environment in which I work, I am trusted to deliver :	Not at all	26	1%
	Sometimes	134	5%
	Most of the time	938	38%

	All the time	1358	55%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
Within the environment in which I work, the value of my work is understood and recognised	Not at all	153	6%
	Sometimes	720	29%
	Most of the time	1268	52%
	All the time	315	13%
	Total Responses	2456	100%
I have the opportunity to learn in my job	Not at all	23	7%
	Sometimes	113	36%
	Most of the time	123	39%
	All the time	55	18%
	Total Responses	314	13%
I have the opportunity to learn in my profession	Not at all	34	2%
	Sometimes	601	28%
	Most of the time	924	43%
	All the time	583	27%
	Total Responses	2142	87%
My work is predictable	Not at all	954	40%
	Sometimes	941	39%
	Most of the time	495	21%
	All the time	18	1%
	Total Responses	2408	98%
I have the tools and skills to carry out my role	Not at all	23	1%
	Sometimes	252	10%
	Most of the time	1580	65%
	All the time	580	24%
	Total Responses	2435	99%
Individuals are treated fairly within Chambers	Not at all	125	6%
	Sometimes	272	13%
	Most of the time	1051	49%
	All the time	690	32%
	Total Responses	2138	87%
Individuals are treated fairly within my	Not at all	40	14%

organisation	Sometimes	81	27%
	Most of the time	145	49%
	All the time	30	10%
	Total Responses	296	12%

TABLE 7: RESPONDENTS' APPRAISALS OF THEIR WORK

		N	%
Being a barrister provides me with a clear sense of purpose and meaning	Strongly Disagree	84	4%
	Disagree	320	15%
	Agree	1162	54%
	Strongly Agree	597	28%
	Total responses	2163	88%
My job provides me with a clear sense of purpose and meaning	Strongly Disagree	23	8%
	Disagree	50	17%
	Agree	161	55%
	Strongly Agree	58	20%
	Total responses	292	12%
I have the capacity to carry out my work as expected	Not at all	58	2%
	Sometimes	473	19%
	Most of the time	1627	67%
	All the time	283	12%
	Total responses	2441	99%
At times of change and uncertainty I expect things to work out OK :	Not at all	220	9%
	Sometimes	809	33%
	Most of the time	1274	52%
	All the time	153	6%
	Total responses	2456	100%
I tend to focus on things I can change rather than worry about things that I can't influence :	Not at all	225	9%
	Sometimes	822	33%
	Most of the time	1183	48%
	All the time	226	9%
	Total responses	2456	100%

Losing a client/case has an impact on my confidence	Strongly Disagree	126	6%
	Disagree	512	24%
	Agree	1093	51%
	Strongly Agree	414	19%
	Total responses	2145	87%
A work project going badly has an impact on my confidence	Strongly Disagree	12	4%
	Disagree	56	19%
	Agree	162	56%
	Strongly Agree	61	21%
	Total responses	291	12%
Overall, I find my workload manageable	Not at all	157	6%
	Sometimes	694	28%
	Most of the time	1456	59%
	All the time	148	6%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I understand what is expected of me	Not at all	19	1%
	Sometimes	139	6%
	Most of the time	1365	56%
	All the time	933	38%
	Total responses	2456	100%
Within the environment in which I work, I feel comfortable to express my opinions, thoughts and ideas	Not at all	201	8%
	Sometimes	589	24%
	Most of the time	1063	43%
	All the time	601	24%
	Total responses	2454	100%
I believe the most important things that happen in life involve work	Strongly disagree	496	20%
	Disagree	1382	56%
	Agree	489	20%
	Strongly agree	88	4%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I would recommend the Self-Employed Bar as a place to work	Not at all	398	18%
	Sometimes	836	39%
	Most of the time	747	35%

	All the time	175	8%
	Total responses	2156	88%
I would recommend the Employed Bar as a place to work	Not at all	24	8%
	Sometimes	88	31%
	Most of the time	134	47%
	All the time	41	14%
	Total responses	287	12%

