

As well as solicitors, legal support staff were invited to participate.

1242 survey responses

were analysed to give us benchmark data.

In three years

we aim to survey the profession again to assess our progress.

[Read the full report here](#)
[Read the full action plan here](#)

The status of mental health stigma and discrimination in the Scottish legal profession

In 2019 we entered a partnership with See Me, Scotland's programme to end mental health discrimination, to assess how our legal workplaces support colleagues with their mental health. There is a legal, moral and business case to supporting mental health at work. We want to ensure our workplaces allow people to thrive and we want to take care of our people.

We now want to work with the profession on the areas where there is room for improvement. We have produced a seven-step action plan, which provides a framework of initiatives we will lead to engage and support employers to drive cultural change.

1. Leadership

We want to see commitment and buy-in from leaders to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination and will support by:

- Providing leaders with the tools their organisations need to champion staff mental health support
- Engaging leaders by being a proactive and vocal leader as the Law Society of Scotland
- Creating opportunities for sharing ideas and peer support



39%



of respondents felt the senior leaders in their organisation show their commitment to staff mental health.

2. Safe disclosure

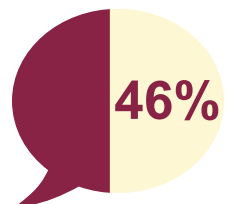
We will help employers understand how they can create a more open culture where colleagues can get support, by:



- Providing advice on setting up a safe environment to talk
- Promoting Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) in the workplace
- Signposting best-practice guidance on consistent implementation of policies and procedures relating to disclosure

Nearly half of respondents said opportunities

for staff to have open and honest conversations about mental health would create a more positive attitude.



3. Better literacy

The more people have access to information, the better equipped they are to support themselves and others. We will:

- Promote mental health engagement and awareness campaigns
- Develop our Lawscot Wellbeing online portal to be a one-stop-shop for all resources
- Learn from other organisations from inside and outwith the legal profession



77%

of respondents actively want a better understanding of mental health problems so they would know what to say/do to accommodate someone.

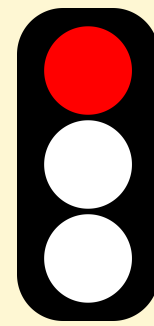
4. Training

As training increases skills, we will support organisations with access to mental health-specific training for all staff, by:

- Promoting the importance of mental health training
- Signposting training options suitable for different workplaces
- Encouraging employers to undertake an assessment of training needs for managers



What training would respondents like to see? ➔



Availability of mental health-related training scored a 'red' on See Me's traffic light indicator, suggesting low provision and/or uptake.

Respondents felt training would be beneficial to improve workplace culture.

Manager training 62%
Staff training 54%

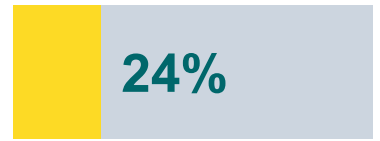
5. Management

A high proportion of areas requiring improvement identified in the report related to manager skills and confidence, making it a key area of focus.



Managers should be informed, confident and proactive, able to support colleagues with their mental health. We will:

- Produce a resource to help managers confidently hold conversations about mental health to support their colleagues
- Look at how we can help improve consistency among manager skills
- Highlight or facilitate networks for management peer support

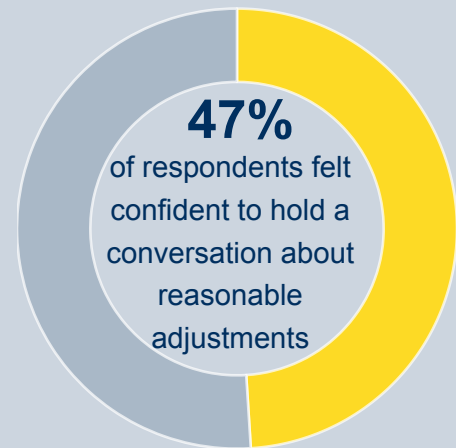


of respondents thought supervisors/line managers knew how to support staff in relation to their mental health and wellbeing, and confidently signpost to further support.

6. Reasonable adjustments

While legal professionals will be familiar with the law, we will help people apply it in a practical setting so:

- Employees can request reasonable adjustments
- Managers can have supportive conversations confidently
- Decision makers take a consistent approach to what is reasonable for their organisation to incorporate into their policies.



7. Stigma-free culture

Our goal is to end mental health stigma and discrimination in the legal profession, by influencing cultural change. We will:

- Issue clear guidance on how to report complaints about behaviour
- Deliver ongoing, inclusive engagement relating to mental health
- Champion a zero-tolerance approach to stigma and discrimination in the legal profession

In respondents' own organisations,

24% had observed/were aware of stigmatising attitudes to mental health

23% had observed/were aware of discrimination