# Report of
# IP Inclusive & CIPA
# survey for Mental Health
# Awareness Week 2018

*This report is dedicated to Jonathan's Voice, a charity set up in memory of the patent attorney Jonathan McCartney, who tragically took his own life in the autumn of 2017.*

*Jonathan's Voice works with organisations and individuals, in particular in the IP sector, to promote mental well-being in the workplace and beyond. IP Inclusive, recognising that mental health is key to an inclusive working environment, will be collaborating with the charity in pursuit of those objectives. We hope that this survey will help, by offering insight into a potentially widespread and increasing problem, and direction for those who hope to address it.*

## Executive summary

In spring 2018, IP Inclusive and CIPA ran a joint survey of CIPA members – including student members, for whom there were tailored questions – to explore the mental well-being of the patent profession. The survey, which was voluntary and anonymous, aimed to capture basic data on mental health problems, in particular stress levels; their causes; their impact; the support available to help people cope with them; and the steps that might be taken to improve things.

There were 180 responses to the main survey, representing about 6.2% of the total CIPA membership excluding students (7.7% if calculated relative to the current number of Fellows). The student version elicited 191 responses (about 20.2% of CIPA's total student membership). The survey completion rates were 83% and 84% respectively.

Respondents reported significant levels of work-related stress, anxiety and depression, which often spill over into their personal relationships. Over the previous two years, 66.9% of respondents to the main survey had been adversely affected at work by high stress levels, 55.4% by anxiety, 30.7% by depression and 3.0% by another, diagnosed, mental health problem. Of the student respondents, 51.7% had been adversely affected by high stress levels, 51.7% by anxiety, 27.3% by depression and 4.1% by a diagnosed mental health problem other than those.

The most cited cause of such problems was high workload, and associated issues such as deadlines and long working hours. For student members, these concerns were inextricably linked with the qualifying exams, in particular the difficulty of juggling exam preparation and day-to-day work; the nature and difficulty of the exams and their alleged lack of suitability compared to other assessment methods; and the stress that arises from the profession's reliance on exam success as the main, if not the sole, way of evaluating and rewarding achievement.

Workplace inclusivity is also not as good as it should be; there were significant reported levels of discrimination, harassment, bullying and other problems caused by colleagues' behaviour, and evidence that many attorneys feel the need to hide aspects of themselves in order to fit in at work.

The survey revealed a profession that is still often unable to talk about mental health: many who suffer from mental health problems do not tell their employers or even their peers, and take little if any time off work. 82.4% of the main survey respondents and 81.5% of the student respondents had not taken any time off work due to stress and mental health problems, despite the relatively high level of problems reported. Heavy workloads and inadequate capacity planning seem to constrain people's ability to seek adequate treatment and recuperation time, even where so-called "flexible" working arrangements are available.

Mental health support (including training) at work appears to be variable, in many cases inadequate or ineffective and in others non-existent. Also inadequate throughout the profession is the signposting of information and resources for those in need of help.

A snapshot of current moods showed many patent professionals to be uncomfortable, unhappy or very unhappy (33.8% in the main survey; 22.8% in the student version). Plenty have considered

changing jobs or even careers, and disturbing numbers confessed to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. There are clearly issues to overcome, for the good of the profession, its individual members and the businesses that employ them – but it appears worth doing so, as respondents admitted high levels of job satisfaction when their work is going well.

The survey responses suggest several key things that could be done by CIPA, IP Inclusive and individual employers – and indeed by the profession as a whole – to improve mental well-being in the patent sector. These could be based at least partly on the recommendations in the recent Stevenson-Farmer review[1], and centre around more widely-available training (for example in mental health "first aid"); awareness-raising and open conversations on mental health issues; improved mental health support for employees; and better signposting of available information and support. More specifically, patent professionals also need to improve their capacity and contingency planning, and the quality of their managers and student supervisors. The profession would also do well to review the impact of its current qualification system on the mental health of its recruits.

The higher response rate for the student version of the survey could suggest that the next generation is more aware of mental health issues, more willing or able to talk about them and hopefully better equipped to tackle them. This should be taken as a call to action. Encouragingly, our response rates were higher than those of a similar survey conducted among junior lawyers earlier in 2018, and indicated a lower incidence of mental health problems in the patent sector than in the wider legal profession, although less well-developed workplace support systems.

It would be useful to repeat this survey in 2020, not only to assess developing trends in mental health problems in the patent profession, and the available support, but also to help shape the profession's response.

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IP Inclusive Leader

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[1] Farmer, P. and Stevenson, D. (2017). Thriving at Work: The Independent Review of Mental Health and Employers. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf

# Contents

# 1    Introduction

In the run-up to Mental Health Awareness Week (14-20 May 2018), IP Inclusive and the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA) ran a survey of CIPA members to find out more about mental well-being in the patent profession.

The theme for Mental Health Awareness Week 2018 was "Stress: are we coping?"   The survey aimed to capture basic data on mental health problems – in particular stress levels – within the patent profession, their causes, their impact, the support available to help people cope with them and if appropriate, steps that might be taken to improve things.

This report, which is publicly available, summarises the key outcomes.  It is intended for use by IP Inclusive, CIPA and other interested parties (including CIPA members and their employers) to address problem areas in the profession.  It was prepared for IP Inclusive by Andrea Brewster, who leads the initiative and chairs its governing body, IP Inclusive Management, and who also created and managed the survey.

The report covers:

- Essential information about the survey and its respondents (sections 2 and 3)
- The responses received to the four main parts of the survey (sections 4 to 7)
- A discussion of the results and their implications (section 8)
- Recommendations for follow-up (section 9)

Sections 8 and 9 necessarily add a more personal perspective to the facts reported in sections 2 to 7.

In reporting the survey responses, percentages are quoted to one decimal place.  More accurate figures will be made available on the IP Inclusive website.

Data has not been cross-linked between survey questions, for example to establish potential links between mental health and organisation size or location.  It is felt that in such a small population, anonymity could be compromised if the results were to be analysed in this way.

IP Inclusive hopes to run a similar survey in the spring of 2020, to gauge changes in the mental health support available in the patent profession, and their impact on the amount and nature of mental health problems as well as on people's willingness to discuss them.

## 2    The survey

The survey was run online using IP Inclusive's SurveyMonkey® account.  Participation was voluntary.  Responses were collected anonymously.

The survey questions were compiled by Andrea Brewster, Chartered Patent Attorney and IP Inclusive Leader, with input from CIPA, its student representative body the Informals, and the charity LawCare which promotes and supports mental health and well-being in the legal community.  Two versions were used, one tailored for CIPA's student members (ie unqualified or part-qualified trainees) and one for its other members.

Both sets of questions are attached, as Annex I for the main CIPA survey and Annex II for the student members' version.  They were divided into four categories:

- How people feel at work (survey page 2)
- The support available to them (page 3)
- Diagnosed mental health problems (page 4)
- Overall mood and job satisfaction levels (page 5)

Questions were also included, on page 1 of the survey, to gather basic information about the respondents, in particular their roles, levels of seniority and working environments.

For many of the questions, respondents to the main survey were asked to base their answers on their experiences over the previous two years, or on their experiences immediately before ceasing to practise if they did so in the previous two years.  Student members were asked to base their answers on their experiences since joining the profession.

A link to the student survey was sent out via the Informals on 16 April 2018.  The non-student version was publicised to the wider CIPA membership through an email newsletter on 24 April 2018.  The two links were also circulated to IP Inclusive supporters on 24 April 2018.  Both versions of the survey were closed on 24 May 2018.

# 3    The respondents

## 3.1    Main CIPA survey

There were 180 responses to the main survey, representing about 6.2% of the total CIPA membership excluding students (7.7% if calculated relative to the current number of Fellows).  The average survey completion rate was 83%.

These responses included a good spread of participants across career levels, and representation from both in-house departments and private practices of various sizes and in a range of geographical locations.

The majority of respondents (91.1%) were patent and/or trade mark attorneys.  3.9% were IP administrators/paralegals and 2.8% identified as "other supporting role (eg HR, finance, office management)".  Two respondents were IP managers, one a secretary and one held what they described as an "IP commercialisation position".

In terms of career level, 7.8% were not yet fully qualified, 12.8% qualified, 27.8% "senior qualified (more than three years post-qualification)", 14.4% "senior qualified with management responsibilities", 8.3%  "director or senior manager (non-owner)", and 25.6% "partner or director with business ownership".  A further 5 gave free-text responses identifying themselves as "CIPA administrator course", "qualified in-house - head of IPR dept", "partner without business ownership", "salary partner" and "self-employed owner" – all of which might arguably have fallen into one of the other available categories.  One respondent said they had "non IP qualifications".

Although the majority (40.8%) were from large private practices (defined as having more than 80 staff including partners/directors), 3.4% were sole practitioners, 6.7% in small private practices (1-10 staff including partners/directors), 27.9% in medium private practices (11-80 staff including partners/directors), 10.6% in small in-house departments (1-10 staff), 6.2% in medium in-house departments (11-50 staff), and 3.4% in large in-house departments with more than 50 staff.  One said they worked in a limited company (which presumably could have been either private practice or industry) and one for a "service provider".

In terms of location, again there was a reasonable spread.  When asked "Where do you work, mostly?", 27.8% answered London, 40.0% a city other than London (add to this a further 2 respondents who specified Manchester and Cardiff), 16.1% a "smaller town or village" and 5.0% "outside the UK".  8.3% said they worked mostly from home.  One respondent referred to a "London suburb" and one to an "industrial technical centre in rural location".  One said they worked 50% from an office outside London and 50% from home.