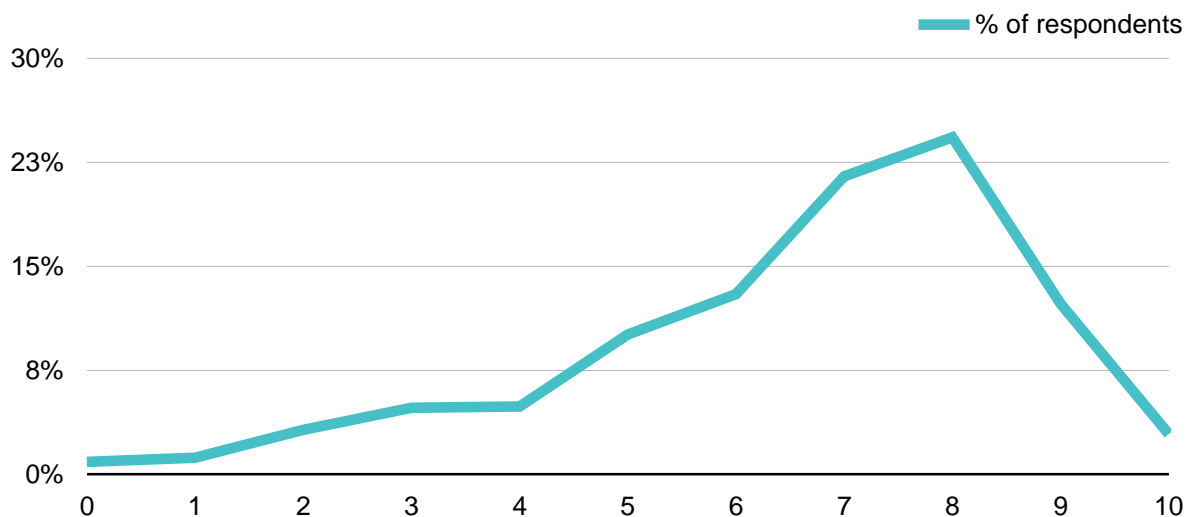
Appraisals of stress and health

Respondents' appraisals of their stress and health

Respondents' health and stress appraisals are summarised in Table 8.

Life Satisfaction: respondents were asked to rate their overall life satisfaction on a 0-10 scale (0=extremely dissatisfied, 10=extremely satisfied). The distribution of scores was skewed towards the 'satisfied' end, with 980 respondents (40%) rating themselves as 8 or above, 1504 (61%) rating themselves as 7 or above, and 254 (10%) as 3 or below (Figure 6).

Figure 6 - Life Satisfaction

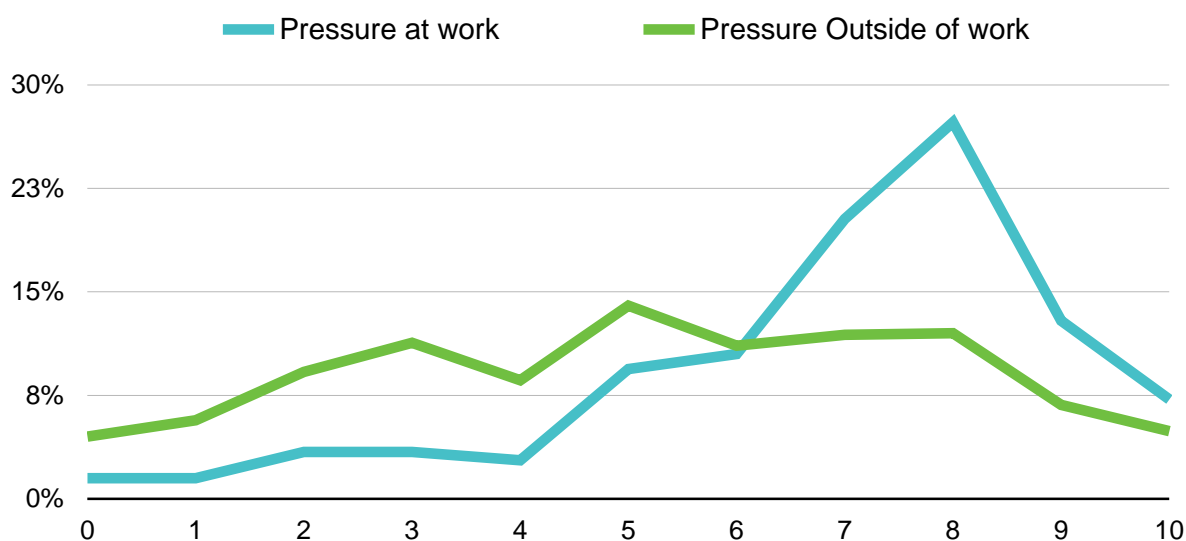


Physical health: most respondents (N=2091, 85%) said that their physical health was good or very good. However, only 929 (37%) said that they took regular exercise most or all the time.

