

Your health, your career

Updated 6 April 2020

We recognise we are in unusual and worrying times. We appreciate that the demands and pressures can easily build and make you feel like things are getting on top of you.

There are times when you may need support and assistance, particularly if a disability or health problem is making things harder for you at the moment.

- [How we can help](#) [#8966]
- [Real stories](#) [#4415]
- [Other support and resources](#) [#9294]
- [Where to get help](#) [#5070]

How we can help

Your health and wellbeing is important. Talk to us if you are having difficulties and have concerns about your work. If you do not address these, it is easy for matters to spiral out of control.

We can talk through any issues and may be able to offer help and guidance. Alternatively, we can try to point you in right direction and suggest other options.

For example, we may be able to:

- talk things through with you in person rather than through letters or emails
- give you a little more time to respond to our queries or questions
- arrange for someone to help you deal with our various processes.

Professional Ethics

Talk to one of our Ethics advisers [[/home/contact-us/](#)] either on the phone or on web chat (web chat is usually available during business hours when you visit the [SRA Standards and Regulations](#) [[/solicitors/standards-regulations-resources/](#)] or [guidance](#) [[/solicitors/guidance/guidance/](#)]). They are there to provide you with guidance on all matters relating to the Standards and Regulations.

Bespoke service for small firms

A dedicated team [[/solicitors/resources/small-firms/small-firms/](#)] can help you face the challenges of running a small firm. Use our call-back service [[/solicitors/resources/small-firms/small-firms/](#)] to discuss any regulatory matters.

Support and guidance if we are investigating you

We understand that it can be stressful and daunting if we are investigating you. If you are also experiencing health problems or have a disability, this can make things even harder for you.

Talk to your contact person at the SRA, as they could look at ways we could make things a little easier by changing the way we usually do things. For example you may:

- need extra time to respond to us
- need us to talk through the process with you
- prefer to talk over the phone rather than communicate via written correspondence
- need help closing your practice

Please tell us about your issues so that we can discuss the options with you.

Our reasonable adjustment policy [\[sra/equality-diversity/policy/reasonable-adjustment-policy/\]](/sra/equality-diversity/policy/reasonable-adjustment-policy/) can provide further information.

Real stories of how we have helped

Dealing with just one person at the SRA

What were the issues?

Mr T's firm was being shut down. We were working with him to make sure this was done properly. However, there was an outstanding issue that our Supervision team was dealing with, and a third team was liaising with Mr T about charges and funds.

He contacted us to say that he was suffering from depression and this was all getting too much for him. He explained that he found it stressful dealing with the various departments on different matters and was struggling to keep on top of it all.

How did we help?

We offered Mr T one point of contact—someone he could call or email at anytime. We explained that this might cause delay, as the person would need to speak to the different teams to share information or get answers to his questions. He was happy with this and it was agreed that his SRA contact would call him once a week (on a specified day and time) to update him and pass on any key information. Mr T felt he was able to handle the situation much better this way and was more in control of the situation.

Small firms advice

What were the issues?

Mr X was a sole practitioner who had run his own business for 40 years. Due to serious illness, he had not been able to keep on top of his practice and had stopped working for long periods of time. Ultimately, he realised he could not continue practising. He was finding the whole situation overwhelming. He did not know how to proceed or where to get help.

How did we help?

Mr X contacted our small firms helpline for advice, and our dedicated team talked through his issues with him.

We were able to outline his options and prepare a plan for him. We then called Mr X every fortnight to help him stay on track and answer any queries he might have. We also arranged a visit to his office on his request to make sure he had the correct documentation for us.

Mr X found the closing down plan very helpful, as it focused his mind on the key actions and made sure he did not miss anything important. He also appreciated the regular contact with us and was able to close down his practice properly without putting his health at further risk.

Requesting information following a complaint

What were the issues?

Following a complaint, we wrote to Miss D and asked her for information to help with our inquiry. When we did not hear back from her, we visited Miss D's practice and discovered she had been unwell for some time.

She told us she had family problems and was going through a divorce. Miss D was also seeing her doctor about her anxiety and stress.