## 3.2    Student members' version

This version of the survey elicited 191 responses (about 20.2% of CIPA's total student membership) and an 84% average completion rate.  This higher response rate is discussed further in 8.3.1 below.

There were responses from students at all levels of training. 20.7% of them had not taken any exams yet; 12.8% had passed at least some of the foundation exams or an equivalent (eg Queen Mary) course; 20.7% had passed all of the foundation exams or an equivalent course; 28.7% had passed some of the final exams and/or some of the European qualifying exams; and 17.0% were part-qualified (either EPA or CPA but not both).

Again there was a mixture of in-house and private practice respondents, from organisations of a range of sizes and locations, although with less representation from in-house departments and a bigger majority in city-based practices, which reflects current trends in patent attorney training.

The majority (68.1%) were from large private practices. 3.1% were from small private practices, 22.0% medium private practices, 1.6% small in-house departments, 3.7% medium in-house departments and 0.5% (one person) a large in-house department (all of these categories being defined as in the main CIPA survey). One said they were self-employed and one that they worked in a small practice within a larger law firm.

As to location, 36.1% of respondents worked mostly in London, 53.4% in a city other than London (add to this a further 2 respondents who specified Cambridge), 7.9% in a smaller town or village. One person worked mostly outside the UK, and one mostly from home. One said they worked from "a farm outside a tiny village".

# 4    Results from survey page 2 – "How do you feel at work?"

## 4.1    Main CIPA survey

### 4.1.1    The extent of the problem

Over the previous 2 years, 66.9% of respondents had been adversely affected at work by high stress levels, 55.4% by anxiety and 30.7% by depression.  3.0% had been adversely affected by a diagnosed mental health problem other than those.  21.7% said they had not been adversely affected by any such issues.

When asked about time taken off work due to stress and mental health problems, however, most (82.4%) had not had any.  11.5% had taken a few days, 4.9% one to three weeks and only 1.2% a longer period.

### 4.1.2    Contributing factors

A wide range of factors were acknowledged to have contributed to stress or anxiety at work.  The six most common were deadlines (56.1% of respondents), conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities (46.3%), difficult clients (43.3%), senior colleagues' behaviour (40.9%), long hours (35.4%), and billing targets (32.9%).  "Activities outside your comfort zone", for example presentations, formal hearings or networking, were also declared by 29.9%.

It is interesting to note that several factors typically associated with stress were less common – although still not insignificant – sources of concern: for example, hearings and litigation had caused stress or anxiety for 24.4% of respondents; performance reviews/appraisals for 20.1%; business development for 18.3%; business management-related worries (other than financial) for 17.7%; the daily commute for 15.2%; exams for 14.0%; "international clients, different time zones and the need for 24-hour availability" for 13.4%; managing junior colleagues for 12.8%; training others for 12.2%; on-the-job travel for 10.4%; and business financial worries for 9.2%.

"The law changing quicker than you can keep up with" had proved stressful for 5.5% of respondents and CPD demands for only 2.4%.  "Socialising with colleagues", however, had caused problems for a not insignificant 9.8%, suggesting that for some patent professionals, work-related social events may not be the stress-busters they are intended to be.

8.5% reported bullying or harassment as a source of stress or anxiety, and 2.4% discrimination.  These figures may at first glance seem low, but in the context they allow no room for complacency, and it should be noted that when 40.9% class "senior colleagues' behaviour" as a source of difficulty, there is almost certain to be an element of bullying or harassment included in that category.  See also the comments about inclusivity in 4.1.3 below.

Deadlines, billing targets, long hours and conflict with home life are likely to be closely linked, and it is not surprising that all four of these feature highly in the stress stakes.  In the 21 accompanying comments, many respondents referred more generally to high workloads, and to having simply too much to fit into the working day.  References were also made to the pressure of keeping up with

"workaholic" colleagues, to pressure from clients to do more and more quickly, and to inadequate support from managers – as well as to other typical stress factors such as an office move, IT issues, the threat of redundancy, lack of resources, workplace politics, and liability issues surrounding practice ownership.

### 4.1.3   The impact at work

Asked about the negative feelings which had troubled them at work, respondents mainly identified with two: lack of control over workload (69.1%) (which fits with the answers to the previous question) and "feeling you're not up to the job" (68.4%).  A feeling of not "fitting in" also scored highly (29.6%).

15.8% said they had suffered from the fear of redundancy.  7.2% had suffered ethical concerns about the work they were being asked to do.

What is worrying for employers is that 46.7% had considered leaving their current job, during the previous two years, and 28.3% had considered leaving the profession altogether.  A significant – and extremely concerning – 7.2% had contemplated suicide, while 5.9% had experienced feelings of wanting to harm themselves.  (In this context, 7.2% and 5.9% represent, respectively, 11 and 9 respondents.)

From an inclusivity point of view, the profession also scored poorly, with 20.4% saying they had suffered from "pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with"; 19.7% from "needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues"; and 19.1% from "anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability or mental health".

The 12 comments made in response to this question referred to mental health conditions, to being discriminated against for being gay, and to a general feeling of isolation which can be inherent in the practice of law.

### 4.1.4   The impact on personal relationships

36.8% of respondents felt that stress at work had affected their relationships outside of work "a lot" or "quite a lot", another 42.8% feeling the effect "a little".  A total of 19.9% answered "very little" or "not at all" to this question, 1.8% "not sure".

### 4.1.5   Seeking support

Asked which forms of support they had drawn on, 66.9% said they had turned to family or friends, 19.3% to a GP and 21.1% to a counsellor or therapist.  Several of the 14 comments here referred to seeking support from colleagues.  Some had tried self-help practices such as meditation or CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy).  One said they relied on "outside activities".

21.7% had not sought any form of support, one commenting that "there's no time to spare for support" – although note that this question did not separate out the people who had sought no support because they had no need.

Only 29.5% of respondents were aware of the support available from LawCare, and only 1.2% (2 people) had used the LawCare helpline or website.  Two had turned to another helpline or charity, citing Samaritans and an employee assistance programme.

## 4.2    Student members' version

### 4.2.1    The extent of the problem

Over the previous 2 years, 51.7% of student respondents had been adversely affected at work by high stress levels, 51.7% by anxiety and 27.3% by depression.  These figures are lower than for more senior members of the profession.  4.1% had been adversely affected by another, diagnosed, mental health problem.  26.7% said they had not been adversely affected by any such issues.

81.5% had not taken any time off work due to stress or mental health problems.  12.1% had taken a few days, 5.2% one to three weeks and 1.2% a longer period.  It is of note that although the levels of reported problems are generally lower, absenteeism levels are similar if not very slightly higher for students than for other CIPA members.  This may be because it is more difficult to take time off with an established case load and more senior responsibilities, and/or it may indicate a more honest approach to mental health problems among younger people.

### 4.2.2    Contributing factors

Again several factors were acknowledged to have contributed to stress or anxiety at work, and whilst there is considerable overlap with the results for the main CIPA survey, there are also differences reflecting the different type of work carried out by students.  Unsurprisingly, exam-related challenges were the most common.  66.1% of respondents said that they had suffered significant stress or anxiety at work as a result of exam performance fears and 66.1% due to the difficulty in finding time for exam preparation.

The other most common triggers were deadlines (53.1% of respondents); senior colleagues' behaviour (27.2%); billing targets (25.9%); performance reviews/appraisals (25.3%); conflict with home life and/or personal responsibilities (23.5%); on-the-job (as opposed to external) training (22.2%); and "activities outside your comfort zone", for example presentations, formal hearings or networking (also 22.2%).

Difficult clients had caused problems for 18.5%; long hours for 17.3%; the daily commute for 16.7%; and external training, for example courses, for 9.3%.  6.8% saw "socialising with colleagues" as a source of concern.  4.3% had been troubled by international clients, different time zones and the need for 24-hour availability; 2.5% by on-the-job travel; and – an unsurprisingly low number, considering typical student roles – 1.2% by managing junior colleagues.

6.2% reported bullying or harassment as a source of stress or anxiety, and 1.9% discrimination.  Again the 27.2% who had problems with senior colleagues' behaviour may also have experienced bullying or harassment.  However, in all three contexts the figures are slightly lower than for more senior CIPA members.

Respondents added 35 generally lengthy comments in response to this question. Some read like cries for help. The key concerns expressed related to exams and on-the-job training: that the exams are too difficult and/or unrelated to real-life work experience; that training for the exams is inconsistent and often inadequate; that trainers and supervisors lack the time and/or the skills to train properly, in particular to give constructive as opposed to purely negative feedback; that the linking of exam success to salary and job security creates undue pressure; that employer support may be withdrawn if an exam isn't passed at the first attempt, leaving students to pay their own resit fees and prepare without further assistance or study leave; and generally that preparing for exams in one's own time can put a huge strain on personal relationships, particularly when juggling work with a young family or other caring responsibilities.

Balancing exam preparation with the day-to-day workload and billing targets also caused concern, as did the difficulty of meeting deadlines and client demands when your work has to be reviewed and your supervisor is also busy and stressed. Two people called for an external (eg university) course for the final exams, to allow all candidates access to appropriate and consistent preparation. Others called for the training of trainers and managers, and some for more understanding and flexibility in task allocation and working arrangements at this difficult stage of the career.