Pressure: respondents were asked to rate the pressure they felt at work and outside work on a scale of 0-10 (0=not at all pressured, 10= extremely pressured). Regarding work pressure, only 549 respondents (22% of the sample) rated themselves at 5 or less; 1152 respondents (47%) rated themselves at 8 or above. This contrasts with respondents' ratings of pressure outside work, where 1856 (53%) of the sample rated themselves at 5 or less, and only 597 (24%) rated themselves as 8 or

above (Figure 7).

Figure 7 - Pressure at Work and Outside of Work



Health: relatively few worried about their health most or all the time (N=442, 18%). However, this also implies that nearly one in five respondents worried about their health much of, or all, the time. A larger minority (N=530, 28%) endorsed that, most or all the time, they experienced unpleasant physical symptoms when stressed. A quarter of the sample (N=582, 24%) said that they felt nervous, anxious or on edge most or all the time. Only 839 (34%) considered that their stress had no impact on their work.

Mood: regarding mood, 303 respondents (12%) rated their mood as 'low', 689 (28%) rated their mood as 'average', and the remaining 1461 (60%) rated their mood as 'good' or 'very good'. One in seven respondents (N=384, 15%) said that they felt down or low in mood most or all the time, and 268 (11%) said they seldom or never had interest or pleasure in doing things. One fifth of respondents (N=409, 21%) said that they experienced shifts in mood throughout the day at work most or all the time.

Sleep: Regarding sleep, 1364 respondents (55%) said they did not enjoy good quality, refreshing sleep more than sometimes.

TABLE 8: RESPONDENTS' APPRAISALS OF THEIR STRESS AND HEALTH			
		N	%
I tend to feel down or low in my spirits :	Not at all	341	14%
	Sometimes	1731	70%
	Most of the time	324	13%
	All the time	60	2%
	Total responses	2456	100%
I experience little interest or pleasure	Not at all	924	38%

in doing things :	Sometimes	1264	51%
	Most of the time	228	9%
	All the time	40	2%
	Total responses	2456	100%
I find it difficult to control or stop worrying :	Not at all	400	16%
	Sometimes	1244	51%
	Most of the time	554	23%
	All the time	257	10%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I tend to dwell on my mistakes :	Not at all	275	11%
	Sometimes	1315	54%
	Most of the time	586	24%
	All the time	279	11%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I tend to feel nervous, anxious or on edge	Not at all	355	14%
	Sometimes	1518	62%
	Most of the time	495	20%
	All the time	87	4%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I tend to be very critical of myself :	Not at all	84	3%
	Sometimes	924	38%
	Most of the time	910	37%
	All the time	538	22%
	Total responses	2456	100%
I experience unpleasant physical symptoms when I am stressed, for example: headache, fatigue, palpitations, upset stomach, achy muscles :	Not at all	641	26%
	Sometimes	1185	48%
	Most of the time	420	17%
	All the time	210	9%
	Total responses	2456	100%
I worry about my health :	Not at all	545	22%
	Sometimes	1469	60%
	Most of the time	334	14%
	All the time	108	4%

	Total responses	2456	100%
I have the opportunity to exercise regularly :	Not at all	481	20%
	Sometimes	1046	43%
	Most of the time	722	29%
	All the time	207	8%
	Total responses	2456	100%
In general, I would describe my physical health as:	Very poor	21	1%
	Poor	344	14%
	Good	1525	62%
	Very good	566	23%
	Total responses	2456	100%
My current level of stress has a negative impact on my performance at work	Not at all	839	34%
	Sometimes	1339	55%
	Most of the time	217	9%
	All the time	60	2%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I enjoy good quality, refreshing sleep	Not at all	402	16%
	Sometimes	962	39%
	Most of the time	956	39%
	All the time	135	5%
	Total responses	2455	100%
I feel that if I do show signs of stress at work it indicates weakness	Strongly Disagree	162	7%
	Disagree	747	30%
	Agree	1122	46%
	Strongly Agree	423	17%
	Total responses	2454	100%
I experience shifts in my mood throughout the day at work	Not at all	336	14%
	Sometimes	1593	66%
	Most of the time	409	17%
	All the time	86	4%
	Total responses	2424	99%