How did we help?

Once Miss D gave us her medical evidence, we agreed to put our inquiry with her on hold for a limited period, with monthly contact. After six months, she was feeling much better and was able to help us.

Struggling to pay fees

What were the issues?

Mrs R called us in distress to explain that she could not pay her firm fees due to financial difficulties. She also felt she may have to close her practice.

How did we help?

We told her about the help offered by the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme (SAS) and how to get in touch with SAS. We also talked her through paying her fee and referred her to our website, which outlines sources of help and assistance should she need it in the future.

Mrs R was grateful for the information and said wished she had contacted us sooner. She said was pleased to know where to get help should she need it again.

Resources

Supporting employee wellbeing during the pandemic (PDF 15 pages, 2.4MB)

[[globalassets/documents/solicitors/thriving-in-law?version=4992b3](#)] - a collaborative piece from LawCare, Byrne Dean and Wellbeing Republic that looks at managing anxiety and bolstering immunity and how to best support leaders during these challenging times.

Case study: Eversheds supporting wellbeing during Covid-19

Background

Eversheds Sutherland is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its people as a key priority, and this is especially important now given the current circumstances we are all facing. In recognition of this, Eversheds Sutherland has put in place a number of provisions to support its people during these challenging times.

What they have done

Support has included introducing increased flexibility around working hours, patterns and days. This is designed to help colleagues, especially those with childcare and caring responsibilities, juggle these additional new demands and pressures.

Eversheds Sutherland has also introduced a hardship fund to help support colleagues who may be facing exceptionally difficult circumstances.

A dedicated 'Coronavirus Hub' page has been set up on its intranet with copies of key announcements, links to useful policies, specific guidance and support for home working and

business continuity.

In addition to this, a dedicated 'Coronavirus Advice Line, staffed by HR colleagues, has been set up to answer queries and provide clarity to colleagues on a 24/7 basis.

Support App

Eversheds Sutherland developed an app to help colleagues stay connected by sharing information, resources, ideas and activities via a number of interactive 'chat rooms' on topics including wellbeing, remote working, hobbies, clubs, helping others, 'Kid Zone' for parents, and a just for fun section which includes a pets corner and photography competitions. Colleagues can also give a 'virtual thank you' to members of their teams who have demonstrated the firm's values.

Wellbeing is a key section in the app, covering topics including top tips for exercise and physical health, mindfulness meditation and mental health, effective family relationships, eating for wellbeing and getting better sleep. The Employee Assistance Programme is also regularly signposted.

The app also provides details of wider support which is available and tailored to specific groups or issues such as carers, LGBT+ mental health and wellbeing, and working parents. The app also links to specific support for colleagues potentially at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse – a risk which can be heightened during lockdown.

Communication

Eversheds Sutherland's international Managing Partner and Executive Sponsor for Wellbeing has shared regular wellbeing-related communications with colleagues on topics such as top tips to support wellbeing whilst working remotely, creating healthy boundaries with technology, information and support for working parents, and sustainable working practices.

Within teams and practice groups, regular communications are also circulated on the topic of wellbeing which include recommendations from colleagues on relaxation and sleep, activities such as gardening, baking and photography, and team walking challenges.

Getting active

In addition to sharing information and online resources to support staying active at home, colleagues who are qualified yoga instructors are running regular online yoga classes for all abilities via Zoom for everyone to benefit from whilst working remotely.

Mental Health Awareness Week

In support of 2020's theme of 'Kindness', Eversheds Sutherland brought colleagues together virtually across the international offices to share the importance and impact of 'kindness' on mental health and wellbeing through a series of blogs. It also took part in the virtual green ribbon initiative to support the #endthestigma campaign, and shared resources to help colleagues look out for each other and spot the signs that someone working from home may be in mental or physical distress.

Supporting clients

Eversheds Sutherland quickly adapted to an entirely new way of working with clients, including shifting an extensive in person events schedule to one that exists solely in a digital space, via webinars. The knowledge the firm is able to share with clients is now more accessible than ever before, on a global scale. Utilising video conferencing platforms has also meant its lawyers can continue have meetings with clients 'face to face' to maximise the effectiveness of these interactions, and continue to maintain and develop meaningful relationships.