Several of the respondents referred to difficult relationships with their supervisors and line managers, sometimes extending beyond training-related issues to behaviour that seemed to be more like bullying. One mentioned their supervisor's overtly dismissive attitude to mental health problems: the "man-up" kind of approach to stress management.

That said, there were also a few positive stories, of understanding and supportive colleagues and in cases of HR personnel stepping in to resolve workplace problems.

### 4.2.3   The impact at work

Asked about the negative feelings which had troubled them at work, respondents identified primarily with feeling they weren't up to the job (75.2%) and lack of control over workload (47.1%).

26.1% said they had suffered from a feeling of not "fitting in", 19.6% from the fear of redundancy, 5.2% from ethical concerns about the work they were being asked to do.

Again a worry for employers – and indeed for the profession as a whole – is that 37.9% had considered leaving their current job and 30.7% leaving the profession altogether. 6.5% had contemplated suicide and 3.9% harming themselves – slightly lower figures than in the main CIPA survey, but it should be remembered that 6.5% still represents 10 young people whose lives may be at risk.

Inclusivity figures are little better for students than for more senior members of the profession: 19.6% said they had felt the need to hide aspects of themselves or their lives from colleagues (examples mentioned in the comments included a long-term medical condition and trying for a baby), while 16.3% said they had suffered from "anxiety or isolation linked to something personal,

such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability or mental health". 7.8% confessed to feeling "pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with".

This question also elicited 22 often lengthy comments, from which similar themes emerged. Negative feelings were primarily focused around the exams: the sheer volume of work involved and its impact on personal and social life; the number and nature and difficulty of the current exams; the strain of balancing exam preparation with day-to-day workload, which gets worse as level of experience increases, making it particularly tough for those resitting exams; the sometimes poor quality of the training; and diminishing employer support for resits.

Several commented on the extent to which nothing else seems to matter, during a patent attorney's training, except exam success. This engenders feelings of inadequacy. They suggested there might be better ways to assess competence which take more account of experience and skill at the day-to-day work. Linked to the profession's obsession with exam results is the impact that has on job security and salary – four people specifically mentioned the stress this brings, in particular the dreadful fear of redundancy. One pointed out that there seem to be few alternative options, in the IP sector, for those not deemed to have succeeded as patent attorneys.

In addition to exam-related issues, the comments also referred to bullying, to discrimination on the basis of both nationality and faith, and to the loneliness of the job. These were individual comments, however, not recurring themes. It is only fair to point out that there was no option in this question to say you had suffered from *none* of the specified negative feelings, although 5 respondents did put either "None" or "N/A" in their comments. One, notably, wrote: "Compared to academia this is heaven."

### 4.2.4 The impact on personal relationships

21.5% of respondents felt that stress at work had affected their relationships outside of work "a lot" or "quite a lot". 38.4% had felt the effect "a little", 37.2% very little or not at all. 2.9% said they were not sure. The lower figures here may reflect the fact that students are less likely to have parental or other caring responsibilities.

### 4.2.5 Seeking support

As to the support they had drawn on, again the majority (64.2%) said they had turned to family or friends. 20.8% had sought help from a GP, 17.9% from a counsellor or therapist. 3 of the 10 comments referred to seeking support from colleagues, and one from occupational health professionals. 28.9% had not sought any form of support.

Only 27.2% of respondents were aware of the support available from LawCare, and only 0.6% (one person) had used the LawCare helpline or website. 4.6% had sought help from other similar helplines (Breathing Space was mentioned), or in four cases via employee assistance programmes such as those available through Health Assured and Aviva.

# 5 Results from survey page 3 – "What support do you have at work?"

## 5.1 Main CIPA survey

### 5.1.1 Currently available mental health support

Certain forms of mental health support are already available to CIPA members through their work, although not by any means across the whole profession. Only 28.0% of respondents said they had access to a sympathetic line manager, 25.5% to sympathetic HR personnel, 22.9% to a third party-managed employee assistance programme, and 17.2% to private health care which extended to mental health problems.

8.9% said they had a personal mentor. 5.1% had access to a support network or group (eg for women, LGBT+ or BAME professionals), but only 1.9% to a trained counsellor and 1.3% to a mental health "first aider" or similar.

37.6% said they had access to no such support at all, while 2 commented that they didn't know what support was on offer.

In the 15 accompanying comments, references were made to the support of peer colleagues, of peer professionals outside of their own organisations, and of a chaplain, a business coach and clients. Some commented that HR and similar support structures appeared to act more in the interests of the organisation than of the individual. One pointed out the particular difficulty of working in a small firm that has no dedicated HR function, where the only option in response to a poor working environment is to leave.

### 5.1.2 Well-being activities and facilities

The provision of well-being activities and facilities also appears to be variable. 44.7% of respondents believed they did not have access to any, while 37.1% had access to an informal cafeteria, 18.2% to a gym (plus one who had discounted gym membership through work health insurance) and 16.4% to a quiet room or space. 12.0% had received training on physical and/or mental well-being, 11.3% exercise classes.

Other activities referred to, but all available to fewer than 5% (in most cases fewer than 2%) of respondents, included relaxation classes (4.4%), a games room (1.9%) and yoga classes. One respondent commented that these types of benefit might as well not be available anyway, because there was never time to take advantage. Another expressed scepticism about such taxable perks, although it was not clear whether this person felt the perks were a bad idea or merely that they were unlikely to be popular with employers.

Three people referred to the benefit of their offices being located in a pleasant environment (in 2 cases this related to working from home), and one to the ability to take a daily walk in the open air.

### 5.1.3   Flexible working

Lack of flexibility in working arrangements did not in itself come across as a major problem.  31.1% said they had "plenty" of flexibility, 30.4% a moderate amount and 25.5% "a moderate amount, but I have to justify it".  Only 13.0% felt they had insufficient flexibility.  However, it must be borne in mind that overall high workloads and long hours are a major source of stress and anxiety (see 4.1.2 above), and that mere flexibility in when and where these hours are worked may not be enough to yield a healthy workforce.

There was a relatively high number of comments on this part of the survey, the 20 responses highlighting a more complex situation than the headline figures might suggest.  Several said they were able to work from home, but some also commented that in practice, flexible hours and home-working were treated with suspicion by senior staff, and/or combined with unrealistic expectations about availability or overall work capacity.

One respondent made a valid point which further complicates the perception of flexible working:

> *Flexibility can be bad because managers think that people appear to be working weird hours out of personal choice, when it is actually workload pressure, and management don't follow up such danger signs.  Flexibility is bad for people temporarily having difficulties with scheduling their work (perhaps owing to anxiety etc).*

It is clear that some attorneys are constrained by stricter working arrangements, in which home working and flexible hours are either discouraged, or only allowed for parents, or not allowed at all.  One commented that they had been discouraged from working at home, even though it helped them to manage their mental health problems, and as a result had felt the need falsely to attribute absences to physical rather than mental health problems.

### 5.1.4   Extra support wanted

The survey asked what further mental health support people would like access to, either in the workplace or through CIPA.  39 people answered this question, with largely helpful and positive free text answers.

Among the requests were for an independent mental health advisor, confidential "Samaritan", designated mental health champion or company "stress troubleshooter" (4 mentions); an anonymous advice line (3 mentions); mentoring and coaching (3 mentions); and generally "cheaper, easier ways of engaging for help".  Four people mentioned a quiet breakaway space, away from the desk, such as a meditation room; another person had mentioned something similar in response to an earlier question on currently available support.  There were also 3 requests for greater flexibility in working arrangements, for example to allow time for exercise or therapy.

Some asked for better awareness of mental health issues (2 mentions), reduced stigma and importantly (5 mentions) better training, including on mental health "first aid", mindfulness, stress management and the impact of our behaviour on colleagues.

A number of suggestions were related to workload. One person called for "wide-ranging change in culture with regards to expected working hours". Another thought the best solution, again workload-related, was simply for employers to recognise that they needed to employ more staff. Someone referred to better workload and capacity planning, for example in appraisals.

One person requested more help from CIPA in accessing the right support. Other similar suggestions in this context included making more information available on the CIPA website, potentially with personal stories "to help others who are suffering in silence"; the possibility of a trained mental health liaison officer, with experience in patent practice; and a CIPA-led discussion in the profession about flexible working and its benefits.

There were 2 requests for more business practice support for those who own and manage smaller practices – this seems to be an important source of anxiety for some in the profession.

One suggestion was to adopt best practices from other professions.

Most respondents gave the impression of regarding additional support as a good thing, within their own organisations and/or for the profession as a whole. 6 people, however, said they were unsure what types of support might be useful (one adding that "recognition that workplace support may be needed would be a start"), and 4 answered "none" to this question. Conversely, one respondent answered "anything".

## 5.2    Student members' version

### 5.2.1    Currently available mental health support

An encouraging 61.8% of student respondents said they had access to a sympathetic line manager and 44.7% to sympathetic HR personnel. 20.6% had access to a third party-managed employee assistance programme and 21.8% to private health care which extends to mental health problems.

21.8% said they had a personal mentor (much higher than for qualified attorneys, as might be expected for trainees), but only 7.1% had access to a support network or group, 2.9% to a trained counsellor and 1.2% to a mental health first aider or similar.

13.5% said they had access to no such support at all – this is considerably lower than the figure for qualified attorneys.

Most of the accompanying 6 comments referenced the support available from colleagues, whether a supervisor/line manager, a mentor or fellow trainees. Only one respondent commented that their line manager was no use as a support.