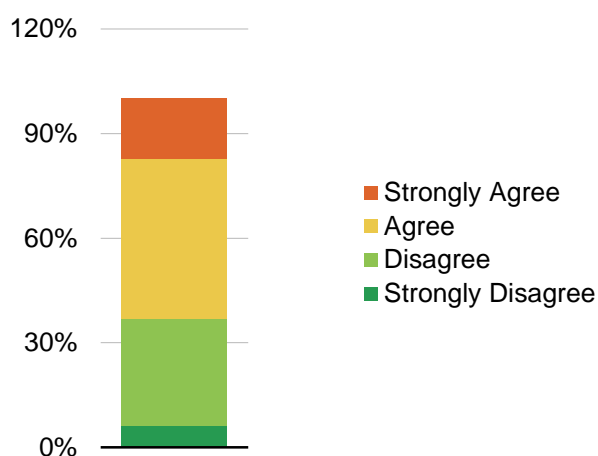
Stigma

We all need a level of stress to motivate and energise us for optimal performance. Without it we become bored and lack stimulation. We are designed to deal with short-term levels of heightened stress and our resilience is measured by how we cope, learn and recover from these times. If acute periods of stress continue and become chronic our health and performance will be negatively impacted as will our impact on others. Even a small shift in an individual's psychological health will have an outweighed effect on their productivity, and should they continue to work will place risk into the business, otherwise known as presenteeism.

Stigma around stress in the work place has a profound impact on individuals who not only feel unable to speak up but are then more likely to get stressed about being stressed. This cumulative effect represents risk to health, performance and reputation.

The majority of respondents (N=1545, 63%) agreed that showing signs of stress at work indicated personal weakness. This level of stigma is significant and will impact on the individual dealing and coping with stress at work and in turn will add to the pressure they experience.

Figure 8 - 'Showing Signs of Stress at Work Indicates Weakness'



Qualitative Results

Questions which provided free text options have been analysed for emergent key themes.

Q: For me the best thing about working at the Bar is ...

- **Autonomy** - respondents reported the sense of autonomy, control, independence, choice, control and flexibility in being self-employed
- **Purpose and meaning** – the text demonstrated the respondents sense of the importance of their work and advocacy, helping to make a difference, being 'instrumental in delivering justice' contributing to fairness, the satisfaction of gaining a good result, the sense of responsibility, 'doing something that matters' which is 'capable of being life changing at times' and a sense of worth

- Belonging and Connection - respondents reported the sense of camaraderie and collegiate environment with colleagues and being connected through shared experience of the role
- Learn and Challenge - reports of the value of accomplishment, learning, pride, achievement, variety, challenge and intellectual challenge
- Remuneration – the potential level of remuneration was reported although we would suggest this be read in conjunction with the challenges around fees below.
- Status –the sense of professional reputation, respect and pride

From the analysis of comments there is reported from many a sense that what was valued and good, as above, has changed/is changing for less good - ‘the positives are becoming fewer and fewer’.

Q: What is the most challenging thing about working at the Bar?

- Capacity in relation to working hours – words used by many are; unsociable; long; continual time pressure and challenges on time management leading often to a lack of time for preparation and a constant ‘battle’ of deadlines and volume of work and the pressure of late/last minute instructions and changes
- Work/life integration - a sense of juggling; always being on call and family life pushed to the margins
- Control and Certainty – aspects reported by respondents under this factor are competing demands from various sources; unrealistic client demands and expectations; lack of control over increasing workload; unpredictability across work/pay/one’s future/demands on time and workflow
- Expectations (self and from others) – respondents reported the pressure associated with a constant expectation of excellence; always being on show; the pressure of getting it wrong alongside the requirement of always getting it right; having one’s judgement continually tested; a sense of self-doubt, continually striving to do the best – ‘you can never have an off day’ with ‘the pressure to perform 100%, 100% of the time alongside ‘the great weight of responsibility’, managing difficult and complex case; the intellectual demands and keeping abreast of the law
- Financial – linked to this the repeated aspects reported were, managing aged debt; being paid regularly; cash flow; financial uncertainty & insecurity; fluctuating pay and forecasting the future; reducing remuneration; finding work; risk of less work/winning work; earnings; finances; inability to control one’s own income and work; the worry associated with paying bills and the ‘feast and famine phenomena’
- Support – respondents reported the challenges and lack of support of being on your own/self-employed and building a sustainable practice; the lack of recognition/appreciation; loneliness; lack of support to cope with the distressing aftermath and/or during difficult cases :-‘dealing with horrendous things without emotional support or counselling’ and the sense of insecurity associated with coping with finances, work/life integration, finding work and the workload

