

# Report of IP Inclusive & Jonathan's Voice survey for Mental Health Awareness Week 2022

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## Executive summary

### The survey

In spring and summer 2022, IP Inclusive and Jonathan’s Voice collaborated with CIPA and CITMA to survey mental wellbeing in the patent and trade mark professions. IP Inclusive recognises the importance of mental wellbeing in creating an inclusive working environment, and as such sees this project as a key element of its work this year.

Building on similar surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, this year the survey was extended to business support professionals working in patent and trade mark organisations, who are not necessarily members of either institute.

The survey was voluntary and anonymous. It aimed to capture data on mental health problems, in particular stress; their causes; their impact; the support available to help people cope with them; and the steps that might be taken to improve things. Separate, tailored versions of the survey were created for students; paralegals and business support professionals; and (the “main survey”) other CIPA and CITMA members.

### The respondents

Responses to this year’s survey were lower than in the previous years. There were 111 responses to the student survey. The new paralegal and business support version elicited 183 responses and the main version 181 responses. The ratio of CIPA to CITMA respondents was approximately 4:1 in the main survey and 19:1 in the student survey.

Respondents came from a range of professional roles, career levels and working environments, although in-house professionals were less well represented than private practice, the majority working in large private practice firms.

### Current mental health: the previous 12 months

Higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression were recorded than in 2019, particularly among students where 72% of respondents said that high stress levels had affected their work in the past year.

Significant numbers of respondents felt unable to talk to their employer about their mental health problems or take time off work, many feeling that they should be able to cope. These figures are marginally better than in the previous surveys. However, they suggest that stigma still surrounds mental health issues in the IP professions.

High workloads appear to be contributing significantly towards mental health problems, in the form of deadlines, billing targets and client demands/expectations. Exam preparation and performance

fears are also significant contributors for students. Insufficient control over workload and insufficient support were likewise prominent factors in all three surveys.

High workloads are also impeding alleviation of mental health issues, since having too much work and not wanting to let colleagues or clients down were significant reasons cited for not taking time off work. The majority of respondents were aware that you are allowed to take time off work for your mental health. However, many felt that they should be able to cope and had concerns around the impact on career prospects of taking time off for mental health.

In terms of negative feelings that have arisen at, or because of, work, high numbers of respondents in the student survey and the main survey had the feeling they were not up to the job and many feared making mistakes at work. Negative feelings linked to EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) such as feeling you don't fit in, pressure to conform, anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, and needing to hide aspects of oneself, were relatively common (up to 31%), particularly amongst student respondents.

Work-related stress had a significant impact on respondents in terms of difficulties concentrating on work and reduced productivity. There was also an impact in terms of the numbers of respondents nearly or actually making a work-related mistake. Significant numbers (up to half of respondents) were considering leaving their current job or leaving the profession.

Physical symptoms experienced which could be attributed to work-related stress commonly included fatigue and sleeping and appetite problems. Some had considered self-harming or had suicidal thoughts.

### Available workplace support

Whilst a significant proportion of respondents still appear unable to be fully open about their mental wellbeing among colleagues, many are able to turn to a sympathetic line manager or HR personnel.

Organisations have clearly invested in workplace support for mental health: the number of respondents with access to a trained mental health "first-aider" has more than doubled since the 2019 survey, and access to private health care which extends to mental health problem and to EAPs (employee assistance programmes) has also increased significantly across all respondents. In addition, the majority of this year's respondents have at least a moderate amount of flexibility in their working arrangements, levels of flexibility being significantly higher for all three groups than in 2019.

### Self-support practices

Many respondents rely on sympathetic family, friends or colleagues for mental wellbeing support. Nearly 30% of respondents in the main and student surveys have drawn upon the support of a counsellor or therapist.

Increasing numbers are accessing resources or support online, for example via Jonathan's Voice, IP Inclusive or the CIPA Informals.

### The effects of Covid-19

The effects of Covid both across and within the different groups of respondents were varied. The greatest consensus was amongst students in relation to their training and exams, where the majority of responders felt more concerned about these since Covid.