### 5.2.2    Well-being activities and facilities

Although 46.8% of respondents believed they did not have access to any well-being activities or facilities, there were 37.3% with access to an informal cafeteria, 17.8% to a quiet room or space and 10.1% to a gym. 11.2% had received training on physical and/or mental well-being, 7.7% exercise classes and 6.5% relaxation classes. One respondent (0.6%) said they had access to a games room.

Also mentioned in the 8 accompanying comments were massage, occupational health support, CBT and yoga classes.  A couple of respondents referred to the accessibility of pleasant outside spaces in which to take walks.  Three people, however, questioned the value of the activities and facilities referred to in this question, one pointing out that time taken away from the desk for relaxation or yoga classes simply makes it harder to fit the work in, and another that "well-being sessions… seem irrelevant when the behaviour of the bosses doesn't change".

### 5.2.3   Flexible working

Students, predictably, have less flexible working arrangements than their qualified counterparts.  21.8% felt they had insufficient flexibility, and 4.7% none at all.  15.9% said they had "plenty" of flexibility, 31.2% a moderate amount and 26.5% "a moderate amount, but I have to justify it".  However, as for qualified CIPA members, high workloads – in particular exam-related work – are major sources of stress and anxiety (see 4.2.2 above), and flexibility alone is unlikely to prevent that.

Three themes emerged from the 16 comments given here.  One was that even if people avail themselves of flexible or remote working options, they may still feel guilty (or be made to feel guilty) compared to colleagues who remain in the office, or put pressure on themselves to make up the time afterwards, or remain "on call" anyway due to international clients in different time zones.  Another theme was that often, flexible working and working from home are privileges limited to qualified attorneys rather than students.  The third theme was that while many students appear to have at least some flexibility in their working arrangements, many would like greater options to work from home.  There is of course a potential conflict here with the desire for more "hands-on" training.

There is clearly a big variation between employers.  Three people said they had flexi-time/core time schemes.  One said they had a lot of flexibility and could work from home two days a week if desired.  One, however, said they had "limited" flexibility and one that there was "no clear policy" on remote working.  Another said they had "zero flexibility" and one that "work/life balance is terrible as a trainee patent attorney".

The comments also referred to a range of types of flexibility, from being allowed time off for medical appointments, to being allowed to work from home in special cases such as when preparing for a client meeting or travelling to an EPO hearing or for emergency childcare.  Study leave is available for some, but this privilege often seems to be withdrawn for exam resits.

The comments also pointed out how useful flexible working arrangements would be (*would be*, note) for parents (especially single parents) and those suffering from stress or other mental health problems.  In the latter case, reference was made to the value of being able to work away from the office if you don't want colleagues to know about the problem.

### 5.2.4   Extra support wanted

Only 37 students answered the question about the further support they would like access to, but they gave a range of suggestions, many mirroring those of their qualified counterparts.

Some of the suggestions concerned relationships with supervisors: there were 4 mentions of training (including on mental health-related issues) for trainers and managers; 2 of better and more consistent training for their own exams; and 2 of a more sympathetic or less demanding manager. One person commented that "an understanding boss is the key thing".

Inevitably, there were exam-related suggestions: 2 mentions of improvements to the exam system; 2 requests for less reliance to be placed on exam results (as opposed to, say, course work); 2 for more CIPA support for resit candidates; and 2 for lower resit fees when trainees have to pay their own. Related to this were 3 mentions of improvements in workloads, including more understanding about exam pressures and dedicated time off for exam preparation. There were also 7 mentions of more flexible working hours and/or locations.

Some students said they would like access to training on stress, time and/or client management, and on safeguarding their mental well-being: this was mentioned 7 times, 2 of which related specifically to mindfulness training. There were also 6 mentions of physical activities, including relaxation, exercise, yoga or meditation classes; gym access; and standing desks.

Some asked for better access to support systems. For instance, there were 2 mentions of mentoring; 2 of a helpline, trained counsellor or careers advisor; and one of an independent body or mediator to deal with workplace discrimination and bullying. 3 respondents mentioned the need for better signposting to counselling and other support, especially for those in smaller firms. There were also 2 mentions of opportunities to meet other trainees, for example through the Informals; one of time off to attend student networking events; and one of a women's support group.

One person said they couldn't think of anything in this category. One expressed a desire for "access to any (all!) of the well-being activities listed above". Another, interestingly, took the view that further support was unnecessary, adding "I think it is something you have to manage, family and high achieving job".

It should be remembered, of course, that many students already have access to the types of support mentioned in these comments. Indeed, one respondent rightly pointed out that the survey had not given an option to say you were satisfied with current support levels, which presumably some of the respondents were, judging by the numbers responding to this question. However, the survey also tells us that many are not – in other words, that support levels and training standards vary considerably across the profession.

# 6    Results from survey page 4 – "Diagnosed mental health problems"

(For both versions of the survey, respondents were reassured that they need not answer these questions if they preferred; many, however, did.)

## 6.1 Main CIPA survey

### 6.1.1 Conditions and their treatment

153 people answered the first question, of whom 17.0% (26 responses) said they had experienced a medically diagnosed mental health problem in the previous two years. 25 of these 26 respondents went on to provide further information.

The majority described their condition as depression (8), anxiety (3) or a combination of the two (6). Two mentioned bipolar disorder. Other conditions mentioned included borderline personality disorder and obsessive-compulsive personality disorder; hypothyroidism; stress; risk of burnout; and in one case "post maternity leave bullying". A few people referred to conditions which had been ongoing for several years.

One commented: "I have not had it officially diagnosed since I do not want it on my medical records, but depression, anxiety".

Treatments which these people had undergone were mainly medication (15 mentions), counselling or psychotherapy (11 mentions), and CBT (8 mentions); 11 people had used a combination of two or more of these. One person referred to a month's inpatient stay in a mental health unit. No one reported having refused treatment.

Perhaps more disturbing is that 10 people had taken no time off work as a result of the problem (one justifying this by the problem being "not work-related"). The remainder had taken from a few days (4 respondents) to a couple of weeks (5) off work. Two people mentioned fitting in a few days off here and there, one of whom said that they still frequently struggled.

### 6.1.2 Workplace support

When asked "how supportive was your employer?", 9 said they hadn't told their employer about the problem. Of the remainder, 7 reported a supportive or very supportive response, 3 a moderately supportive response and 3 a lack of support. One mentioned that their employer had allowed them to work part-time on their return, but another that their line manager had assumed they could resume with a full workload immediately.

A similar question about support from colleagues yielded an almost equal split between those who had not discussed the issue with colleagues and those whose colleagues had been broadly or very supportive. In the latter category, one respondent commented that colleagues were mostly supportive but "a few took advantage", and another that colleagues were "supportive on the face of it but lacking in understanding when I worked shortened days".

When combined with the answers about time taken off to recover, these comments indicate that there is still a lack of understanding of, and a stigma attached to, mental health problems; the pattern emerging is that many professionals suffer in silence.

### 6.1.3    The return to work

The return to work, where applicable, was described as difficult by 4 people, and moderately to very easy by 6, although one commented that their return had been "easy at the time but, harder in retrospect".  Another had had to start working largely from home instead.

Also variable was the level of formal support on returning: only 4 respondents mentioned either a phased return or re-allocation of workload, and 4 specifically stated that they had received no support at all.

## 6.2    Student members' version

### 6.2.1    Conditions and their treatment

162 students answered the first question, of whom 21.6% (35 responses) said that they had experienced a medically diagnosed mental health problem in the previous two years.  34 of these 35 respondents provided more information.

Again the majority described their condition as depression (12), anxiety (12) or a combination of the two (4), one of the latter referring specifically to post-natal depression.  Other conditions mentioned included stress, low mood, borderline personality disorder, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, Asperger's syndrome and schizophrenia.

Treatments which these people had undergone were mainly medication (20 mentions), counselling or psychotherapy (13 mentions), and CBT (10 mentions).  13 respondents had undergone a combination of two or more of these.  Two, however, said that they had not had any treatment.

As regards time off work as a result of these problems, a similar pattern emerged as in the main CIPA survey.  13 students had taken no time off; 4 had taken 1-2 days; 7 had taken 1-2 weeks; and 3 had taken more than 2 weeks.  3 people said they had taken occasional "flexitime" to cover medical appointments.

### 6.2.2    Workplace support

Responses to the question "how supportive was your employer?" were reasonably encouraging: 12 said that their employers had been very supportive, although some commented that certain colleagues (typically, although not always, the direct line manager) were noticeably more supportive than others.  2 said their employers had been reasonably or quite supportive.  3, unfortunately, had found their employer unsupportive, one referring to "the complete opposite of support" and another to having been fired as a result of the problem.

In 5 cases, respondents had not told their employers about the problem.  There were references to attributing time off work to physical rather than mental health symptoms, and to telling only a few select colleagues within the organisation.

10 respondents said that their colleagues, when they knew about the problem, had been very supportive, in particular their peers.  6 said that their colleagues didn't know about the problem, 2 that only a chosen few had been told.  One commented that "the ones who know don't mention it".

### 6.2.3   The return to work

For those who took time off, there was a spectrum of experiences on returning to work, from very or quite easy (6 responses) to very difficult (1 response).  One person commented that it had been difficult but had settled down after a few months, and one that having their imminent deadlines taken care of had helped ease them back into post.

When asked what kind of back-to-work support their organisation provided, 5 people said none (one adding "but I did not ask for any"); one mentioned the reduced case load and removal of imminent deadlines referred to above; one said that regular catch-ups had been all that was needed; and one talked of a "supportive environment".  Another more worrying comment ran: "Ha!  I was told never to do it again."  Systematic support structures appear to be rare.