- Results – bad results/day in court was cited by many
- Difficult/aggressive barristers and judges were listed as challenges
- External perception of the profession – several respondents reported the sense of the profession being devalued in the eyes of the public and government/ministers

Q: What's the most challenging thing about being an employed barrister?

- Work/life integration – as with the self-employed Bar respondents here reported the challenges with balancing their workload with life outside work, numerous clients, deadlines, unrealistic expectations and performance targets
- Status and Belonging – many respondents reported the challenge with the attitude of the self-employed Bar towards the employed Bar - 'second class citizen'/'failed at the self-employed Bar' and as a result feeling remote from colleagues at the self-employed Bar and/or not feeling part of the Bar with less others to discuss legal problems with
- Organisational Leadership – specific to the employed Bar were the reports of unsupportive management who were either non-legally trained, had a lack of experience or lapsed experience; the lack of understanding of the role and skills; ;
- Autonomy and Control: respondents reported the challenge of having to adjust to, or simply having a boss/manager; dealing with continual managerial change; their perceptions of the inflexibility of the organisations demands; lack of autonomy/freedom; the lack of control over one's work,
- Work and workplace environment – many reported the constant interruptions of the office environment and the limited opportunities for progression with less variety over the work and the lack of career structure
- Leading – several noted the challenges of managing others
- Remuneration – this was reported as lower

Q: In my experience, the events that trigger mood shifts are:

- Capacity – the following aspects relating to this factor : managing competing demands and deadlines, too much work/too little work, excessive emails, shifts in levels of work, not enough preparation time, time pressures, last minute demands/unpredicted developments in cases/unexpected events, sudden changes to work, unexpected work & last minute diary changes, overwhelm in relation to workload/additional tasks, urgent deadlines and interruptions
- Expectations – the need to get it right/the fear of getting it wrong, not having performed to the expected standards (self/others); not being as good as others think I am/being up against someone brighter than me, not knowing the answer, making a mistake, something going

wrong; being daunted by complexity/difficult stressful case; being out of one's comfort zone/uncertain about the case understanding and/or handling a case with lack of experience

- Results – shifts in mood were associated by many to success and failure; praise and criticism; losing a case
- Interactions – mood shifts were linked also to adverse behaviour/bad interactions with/from clients, judges, other lawyers, opponents, clerks and managers; the lack of recognition and many listed Judges who bully/shout are rude/disrespectful. Additionally many cited other people not coming through/letting them down/their errors/incompetence and ill-prepared papers as impacted on the respondent's mood
- Financial – the worry associated with finances and the pressure of delayed payment, low fees, lack of work and the worries about getting work were significant to many on their mood levels
- Work/life integration – the need to change plans outside of work due to work; being unable to plan; general external, family and personal worries were listed by many
- Energy – Many listed fatigue/tiredness and hunger due to lack of breaks and time to eat/erratic eating patterns or not enough time as having a significant impact on their mood
- Administrative issues, delays and IT problems were listed by a notable number of respondents

Further analyses

Analyses were carried out to explore associations of perceived work pressure, mood, and life satisfaction. For these analyses, these variables were dichotomised. Work pressure was divided into low/medium (self-ratings 1-7) and high (ratings >7). Mood was dichotomised into 'low' and 'moderate/good'. Life satisfaction was dichotomised into low/moderate (self-ratings less than 8) and high (ratings 8-10). In cross tabulating other variables against these three, Chi squared tests were carried out. The variables cross tabulated were chosen because the associations with the three variables above appeared plausible. However, since these analyses were exploratory and because multiple analyses were carried out, statistically significant differences should be taken as $p < 0.001$ rather than the customary $p < 0.05$.

Associations of work pressure

A higher proportion of female to male respondents (50% vs 45%) rated their work pressure as high, but this difference is unlikely to be statistically significant (Chi square=7.51, $p=0.006$).

