

# LawCare News Ireland

## Welcome

to the Autumn edition of *LawCare News Ireland*.

The summer is traditionally a quieter time for us, and across the legal profession, but this year we were preparing for our 20th anniversary celebration and conference, which took place in London on Tuesday 10 October, which was also World Mental Health Day.

I'm proud to say the day was a great success. The conference, Making Mental Health Matter, brought together over 70 attendees from across the legal community and all the jurisdictions. The half-day event was an opportunity to stimulate thinking about why mental health matters in the legal community, and was followed by a party with cake and a short speech from our vice-chair, Robert Venables.

Robert outlined the history of LawCare, which has moved from being a charity with the limited remit of supporting solicitors with addiction and related problems, to one that offers help to the whole profession throughout Ireland and the UK on a wide range of issues encompassing, amongst others, stress, depression, anxiety and bullying at work.

Making Mental Health Matter echoed the theme of this year's World Mental Health day – mental health at work – and we launched a new booklet, *Look After Others, Tips for Good Mental Health and Wellbeing at Work*, to help organisations start to create a culture that encourages people to be open and honest about their mental health, and to access the support they may need. You can **download the booklet here**.

One of the most engaging discussions was the panel session, hosted by Eduardo Reyes, Features Editor of England & Wales' Law Society Gazette. Eduardo drew out the organisational approaches to mental health from Nigel Jones, Chair of City Mental Health Alliance and a partner in Linklaters, Bryan Scant from the Junior Lawyers' Division of the Law Society of England and Wales, Kirsty Hood from the Scottish Faculty of advocates, and Antoinette Moriarty of the Law School of Ireland Counselling Service. Ms Moriarty's contribution inspired many questions from the floor, and prompted discussion about how we encourage those at an early stage in the profession to seek support when they need it.

We also welcomed Valerie Peart and Louise Campbell from the Law Society of Ireland, who are LawCare trustees, as well as Attracta Wilson from Northern Ireland, also a LawCare trustee.

We are very pleased with all the positive feedback we've had, and we're inspired by the participants' motivation to work together, and with us, to continue to raise awareness about why mental health matters in the legal community, to promote the benefits of good mental health in the workplace, and to ensure that those in need of help and support know how and where to find it.

I hope you have a good quarter, and a great Christmas break. Do visit our website **[www.lawcare.ie](http://www.lawcare.ie)** to access details of the support we provide and the information and resources we have available.

Elizabeth



[facebook.com/LawCare](https://facebook.com/LawCare)

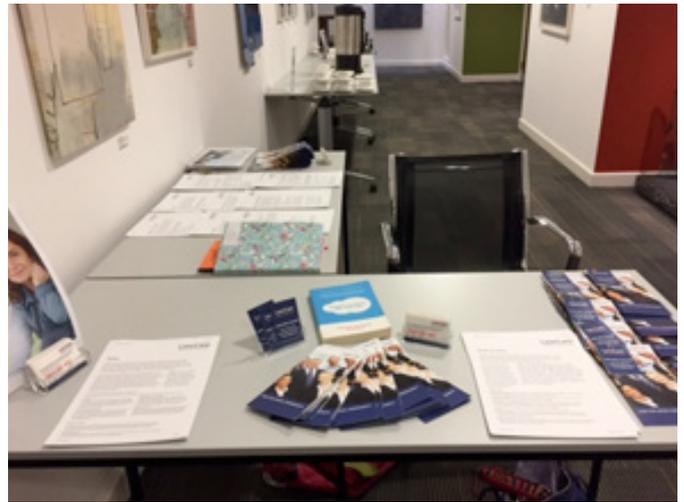


[@LawCareLtd](https://twitter.com/LawCareLtd)

## Meeting the Younger Members

LawCare's Coordinator for Ireland, Mary Jackson, recently attended a Younger Members' event, held in the James O'Sullivan room of the Law School on 12 October. The theme of the conference was The Smart Client Mastering the Solicitor/Client Relationship in a New Era.