# 7 Results from survey page 5 – "Your overall mood and job satisfaction levels"

## 7.1 Main CIPA survey

Respondents were asked: "When your work is going well, how would you describe your level of job satisfaction?" 34.4% said excellent, 44.6% good and 15.3% fairly good. Only 3.2% (5 people) said "not so good" and nobody answered "poor". Four respondents offered additional comments, one of whom said that they enjoyed their job very much, even when not feeling good mentally; they regarded their job satisfaction as unaffected by workplace stresses.

The news was less good in response to the "snapshot" question about current moods at work, which 33.8% described as either uncomfortable, unhappy or very unhappy. 22.3% described their current mood as either happy or very happy, and 40.1% described it as "comfortable". The 6 people who volunteered further answers talked of feeling "excited but challenged" or "tired", or referred to working from home being potentially "isolating". One described their mood as "comfortable despite unusually stressful business circumstances", wondering whether this meant they were (a) coping very well or (b) in denial. One reminded that sometimes it can be the personal life that generates the mental health problems and the workplace which offers respite.

Clearly this is a profession which, though it carries significant risks of stress and anxiety, is able to deliver high levels of satisfaction during good periods. Whether those good periods are long and frequent enough to counter the problems is another issue.

Finally, respondents were asked to what extent they thought their current job satisfaction level would be improved by a more open and sensitive approach to mental health in their workplace. 16.6% thought a great deal, 24.8% a moderate amount, 24.8% a little. 22.9% thought it would be hardly or not at all improved. 10.8% said they didn't know.

## 7.2 Student members' version

When asked about job satisfaction levels when their work is going well, 45.5% of student respondents said excellent, 40.7% good and 9.0% fairly good. Only 1.8% said "not so good" and 1.2% (2 people) answered "poor". It is encouraging to see that the profession's newest members value their work so highly.

In the accompanying 3 comments, again the unrelenting and often all-consuming focus on exam performance was cited as detrimental to job satisfaction. One person pointed to client satisfaction adding to their own job satisfaction, describing a career in the patent profession as "very rewarding". Another, however, mentioned that their satisfaction levels were significantly lower when made to work, unsupervised, at a level beyond that to which they felt they had been trained.

When students were asked about their *current* mood at work, 22.8% described it as either uncomfortable, unhappy or very unhappy; 39.5% as comfortable; and 33.5% as either happy or very

happy.  Although again less encouraging than the figures for *potential* job satisfaction, these are more positive "snapshot" figures than for the main CIPA membership.

The 7 comments offered in response to this question made interesting reading.  One person talked of oscillating between comfortable and uncomfortable.  One talked of frustration.  One said they were currently "very happy" – because they had left the profession.  One said they had experienced a tough period recently, but spoken to their line manager and adjusted their workload so were now finding things more manageable.  Specific problem areas were flagged up: exam stress, the difficulty of settling when under the cloud of a 6-month probation period, and office politics.  One student commented that they were generally happy, but that their boss "can be unreasonable/temperamental".

These responses confirm that the patent profession is *capable* of delivering job satisfaction, but that it often fails to do so.  For students, a great deal of the mis-match is due to exam-related pressures, which are possibly inevitable although there may be more that the profession, and individual employers, can do to mitigate their detrimental effects on workplace happiness: see sections 8 and 9.

17.4% of student respondents thought that their current job satisfaction level would be improved "a great deal" by a more open and sensitive approach to mental health in their workplace.  29.9% expected a moderate amount of improvement, 27.5% a little, and 16.8% hardly any or none at all. 10.2% said they didn't know.  Overall, these figures suggest that students are more alert to the potential benefits of improving mental well-being and support than are qualified attorneys.

# 8    Discussion

## 8.1    Caveats

Obviously, care should be taken in interpreting these survey results.  Response levels were relatively low compared to the overall size of the patent profession (although still significantly higher than those for a recent Law Society survey: see 8.4 below).  This could be for various reasons, or more likely a mixture.  CIPA members may be too busy and stressed to find time to answer a survey – certainly those who did find the time painted a picture of high and stressful workloads.  The e-newsletters containing the survey links may simply not have been read by many busy professionals.  Possibly the subject of mental health is still sufficiently taboo for people not to want to share their experiences (again, this would fit with the answers received, which indicated that many with mental health problems have felt the need to keep them under wraps).

Equally, of course, there may overall be insufficient mental health problems in the profession to warrant responding to a survey about them.  The responses we received suggest otherwise, but we must bear in mind that the respondents to a mental health survey could to an extent be "self-selecting" and therefore unrepresentative of the wider community: people who have suffered are more likely to understand the importance of engaging with the issue, whereas those with good mental health may think the exercise unnecessary.

Against that we must accept the opposite possibility: that there are far more problems than the current responses revealed; that the survey has perhaps only scratched the surface as regards mental health issues in the patent profession.  A lot of our respondents have felt unable to share their mental health concerns with their employers or indeed their colleagues; this reluctance to talk may mean that there are actually large numbers in the profession (more than we know about) who are struggling but did not feel able to discuss that even in an anonymous survey.

It is always possible, of course, to view statistics either optimistically or pessimistically: one could for example worry that 66.9% of qualified CIPA members are adversely affected by high stress levels, or one could be encouraged that 33.1% are not.  Personally I believe that if 66.9% are suffering then that is a problem that needs addressing, even if a third of people are fine, but my analysis should be read in that light.

Subject to these caveats, however, I believe that the results of this survey have value in illustrating general trends within the patent profession; in painting a picture of the problems we face now and how they might evolve in the future; and in directing us towards measures which would improve the mental health of CIPA members and indeed of other IP professionals.

## 8.2    Key outcomes

The following key points emerge from the responses outlined in sections 4 to 7.

### 8.2.1 General prospects for the profession

- Although the patent profession has the potential to provide a rewarding career with high job satisfaction when things are going well, many of its members are not currently happy.

- A large proportion of them suffer from work-related stress, anxiety and depression. A significant number experience clinically-diagnosed mental health problems. It is worrying that some have contemplated self-harm or even suicide.

- There is evidence that these work-related problems are bad enough to affect people's personal lives as well.

- The profession is not as inclusive as it should be; there are significant levels of discrimination, harassment, bullying and other problems caused by colleagues' behaviour, and many attorneys feel the need to hide aspects of themselves in order to fit in at work.

- The profession is at risk of losing people because of these problems. Unhappy staff will at the very least seek to move elsewhere in the profession – so employers who are better able to safeguard their employees' mental well-being are likely to benefit from lateral hires and generally improved recruitment and retention.

- On the plus side, people's comments about the potential for job satisfaction suggest that it is worth trying to address the current mental health issues in the profession, and that the benefits of doing so could be high for employees and employers alike.

### 8.2.2 Workload

- Workload – and lack of control over it – appears to be the biggest cause of mental health problems, together with associated issues such as long hours, deadlines, onerous billing targets, client pressure and poor work-life balance.

- These problems are exacerbated by the "silo" nature of the job. When people take time off, whether in an attempt to de-stress, through illness or for whatever reason, they suffer on their return because the workload remains their problem.

- Similarly, although flexible working arrangements (including home-working) appear to be valued in this context, if the overall workload is too high then the problem is not alleviated by being free to work on it at different times of day or in different locations.

- People feel vulnerable when they know that there is inadequate capacity planning or contingency provision; this may indeed affect their willingness to speak out about their mental health problems.

- Those with a mental health problem often do not take time off work for it: this could be due to the associated stigma (see 8.2.3 below), but it could also be because time off ultimately exacerbates workload pressures.

- These issues mean that where support such as relaxation classes, stress management training or gym membership is available, it is sometimes viewed cynically by staff who simply do not have the time to make use of it, or who perhaps believe that managers are using such measures to get more out of their already overworked personnel.

The emphasis on high workloads and their impact aligns with the results of the 2018 Fellows and Associates salary survey of the IP profession[2]. This survey, which embraced both patent and trade mark attorneys, asked what respondents regarded as important in a prospective employer: 44% rated "support for work/life balance" as very important, a higher figure than that for base salary.

### 8.2.3 Stigma

- There is still a great deal of stigma, in the patent profession, around mental health problems. Even those prepared to answer this survey often did not tell their employers, or sometimes their colleagues, when they were suffering.

- Many people with mental health problems (even those undergoing medical treatment) took no time off work. This may of course be partly due to the issues discussed in 8.2.2, but respondents also gave a clear impression of not wanting to discuss their mental health with employers. It is possible that these people are nevertheless taking time off with physical illnesses that are linked to their mental health.

- The relatively low response rates to this survey could have various causes, as discussed at 8.1 above, but may well be partly due to the fact that mental health is still a taboo subject for many, or one that they are ill-equipped to talk about. I believe people are still encouraged to think that "resilience" to workplace stress is essential for a career in the patent profession, and mental health problems therefore a sign of failure.

### 8.2.4 Access to mental health support

- The mental health support available to patent professionals through their employers is currently variable in amount and quality, and it is clearly not always effective.

- Many who in theory have access to support feel unable to make use of it in practice, typically because they are too busy.

- Improving support and awareness of mental health issues is generally thought to be a good thing; respondents made many constructive suggestions around this, which the profession would do well to follow up.

- Training was one of the key forms of support respondents said they would value, both in managing workloads and stress levels and also on mental health more generally: this could help to destigmatise mental illness and empower people to talk about it and seek support for themselves.

- Better signposting of information and support was also on respondents' wish-lists.