As signatories of the Mindful Business Charter, Eversheds Sutherland has continued to collaborate with clients who are also signatories to support mental health and wellbeing using the principles of the charter to reduce unnecessary stress.

Supporting staff that have a disability and/or mental health problem

Eversheds Sutherland is arranging remote workstation assessments for all those who require them. Such assessments may be due to musculoskeletal discomfort, physical disabilities, or neurological disabilities such as dyslexia, and any required specialist equipment is sent direct to the colleague's home.

Microsoft Teams is being rolled out across the firm, which has the ability to turn on live captions. Transcripts can be provided up to 30 days after a call/meeting, which will in turn help to make calls and webinars more accessible. Use of this platform to interact with colleagues via video conference can also help them stay connected and reduce loneliness.

Eversheds Sutherland also continues to promote and signpost its Employee Assistance Programme which is available to partners, employees and immediate family members. Available 24/7, 365 days a year, this provides confidential support, information and guidance - counselling is also available.

Other support available

Several agencies exist specifically to help and support lawyers.

LawCare [<http://www.lawcare.org.uk/>]

Law Care is an advisory and support service for lawyers, their staff and immediate families facing health problems: its helpline is free and completely confidential. See their COVID-19 resources. [<https://www.lawcare.org.uk/covid-19>] LawCare has helped thousands cope with issues such as stress, workplace bullying, disputes with colleagues and alcohol misuse.

Solicitors' Assistance Scheme [<http://www.thesas.org.uk/>]

This service offers free confidential help and advice for all solicitors on any problem troubling them, whether personal or professional—providing a fellow practitioner who will listen and help.

Solicitors' Benevolent Association [<http://www.sba.org.uk/>]

This is an independent charity working for solicitors, both past and present, and their families. Every year, it helps hundreds of people of all ages who are in serious financial need as a result of illness, accident, redundancy or other adversity.

The Law Society Practice Advice Service

[<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/helplines/practice-advice-service/>]

The Practice Advice Service offers free, confidential support and advice on legal practice and procedure.

Lawyerline [<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/help-for-solicitors/lawyerline/>]

You can call for advice on client care and complaints handling, including:

- how to resolve complaints directly with your clients
- how to deal effectively with the Legal Ombudsman.

Equality Representative Groups

Solicitors have set up groups to support their fellow solicitors. These groups are independent from us and represent people from various backgrounds. They may be able to offer practical advice and peer support. Please contact them direct to see how they may be able to help.

- Association of Asian Women Lawyers [<http://www.aawl.org.uk/>]
- Black Solicitors Network [<http://blacksolicitorsnetwork.co.uk/>]
- British Nigerian Law Forum [<http://bnlf.org.uk/>]
- InterLaw Diversity Forum [<http://www.interlawdiversityforum.org/>]
- Sole Practitioner Group [<http://spg.uk.com/>]

Charities

Mind [<http://www.mind.org.uk/>]

Information and support about mental health problems

Samaritans [<http://www.samaritans.org/>]

Support and guidance to help with issues such as financial worries, stress, depression, suicidal feelings

Healthcare

NHS

Advice and support on stress, anxiety and depression [<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx>]

Supporting solicitors flowchart

Often, in challenging times it can be difficult and confusing to know where to get the help and support you might need. We have been working with the Law Society, LawCare, SBA The Solicitors' Charity, and the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme (SAS) to create a chart that can help identify where you may be able to get the right support. We encourage you to get the help you need the help you need early on as it could prevent serious regulatory action. You can call us at any time even if you unsure we can always guide you to the right support.

Supporting solicitors flowchart
[[globalassets/documents/solicitors/support-solicitors-flowchart.pdf?version=4965ee]

Download and identify where you may be able to get the right support (PDF 1 page, 185KB)

[[globalassets/documents/solicitors/support-solicitors-flowchart.pdf?version=4965ee]

Please use **www.sra.org.uk/support** to link to this page.