There was a significant difference between age groups (Chi square=33.16, $df=8$, $p < 0.0001$). This appeared to be due to the youngest and oldest respondents. The overall rate of high work pressure (defined as above) in the sample as a whole was 47%. The proportion of those with high work pressure in the 20-25 year-old group was only 30%, and in those over 60 years old was 32%.

No difference was found between respondents who were self-employed and those who were

employed. Similarly, those who classed themselves as primary carers of children under 18 years old, or those providing care or support for others, were not significantly different from non-carers in the prevalence of high work stress. There were also no differences between those who classed themselves as disabled (by either classification in the questionnaire) and those who did not.

Those respondents who were mentored less frequently reported high work stress compared with those who were not (39% vs 48%, Chi square=11.77, p=0.001).

Table 9 shows the proportion of respondents by specialty who rated themselves as being under high pressure at work. A significantly higher proportion of those respondents who worked in criminal law rated their work pressure as high. Conversely, high pressure was less prevalent in those working in civil or commercial law, or Chancery law.

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS RATING THEMSELVES UNDER HIGH PRESSURE AT WORK BY SPECIALTY

	% self-rated High Pressure	Chi Square ³	p
Criminal^{i,2}	59	65.7	<0.0001
Civil	39	17.5	<0.0001
Commercial	39	10.5	0.001
Chancery	46	0.11	NS ⁴
Family	49	1.14	NS
Personal injury	40	10.45	0.001

1. Only the most frequent specialties endorsed are included
2. Specialties include all those who endorsed each, regardless of other specialties endorsed (some respondents had multiple specialties)
3. This compared high versus low/medium work pressure for those in each specialty versus those not in the specialty
4. Not statistically significant

Table 10 shows the percentage of those who rated themselves as having high work stress according to their responses to other questions in the survey. As noted above, these questions were selected from the total survey questions because it was plausible that they would be associated with work stress. All of these questions appear to be associated with work stress levels, apart from the view that the most important things that happen involve work.

TABLE 10: POTENTIAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH HIGH WORK STRESS

<i>The columns to the left refer to responses to each of the questions below</i>	Not at all/Sometimes	Mostly/Always	Chi Square	p

Within the environment in which I work, there is generally a sense of cooperation and collaboration :	56	44	29.55	<0.0001
I tend to focus on things I can change rather than worry about things that I can't influence :	56	40	61.37	<0.0001
Within the environment in which I work, genuine mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning :	50	36	35.21	<0.0001
I find it difficult to control or stop worrying :	37	68	209.05	<0.0001
I tend to be very critical of myself	35	55	99.15	<0.0001
I tend to dwell on my mistakes :	38	63	142.08	<0.0001
Overall, I find my workload manageable	73	33	347.56	<0.0001
I tend to feel nervous, anxious or on edge	39	74	227.7	<0.0001
Within the environment in which I work, the value of my work is understood and recognised	60	40	85.63	<0.0001
My work is predictable	52	29	82.52	<0.0001
Being a barrister provides me with a clear sense of purpose and meaning	56	45	16.06	<0.0001
My current level of stress has a negative impact on my performance at work	43	76	101.74	<0.0001
I believe the most important things that happen in life involve work	46	51	6.64	0.01 (not significant)
I feel that if I do show signs of stress at work it indicates weakness	35	54	90.32	<0.0001

Associations of low mood

For the following analyses, the answers to the question on current mood were dichotomised into ‘Low’ and other.

The results largely mirror those for high work stress, above. No gender differences were found. There was a modest effect of age (Chi square=27.13, df=8, p=0.001), this time associated with higher prevalence of low mood in the age groups 40-60 years than in the other groups.

The prevalence of low mood according to specialty is shown in Table 11. According to the criterion for statistical significance identified above, only those who practise at the Criminal Bar different from the rest of the sample, and had significantly higher rates of low mood.

	% self-rated Low Mood	Chi Square	p
Criminal	16	15.2	<0.0001
Civil	12	0.37	0.595
Commercial	8	6.46	0.011
Chancery	8	6.46	0.011
Family	13	0.67	0.411
Personal injury	8	7.73	0.005

1 The same explanations apply as for Table 9.

Those respondents who reported that they were mentored at work, either formally or informally, were significantly less likely than others to report their mood as low (14% vs 6%, Chi square=16.91, p<0.0001). Similarly, compared with those who reported support from peers or clerks only sometimes or not at all, those who reported being supported most or all the time had lower rates of low mood (8% vs 22%, Chi square=83.46, p<0.0001).