- There are several things that respondents would like CIPA, as the central membership body, to do to improve support for the profession, for example providing access to counselling and/or to an independent arbiter, signposting relevant resources and organising training.

- Very few people mentioned having access to, or training in, mental health first aid, yet respondents often spoke of a need for more hands-on help and advice. This may be

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[2] http://www.fellowsandassociates.com/uploads/FellowsSalarySurvey2018.pdf; see also http://www.ipinclusive.org.uk/blog/work-life-balance-more-important-than-benefits-and-bonuses

something which both individual organisations and CIPA could provide and encourage (see 9.5.1 below).

## 8.3    Distinctions between students and more senior CIPA members

Students' responses were broadly in line with those of their qualified counterparts, but there were a few significant differences.

### 8.3.1    Survey response rates

The higher response rate for the student survey was the most notable of these.  It may have been due to a number of factors.  Possibly students have more time for such things, or at least prioritise their time differently.  Possibly the Informals are better at reaching their members through their bespoke "Yellow Sheet" communications.  But it is also possible that younger members of the profession are more aware of mental health issues and more willing and able to talk about them; certainly they seemed to be more forthcoming with information and suggestions in the free text comment sections of the survey, and to recognise the importance of mental well-being and its impact on job satisfaction.

Their responses show that there is still a long way to go in the IP professions before there are open conversations on this subject, but greater candour in our newer recruits ought to bode well for future improvements.

### 8.3.2    Exam-related problems

For students, the main sources of stress and anxiety are, unsurprisingly, exam-related.  Sheer volume of work is again the biggest issue; combined with an increasing day-to-day case load, exam preparation can leave trainees with little in the way of work-life balance.

Survey respondents flagged up various associated problems: ill-equipped (in terms of time and/or training expertise) supervisors; inconsistent training standards; and the nature and difficulty of the exams and their alleged lack of suitability compared to other assessment methods.

These stresses are exacerbated by the profession's rigid focus on exam results as a measure of success, which brings additional fears around salaries, career prospects and even redundancy risks, and affects self-confidence in other aspects of the work.

There are clearly additional stresses for those doing resits, who may be less well supported by their employers, whose day-to-day work is inevitably more demanding by then and who – being typically older – may have increased personal responsibilities such as young children to cope with.

### 8.3.3    Other differences

Although there is inevitably less room for flexible working at this level of a patent attorney's career, nevertheless on the whole employers appear to be taking marginally more care of their trainees' mental well-being than that of their qualified staff, for example providing access to mentors.  This may of course be an artefact of the survey, since the student respondents were more likely to be in larger firms and larger firms have greater resources with which to provide support.  And it should be

borne in mind that even these apparently higher support levels are still, for many students, insufficient to combat the stresses associated with the qualifying exams.

Certainly, however, mental health support seems to fall off after qualification, when people are left to fend for themselves and their colleagues are not expected to, nor equipped to, monitor their mental well-being.  This can presumably also impact on the morale of the students they train.

Students also responded slightly more positively than qualified attorneys about potential job satisfaction levels (ie "when things are going well").  It may be that younger people are on the whole more optimistic and/or at a less stressful period of their personal lives.

Students reported slightly fewer incidences of mental health problems, but slightly higher associated absentee rates (see 4.2.1 above).  These differences are not, however, startlingly large.

## 8.4    Comparison with the wider legal profession

This report is not the place for an in-depth comparison with mental health problems in other sectors, but it is worth mentioning a report of a "Resilience and wellbeing" survey conducted by the Law Society's Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) in early 2018, available at http://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/Uploads/p/d/i/jld-resilience-and-wellbeing-survey-report-2018.pdf.  Bearing in mind the caveats in 8.1 above, it is useful to compare our survey results – in particular those from the student version of our survey – with data from the wider legal profession.

The JLD survey had a 1.4% response rate, well up on a similar survey conducted the previous year, but still significantly lower than that from the CIPA Informals.  It revealed that more than 90% of respondents had experienced stress in their role (26% of those experiencing severe or extreme levels of stress), while more than 38% had experienced a mental health problem in the previous month, whether formally diagnosed or not.  A high proportion (well over 50%) of those suffering severe or extreme stress levels also reported regularly feeling unable to cope.

The most commonly selected causes of stress were high workload; client demands and expectations; and in particular problems with family life and relationships as a result of work-related stress. Working with vulnerable clients also appeared to exacerbate stress.

40% of the junior lawyer respondents said they worked for organisations which offered mental health guidance and support.  39%, however, said they did not know what support was available, and the majority (even those whose employers already made some provision) thought their employers could do more to help with stress and mental health problems at work.

The survey also revealed that 40% of respondents had looked for another job as a result of the stress experienced at work in the previous month.

It appears, then, that mental health is a bigger challenge for the legal profession generally than for the patent sector specifically, but that the patent profession is a little behind in terms of employee support.  It is notable that workload again features highly as a stress-inducing factor.  Juggling

qualifying exams with a day-to-day case load is not, however, an issue for junior lawyers as it is for student patent attorneys.

In the introduction to its report, the Junior Lawyers Division concludes that "The legal profession still has a long way to go to alleviate the stigma relating to mental ill-health", and moreover points out that:

> *There is real value in investing time and resource to improve employees' mental wellbeing and mental health. The legal profession is at risk of losing some of its best talent if employers do not begin to embrace their employees' wellbeing as a key asset for their business.*

# 9    Recommendations

## 9.1    Who can use these results, and how

Despite its limited response rates, this survey does give us an idea of the issues most likely to cause stress, anxiety and associated mental health problems, and of the measures most likely to be valued in addressing them.  Some useful suggestions have been made, which I believe can be used by individual employers within the patent profession; by CIPA as the central membership body; by IP Inclusive as part of its efforts to improve diversity and inclusivity in the IP professions; and by charities such as LawCare and Jonathan's Voice who seek to provide mental health support in this sector.

Employers in particular can use this information to build safer and more attractive working environments with which to attract and retain recruits.  They can become better at preventing mental health problems and supporting the people who suffer them, which should improve both morale and productivity.

CIPA and IP Inclusive can encourage best practices amongst their members and supporters; raise awareness of mental health issues and help to destigmatise them; provide training and potentially other supporting resources; and signpost information and support available elsewhere.

Charities can increase awareness of the resources they provide (the survey shows that LawCare is as yet little used or understood in the patent profession), and in particular can help smaller organisations – who may lack the resources to adopt their own training and support schemes – to improve their mental health policies.

## 9.2    The workload problem

The issue of work levels is a difficult one but it is also clearly the most damaging and it has to be tackled.  The problems facing qualified patent attorneys (long working hours, high expectations and lack of capacity planning and back-up) appear to be developing in much the same way for those coming through in the next generation.  This is a profession that attracts high achievers – but they have to work alone and under pressure, in a job that is deadline-driven, accuracy-dependent and intellectually challenging.  All of these factors help to create and exacerbate mental health problems.  Indeed the survey results confirm that large numbers of patent attorneys are already struggling, some to a dangerous extent; if the stress levels reported here are allowed to continue, or worse, to increase, our profession will be facing serious problems in the future.

Essentially, we need to distribute work more thinly and improve our capacity and contingency planning.  We need to make it possible for patent attorneys to step back from the stress when it becomes too much and to seek appropriate help – and create an environment in which doing so does not imply failure or compromise prospects.  I appreciate, however, that reducing workloads is easier said than done: it is hard to get new recruits into such an exacting profession, and the recruitment process can itself create discouraging or even unfeasible amounts of additional stress

for the very people it is supposed to relieve. The same applies to capacity planning, team-working, delegation and other measures intended to distribute workloads more sensibly.

Reducing workloads per se may also be a difficult sell to employers because of the potential loss of short-term profits. Arguably, since stress and mental health problems are not actually causing patent attorneys to take time off work, there is no immediate business case for addressing them. Instead, employers will need to be persuaded that capacity and contingency planning not only supports their employees, but also increases productivity and helps prevent longer-term problems due to employee "burn-out", mistakes, serious illness and prolonged absence. It also reduces the loss of talented staff either to other employers or to an alternative career altogether, which could otherwise be damaging both to individual businesses and to the profession as a whole.

It may take years to change the "workaholic" mind-set that still drives many patent attorneys and the expectations of those around them. The same applies to the "silo" working pattern. Reducing the stigma around mental health, giving people the opportunity and the capability to talk about it, is key to catalysing these types of change and allowing the profession to explore alternative, more healthy, ways of working. Training will be vital, I believe.

## 9.3 The exam problem

For trainee patent attorneys, the main problems that need addressing are (i) the exams and (ii) the profession's attitude to them. This is not just a workload issue; it is also linked to the all-consuming importance we attach to exam success, as well as the need to provide better and more consistent training (including for the trainers themselves) and potentially to complement the exam system with less stressful assessment methods. On this latter point, I believe it is one thing to expect university students to study for exams when that is their main occupation, quite another to expect the same of people who also have a full-time job to do and increasing personal responsibilities.

Adapting the qualification system may also, of course, help the profession to recruit more effectively, and should make it easier to develop new recruits into productive team members. It could help, therefore, not only the incoming students but also the qualified professionals to whom they report.

## 9.4 The Stevenson-Farmer review

When considering our response to the issues identified by this survey, it is instructive to turn to the Stevenson-Farmer review of mental health and employers, "Thriving at work", which was prepared for the UK government in 2017[3].