"It was encouraging to find out how well known LawCare now is in Ireland, with members telling us they follow us on Facebook or Twitter, or both," says Ms Jackson. "We also regularly feature in the e-zine and the Gazette, which also explains the increase in calls to our Irish helpline this year. "There was considerable interest in the LawCare stand, which gave me a great opportunity to chat to delegates, and to hand out our leaflets and Top Tips. I would like to thank Judith Tedders and Michelle Nolan for their welcome and help on the day."



## LawCare Joins Panel at Professional Wellbeing Conference

LawCare's Coordinator for Ireland, Mary Jackson, participated on the panel of speakers at the Law Society of Ireland FINUAS Network conference, Professional Wellbeing For A Successful Practice. The event took place in Cork on 4 October, in The Kingsley Hotel.

The conference included three workshops: Less Stress More Joy from Walt Hampton, JD/ Executive Coach; What makes me tick? from Antoinette Moriarty, MSc MIAHIP, and The Enjoyable Lightness of Being - Craic Therapy! from Sean O'Tarpaigh, MSc MIAHIP. Ms Jackson gave an overview of LawCare's work, focussing on the mental health aspects of wellbeing.

"Everyone went away armed with ideas for living better and more mindfully," says Ms Jackson. "Many had plans to take themselves less seriously, to block out time for themselves, and to learn how to better manage the e-invasion.

"I particularly like this quote from Sean O'Tarpaigh's hand-out: 'It's dark because you are trying too hard. Lightly, my friend,



lightly. Learn to do everything lightly. Yes, feel lightly even though you're feeling deeply. Just lightly let things happen and lightly cope with them.'"

[Read more of our news at www.lawcare.ie/news](http://www.lawcare.ie/news)

## Blog: Providing a Unique Support Service in Ireland

The Law Society of Ireland is unique among Irish professional bodies with regard to the amount of support provided to members in the areas of career management and challenges. The Career Support Service is a key resource, and we are a team of three full-time staff. We work with solicitors who find themselves out of work, who face changed work conditions, or who are seeking a new career direction. There is wide-ranging help available through the multiple services provided by Career Support.

We provide telephone or email help, where solicitors with any kind of career-related query can contact us by phone or email to access immediate assistance. Members can also arrange a one-to-one consultation with a Career Counsellor to discuss career management and job market matters. This is a free-of-charge service and, while these consultations are usually face-to-face, they can also be provided via Skype or telephone



to suit members who cannot conveniently call into Blackhall Place.

We can help members with their CV: they are welcome to email it, or other job seeking correspondence, to us for review and feedback. Sample CVs and helpful guidelines on drafting CVs are also available. Solicitors can also access a facility to upload their CV onto the Law Society website. This register is viewed by employer members who are seeking staff, particularly for locum and short-term contract requirements. We are proud that the Legal Vacancies section of the Law Society website is Ireland's premier online source of information about legal work opportunities, and receives more than 2.5 million visits each year. Members can sign up to receive notifications about particular types of opportunities or about opportunities in a specific location or region of Ireland. We also have a unique Return to Work programme, which helps solicitors to navigate a successful return to work after time out of the profession spent caring for children or other family members. The programme helps participants to figure out how to integrate back into mainstream legal work, as well as how to organise a good work/life balance.

We organise regular seminars and workshops on career matters and job hunting, and the Careers section of the Law Society website contains a large bank of information, videos and guidance that members can access whenever suits them best.

We provide further support to members who are self-employed - particularly sole practitioners - through the Practitioner Support service. This assistance can be accessed through consultations, SKYPE, telephone and email. Some of the typical issues addressed include setting up in practice, regulatory matters, practice management challenges, leaving practice and planning for retirement.

Last, but not least, solicitors who want to look at the option of buying, selling or merging a practice can utilise the BuySellMerge facility. This facility is located on the Law Society website and is a free, anonymous online forum that can only be viewed by members. Solicitors can post details of what they want and link up with members who have possible matching interests.

Keith O'Malley is Head of Career Support and Practitioner Support at Law Society of Ireland [careers@lawsociety.ie](mailto:careers@lawsociety.ie)