Life satisfaction

For the following analyses, life satisfaction was dichotomised into Low/Moderate (self-ratings of less than 8) and High (ratings of 8-10).

There was no effect of gender or employment status. Again, there was a significant effect of age (Chi square=29.72, df=8, p<0.0001), which appeared due to a combination of lower rates of high life satisfaction in those aged 35-55 years, and higher rates in those aged over 60 years.

Life satisfaction by specialty is shown in Table 12. Bearing in mind the criteria for statistical significance, only those at the Criminal Bar differed from other respondents, in having lower rates of high life satisfaction.

TABLE 12: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS RATING THEMSELVES AS HAVING HIGH LIFE SATISFACTION¹

	% self-rated High Life Satisfaction	Chi Square	p
Criminal	34	18.88	<0.0001
Civil	39	0.33	0.566
Commercial	46	4.96	0.26
Chancery	40	0.02	0.88
Family	39	0.17	0.68
Personal injury	45	4.84	0.028

1 The same explanations apply as for Table 9.

Years in practice

There were no clear stepwise changes in any variables with years in practise. The comparison was carried out between those who had been in practise for 20+ years (N=886) with the remainder of the sample (N=1569). There were no significant differences between the two groups in work pressure or life satisfaction. However, 65% of those in practise for 20+ years said that losing a client mostly/always had an impact on their confidence, compared with 73% of those in practice for <20 years (Chi square=14.26, p<0.0001). Whilst these groups are different both scores are high.

Capacity and work/life balance

So as to test whether barristers are accommodating their workload through an imbalance in their work/life allowing them to perceive that they have capacity for and are thus able to manage workload - further analysis was carried out in terms of the correlation between the responses to 'I am able to integrate the things that are most important to my life and work'; 'I have significant control over the content and pace of my work'; 'overall I find my workload manageable and 'I have the capacity to carry out my work as expected'. Using the Spearman rho correlations to the original variables (each with 4 categories of answer):-

TABLE 13: SPEARMAN RHO

		Spearman rho			
		1	2	3	4
I am able to integrate the things that are most important to my life and work	1	1	0.446	0.530	0.394
I have significant control over the content and pace of my work	2	0.446	1	0.402	0.370
Overall I find my workload manageable	3	0.530	0.402	1	0.548
I have the capacity to carry out my work as expected	4	0.394	0.370	0.548	1

All the correlations are significant ($p < 0.0001$). So responses to these variables are correlated.

The vast majority (95%) of those who reported that they had a good work-life balance mostly/always, also reported that they mostly/always had the capacity to carry out their work. Conversely, 91% of those who had a good work-life balance sometimes/never, also reported that they sometimes/never had the capacity to carry out their work (Chi square 231.45, $p < 0.0001$). Because of the correlations between answers to the questions above, similar answers are expected with the other questions. So this appears to go against the above stated hypothesis. It may be, however, that having the capacity to finish one's work is a necessary prerequisite to perceived good work-life balance. Further exploration would be needed to test the hypothesis, including the relationship between hours worked, the need to complete one's work to work-life integration and the perception of capacity.

Opportunity

The results provide some clear areas for focus and opportunity to both enhance the work place environment of the Bar and the resilience of those working therein alongside strengthening the protective factors already in play.

Individual Resilience

Cognitive tools and learning could be provided through a scalable programme to those working at the Bar to deepen and further build levels of resilience specifically in relation to cognitive style. This would include raising awareness of unhealthy versus healthy perfectionism alongside tools to shift unhelpful patterns of thinking. The work carried out through such a programme should also lead to reduced stigma around work place stress.

Environment and Contextual

Mentoring appears to have a significant positive impact and so a formal programme to build this source of support is a clear opportunity. A first step could be to explore, where mentoring is taking place, how it is implemented and used to determine areas of best practice and learning for an extended programme.

Leadership capability could be enhanced capitalising on the social support reported and valued within the Bar alongside knowledge and skills in relation to other constructs for intrinsic motivation, engagement and cognitive capacity and efficiency.

Potentially a review of the remuneration structure is required as is further analyses in relation to work-life integration and workload capacity.

There is an opportunity to advertise and enhance the accessibility to psychological health support for those individuals reporting significant distress.

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