This independent review looked at how employers can better support the mental health of their employees. It concluded that the UK faces a significant mental health challenge at work (around

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[3] Farmer, P. and Stevenson, D. (2017). Thriving at Work: The Independent Review of Mental Health and Employers. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf

15% of workers were found to have symptoms of an existing mental health condition), but that the stigma surrounding mental health is still a major barrier to employees seeking support. The fact that the authors were concerned about a 15% occurrence of mental health problems, whilst the patent profession seems to be looking at figures at least twice as high, underlines the importance of taking positive action in response to the current survey.

Farmer and Stevenson recommended that awareness and understanding of mental health issues be increased, amongst both employers and employees, in order to equip people with the tools to address them. They offered a set of mental health "core standards", which they urged all employers to adopt. These included (a) to produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan; (b) to develop mental health awareness among employees; (c) to encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling; (d) to provide employees with good working conditions; (e) to promote effective people management; and (f) routinely to monitor employee mental health and well-being.

The patent profession, composed largely of small- and medium-sized employers for whom the relatively straightforward measures (a) to (f) represent feasible targets, could do worse than to model its own response on the Stevenson-Farmer recommendations.

## 9.5    "Quick fixes"

It is possible to identify certain measures which could be implemented relatively easily and quickly. Broadly, they fall into two categories: (i) training and awareness-raising and (ii) support. These are not cure-alls, but they should provide short-term benefits. Thus, I suggest the following could be done, ideally over the next 12-18 months, to improve mental well-being in the patent profession.

### 9.5.1    Training and awareness-raising

Training and awareness-raising will be key to changing attitudes to mental health, which in turn will drive the provision of more and better support mechanisms and an increase in their uptake by those in need. Appropriate training is available from a range of sources, many referred to in the Stevenson-Farmer review. It includes so-called mental health "first aid" training, which equips people with the skills and vocabulary to start conversations with colleagues who need mental health support. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this type of training can catalyse change within an organisation, allowing just a few better-trained staff members to disseminate good practices and seed better support systems for all. I suggest this would be a good place for most patent attorney employers to start.

### 9.5.2    Recommendations for IP Inclusive and CIPA

In line with the wider recommendations in the Stevenson-Farmer review, it is appropriate that the two professional bodies CIPA and IP Inclusive do what they can to tackle mental health problems in the patent profession and to support the efforts of their members (in the case of IP Inclusive, its Charter signatories) in that regard.

IP Inclusive and CIPA (including, where appropriate, the Informals) could usefully:

- Signpost relevant information and resources, including helplines and training providers, and ensure members are aware of this signposting. (IP Inclusive, for example, is planning a dedicated page on mental health support as part of its website upgrade.)
- Work with LawCare to ensure their members are aware of its services and that it can understand and engage effectively with this part of its constituency.
- Provide accessible and cost-effective training for their members on issues relevant to mental well-being at work, in particular on mental health first aid but also for example on stress management and personal well-being.
- Incorporate basic training on mental well-being into CPD events such as CIPA's annual regional meetings, and into early-stage training such as the student induction day.
- Continue to organise events – for example discussions, seminars and webinars – on mental health-related topics.
- Continue to offer training and guidance to improve workplace inclusivity (for instance, training on unconscious bias).
- Collaborate with other organisations, including charities, to improve access to training and support for their members, especially those with fewer resources.

And potentially also:

- Establish a working group to consider the Stevenson-Farmer recommendations, with a view to encouraging and helping their members to implement those recommendations, for instance by providing resources such as template "mental health at work" plans.
- Work with the Patent Examination Board and IPReg, to address mental health problems associated with the current exam system.

### 9.5.3 Recommendations for individual employers
Individual employers could:

- Provide mental health first aid or similar training to their employees, in particular managers.
- Create and implement a mental health policy or plan.
- Encourage staff to discuss mental health in the workplace, involving senior members as role models to create an atmosphere of openness and candour.
- Do more in the way of capacity planning, by monitoring workloads and stress bottlenecks and providing adequate contingency plans as back-up for individual staff.
- Offer flexible working arrangements and ensure that the flexibility is genuinely usable without prejudice to career prospects.
- "Train the trainers", and schedule adequate time for the training process.
- Implement and enforce anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, underpinned by appropriate training.
- Recognise that stress can affect people at all stages, not just when new to the job or working for exams, and review and improve on the support available to more senior staff, for example through mentoring schemes.

And more generally:

- Implement the "mental health core standards" of the Stevenson-Farmer review.

Employers with the resources and the will to do so could also:

- Offer stress-alleviating facilities such as quiet spaces away from the desk, relaxation classes, gym membership and stress management training.
- Provide access to mental health professionals, for example through employee assistance programmes.

### 9.5.4   Recommendations for the profession as a whole

It would be helpful if the entire patent profession could collaborate to raise awareness of mental health issues in the workplace, and to initiate and maintain open and non-judgemental conversations.  In particular it could:

- Publicise the outcomes of and follow-up to the present survey.
- Publish blogs and articles on the subject, via for example the *CIPA Journal*, the IP Inclusive blog and relevant social media channels.
- Identify people with relevant personal stories, to create role models for others in the profession.
- Visibly and volubly mark Mental Health Awareness Week each year.
- Partner with external organisations with expertise in this area (for example charities such as LawCare and Jonathan's Voice, health care professionals and training providers).

Much of this work would of course be best co-ordinated by a central body such as CIPA or IP Inclusive.

### 9.5.5   A general comment

Training, awareness-raising and support mechanisms will undoubtedly help to remove some of the stigma around mental health in the patent profession.  But these measures will only be sticking plasters for the symptoms unless we also tackle the underlying causes – the sources of stress rather than the stress itself.  We need to get better at managing our people and the ways in which they work, and at helping them through the qualification process.  What we can hope is that the measures outlined above will give us the confidence to tackle those underlying problems.

## 9.6   Follow-up to the current survey

I suggest that IP Inclusive and CIPA seek to run a similar survey in the spring of 2020, ie two years after the first.  This would provide valuable information about whether the mental well-being of the profession was improving, whether CIPA members were becoming better able to talk about mental health issues, whether there was better support available to those with problems, and where there was still room for improvement or cause for concern.

It would be valuable, I believe, to run an analogous survey for CITMA members, the patent and trade mark professions occupying a shared space within the legal sector and having much in common.

The next survey could potentially include new or different questions, either to delve deeper into the key issues identified here, and/or to explore topics which have not yet been addressed, for example physical manifestations of mental health problems (eg sleep or dietary problems) and their impact on productivity; and dependency issues (in particular dependency on alcohol, nicotine, caffeine and recreational drugs).

Input could be sought from mental health professionals on the value of these and other potential survey questions. It may also be valuable to collaborate with organisations running similar surveys in other sectors (for example the Law Society's Junior Law Division), so that analogously-structured questions can yield more readily comparable data.

## Annex I
## Survey questions (main survey)

**1        Some basic questions about you**

This information is to help us put the survey results into context.  We will not ask for your name or contact details.  Your answers will remain anonymous, and will be kept confidential by IP Inclusive and CIPA.

If you are a student member of CIPA, please complete the alternative survey being circulated by the Informals.

If you have ceased practising in the last two years, feel free to respond based on your experiences immediately before you did so.

1.  What job do you do?
    a.  Patent and/or trade mark attorney
    b.  IP administrator/paralegal
    c.  Secretary
    d.  Other supporting role (eg HR, finance, office management)
    e.  Other (please specify)

2.  What career level are you at?
    a.  Not yet qualified
    b.  Qualified
    c.  Senior qualified (more than three years post-qualification)
    d.  Senior qualified with management responsibilities
    e.  Director or senior manager (non-owner)
    f.  Partner or director with business ownership
    g.  Other (please specify)

3.  What type of organisation do you work in?
    a.  Sole practitioner
    b.  Small private practice (1-10 staff including partners/directors)
    c.  Medium private practice (11-80 staff including partners/directors)
    d.  Large private practice (more than 80 staff including partners/directors)
    e.  Small in-house department (1-10 staff)
    f.  Medium in-house department (11-50 staff)
    g.  Large in-house department (more than 50 staff)
    h.  Other (please specify)

4.  Where do you work, mostly?

a. London
b. City other than London
c. Smaller town or village
d. From home
e. Outside the UK
f. Other (please specify)

## 2 How do you feel at work?

Please answer these questions based on your experiences *over the last two years*.

5. Which of the following have adversely affected your work (select as many as applicable)?
   a. High stress levels
   b. Anxiety
   c. Depression
   d. A diagnosed mental health problem other than the above
   e. None of these

6. How much time have you had off work due to stress or mental health problems?
   a. None
   b. A few days
   c. 1-3 weeks
   d. More than 3 weeks

7. Which of the following have caused you significant stress or anxiety at work (select as many as applicable)?
   a. Deadlines
   b. Billing targets
   c. Long hours
   d. Difficult clients
   e. Hearings or litigation
   f. The law changing quicker than you can keep up with
   g. CPD demands
   h. Performance reviews/appraisals
   i. Exams
   j. Training others
   k. Activities outside your comfort zone (eg presentations; formal hearings; "networking")
   l. Bullying (including inappropriate banter) or harassment
   m. Discrimination
   n. Socialising with colleagues
   o. The daily commute

p. On-the-job travel

q. Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities

r. International clients, different time zones and a need for 24-hour availability

s. Managing junior colleagues

t. Senior colleagues' behaviour

u. Business development

v. Business financial worries

w. Other business or management-related worries (eg regulation and compliance, legal, HR)

Please add comments if you wish regarding any of the above.

8. Which of the following negative feelings have troubled you at work (select as many as applicable)?

    a. Feeling you're not up to the job

    b. Feeling you don't fit in

    c. Pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with

    d. Lack of control over workload

    e. Fear of redundancy

    f. Anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability, mental health

    g. Needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues

    h. Ethical concerns about the work you're asked to do

    i. Considering leaving your current job

    j. Considering leaving the profession

    k. Wanting to harm yourself

    l. Contemplating suicide

Please add comments if you wish regarding any of the above.

9. To what extent has stress at work affected your relationships outside of work?

    a. A lot

    b. Quite a lot

    c. A little

    d. Very little

    e. Not at all

    f. Not sure

10. Are you aware of the support available from the charity LawCare, which supports mental health in the legal community?  YES/NO

11. Which, if any, of the following forms of support have you drawn on (select as many as applicable)?

 a. The LawCare helpline or website

 b. Another helpline or charity (eg The Samaritans) (please use the box below to specify which)

 c. Family or friends

 d. GP

 e. Counsellor or therapist

 f. None

 g. Other (please specify)

## 3 What support do you have at work?

12. Which of the following forms of support do you have access to through work (select as many as applicable)?

 a. A sympathetic line manager

 b. Sympathetic HR personnel

 c. A personal mentor

 d. Support networks or groups (eg for women, LGBT+, BAME)

 e. A trained counsellor

 f. A third party-managed "employee assistance programme"

 g. Private health care which extends to mental health problems

 h. A mental health "first-aider" or similar

 i. No such support

 j. Other (please specify)

13. What well-being activities or facilities do you have access to through work (select as many as applicable)?

 a. Gym

 b. Quiet room or space

 c. Games room

 d. Informal cafeteria

 e. Training on physical and/or mental well-being

 f. Exercise classes

 g. Relaxation classes

 h. None

 i. Other (please specify)

14. How much flexibility do you have in your working arrangements?

 a. Plenty

b. A moderate amount

c. A moderate amount, but I have to justify it

d. Not enough

e. None at all

Please add comments if you wish.

15. What further support would you like to have access to, either in the workplace or through CIPA?

## 4 Diagnosed mental health problems

Again, all the information you provide will be both anonymous and confidential. But we appreciate that this is a sensitive area, so please feel free to skip these questions if you prefer.

16. In the last two years, have you experienced a medically diagnosed mental health problem? YES/NO

17. If so, and you're willing to provide further information, please tell us briefly:
    a. What was the problem?
    b. What if any treatment did you undergo (eg medication, counselling, CBT)?
    c. Roughly how much time, if any, did it cause you to take off work?
    d. How supportive was your employer?
    e. How supportive were your colleagues?
    f. If applicable, how easy did you find the return to work?
    g. What kind of back-to-work support did your organisation provide (eg a phased return)?

## 5 Your overall mood and job satisfaction levels

18. When your work is going well, how would you describe your level of job satisfaction?
    a. Excellent
    b. Good
    c. Fairly good
    d. Not so good
    e. Poor

Please add comments if you wish.

19. How would you describe your *current* mood at work?
    a. Very happy
    b. Happy
    c. Comfortable
    d. Uncomfortable
    e. Unhappy
    f. Very unhappy

    Please add comments if you wish.


20. To what extent would your current job satisfaction level be improved by a more open and sensitive approach to mental health in your workplace?
    a. A great deal
    b. A moderate amount
    c. A little
    d. Hardly or not at all
    e. Don't know


**Thank you!**

Thank you for completing this survey for us.  We hope our questions have not worried or upset you, but if they have, please consider contacting LawCare: their free, independent helpline is available for all CIPA members.

## Annex II
## Survey questions (student members' version)

**1       Some basic questions about you**

This information is to help us put the survey results into context.  We will not ask for your name or contact details.  Your answers will remain anonymous, and will be kept confidential by IP Inclusive and CIPA.

1. How far are you into your training?
   a. I haven't taken any exams yet
   b. I've passed at least some of the Foundation exams or an equivalent (eg Queen Mary) course
   c. I've passed all of the Foundation exams or an equivalent course
   d. I've passed some of the Final exams and/or some of the EQEs
   e. I'm part-qualified (either EPA or CPA but not both)

2. What type of organisation do you work in?
   a. Small private practice (1-10 staff including partners/directors)
   b. Medium private practice (11-80 staff including partners/directors)
   c. Large private practice (more than 80 staff including partners/directors)
   d. Small in-house department (1-10 staff)
   e. Medium in-house department (11-50 staff)
   f. Large in-house department (more than 50 staff)
   g. Other (please specify)

3. Where do you work, mostly?
   a. London
   b. City other than London
   c. Smaller town or village
   d. From home
   e. Outside the UK
   f. Other (please specify)

**2       How do you feel at work?**

Please answer these questions based on your experiences since you joined the profession.

4. Which of the following have adversely affected your work (select as many as applicable)?
   a. High stress levels
   b. Anxiety

  c. Depression

  d. A diagnosed mental health problem other than the above

  e. None of these

5. How much time have you had off work due to stress or mental health problems?

  a. None

  b. A few days

  c. 1-3 weeks

  d. More than 3 weeks

6. Which of the following have caused you significant stress or anxiety at work (select as many as applicable)?

  a. Deadlines

  b. Billing targets

  c. Long hours

  d. Difficult clients

  e. On-the-job training

  f. External training (eg courses)

  g. Exam performance fears

  h. Finding the time for exam preparation

  i. Performance reviews/appraisals

  j. Activities outside your comfort zone (eg presentations; formal hearings; "networking")

  k. Bullying (including inappropriate banter) or harassment

  l. Discrimination

  m. Socialising with colleagues

  n. The daily commute

  o. On-the-job travel

  p. Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities

  q. International clients, different time zones and a need for 24-hour availability

  r. Senior colleagues' behaviour

Please add comments if you wish regarding any of the above.

7. Which of the following negative feelings have troubled you at work (select as many as applicable)?

  a. Feeling you're not up to the job

  b. Feeling you don't fit in

  c. Pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with

  d. Lack of control over workload

  e. Fear of redundancy

Report of IP Inclusive & CIPA survey for Mental Health Awareness Week 2018

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f. Anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability, mental health

g. Needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues

h. Ethical concerns about the work you're asked to do

i. Considering leaving your current job

j. Considering leaving the profession

k. Wanting to harm yourself

l. Contemplating suicide

Please add comments if you wish regarding any of the above.

8. To what extent has stress at work affected your relationships outside of work?
   a. A lot
   b. Quite a lot
   c. A little
   d. Very little
   e. Not at all
   f. Not sure

9. Are you aware of the support available from the charity LawCare, which supports mental health in the legal community? YES/NO

10. Which, if any, of the following forms of support have you drawn on (select as many as applicable)?
    a. The LawCare helpline or website
    b. Another helpline or charity (eg The Samaritans) (please use the box below to specify which)
    c. Family or friends
    d. GP
    e. Counsellor or therapist
    f. None
    g. Other (please specify)

**3      What support do you have at work?**

11. Which of the following forms of support do you have access to through work (select as many as applicable)?
    a. A sympathetic line manager
    b. Sympathetic HR personnel
    c. A personal mentor
    d. Support networks or groups (eg for women, LGBT+, BAME)

e. A trained counsellor

f. A third party-managed "employee assistance programme"

g. Private health care which extends to mental health problems

h. A mental health "first-aider" or similar

i. No such support

j. Other (please specify)

12. What well-being activities or facilities do you have access to through work (select as many as applicable)?

a. Gym

b. Quiet room or space

c. Games room

d. Informal cafeteria

e. Training on physical and/or mental well-being

f. Exercise classes

g. Relaxation classes

h. None

i. Other (please specify)

13. How much flexibility do you have in your working arrangements?

a. Plenty

b. A moderate amount

c. A moderate amount, but I have to justify it

d. Not enough

e. None at all

Please add comments if you wish.

14. What further support would you like to have access to, either in the workplace or through CIPA?

## 4 Diagnosed mental health problems

Again, all the information you provide will be both anonymous and confidential. But we appreciate that this is a sensitive area, so please feel free to skip these questions if you prefer.

15. In the last two years, have you experienced a medically diagnosed mental health problem? YES/NO

16. If so, and you're willing to provide further information, please tell us briefly:

a. What was the problem?

b. What if any treatment did you undergo (eg medication, counselling, CBT)?

c.   Roughly how much time, if any, did it cause you to take off work?

d.   How supportive was your employer?

e.   How supportive were your colleagues?

f.   If applicable, how easy did you find the return to work?

g.   What kind of back-to-work support did your organisation provide (eg a phased return)?

**5        Your overall mood and job satisfaction levels**

17.  When your work is going well, how would you describe your level of job satisfaction?

a.   Excellent

b.   Good

c.   Fairly good

d.   Not so good

e.   Poor

Please add comments if you wish.

18.  How would you describe your *current* mood at work?

a.   Very happy

b.   Happy

c.   Comfortable

d.   Uncomfortable

e.   Unhappy

f.   Very unhappy

Please add comments if you wish.

19.  To what extent would your current job satisfaction level be improved by a more open and sensitive approach to mental health in your workplace?

a.   A great deal

b.   A moderate amount

c.   A little

d.   Hardly or not at all

e.   Don't know

**Thank you!**

Thank you for completing this survey for us.  We hope our questions have not worried or upset you, but if they have, please consider contacting LawCare: their free, independent helpline is available for all CIPA members, including students.