Significant numbers of respondents felt more concerned about their work-life balance than before the pandemic. This was particularly the case with respondents from the main survey, where nearly half indicated that they felt more concerned in this area, perhaps due to high workloads or perhaps suggesting difficulties in switching off from work when at home. This was also reflected in the responses regarding control over working hours, where over a third of respondents felt more concerned than before the pandemic.

Responses regarding parental/caring responsibilities were varied, but many with these responsibilities felt more concerned than before the pandemic.

In many aspects there was no change in how respondents felt post-Covid, eg in relation to job security, career progression, managing client demands and control over workload. Most respondents to the student and main surveys were less concerned about control over where they work since the pandemic, but this was not the case for all respondents to the paralegal and business support survey.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

During May 2022, timed to mark Mental Health Awareness Week (9-15 May), IP Inclusive<sup>1</sup> ran a survey on mental wellbeing in the patent and trade mark professions. The survey was also open for part of July 2022.

The project was a collaboration with the mental wellbeing charity Jonathan's Voice<sup>2</sup>, with the support of the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA)<sup>3</sup> and the Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA)<sup>4</sup>.

This year's survey was based on similar surveys conducted by IP Inclusive and CIPA in 2018, and by IP Inclusive, CIPA and CITMA in 2019. It 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. It also explored the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on workplace mental wellbeing.

## 1.2 This report

This report, which is publicly available, summarises the key outcomes. It is intended for use by IP Inclusive, Jonathan's Voice, CIPA, CITMA and other interested parties (including CIPA and CITMA members and their employers) to address problem areas in the professions. It was prepared for IP Inclusive by its Lead Executive Officer Andrea Brewster (who also created and managed the survey), its intern Susan Nelson, and its Executive Support Helen Smith.

The report covers:

- Information about the survey and its respondents (sections 2 and 3)
- The responses received (sections 4 to 9)
- A discussion of the key outcomes (section 10)

In reporting the survey responses, all tabulated figures are percentages of the respondents who answered the relevant question, unless otherwise indicated. Percentages are quoted to one decimal place. More accurate figures are provided in the SurveyMonkey® summaries referred to in Annex I, which are also available on the IP Inclusive website. Note that these summaries do not include the free text responses.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://jonathansvoice.org.uk>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.cipa.org.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.citma.org.uk/>



### **1.3 Comparisons with the 2019 and 2018 survey data**

Where helpful, the 2019 and/or 2018 results are included in Annex II. We have flagged where questions or response options differed between the two surveys. Please note that the 2018 survey was for CIPA members only whereas those in 2019 and 2022 were open to members of CIPA and CITMA. Additionally, in the 2022 survey all business support professionals were included, as opposed to only paralegal members of CIPA and CITMA in the 2019 survey.

Full reports of the previous surveys can be found at <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/1809-ip-inclusive-mental-wellbeing-survey-report.pdf> for 2018 and <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/190915-ipi-mhaw-survey-report.pdf> for 2019.

## 2 The survey

The survey was run online using IP Inclusive’s SurveyMonkey account. Participation was voluntary. Responses were collected and analysed anonymously.

The survey questions were compiled by Andrea Brewster, Chartered Patent Attorney and IP Inclusive Lead Executive Officer, with input from Jonathan’s Voice, CIPA, CITMA, CIPA’s student representative body (the Informals) and representatives of paralegals and business support professionals in the IP sector. Three versions were used, one tailored for student members of the two institutes (ie unqualified or part-qualified trainees), one for paralegal members and business support professionals, and one (referred to here as the “main survey”) for other institute members. The latter group comprises mainly qualified patent and/or trade mark attorneys.

The inclusion of all business support professionals in the second version, as opposed to only paralegal members of CIPA and CITMA, was new for 2022.

The questions were divided into five categories:

- How people had felt at work during the previous twelve months (see section 4 below)
- The workplace support available to them (section 5)
- The self-help measures they drew on (section 6)
- The impact of Covid-19 (section 7)
- Additional questions for paralegals and business support professionals only, including about the support available to them through IP Inclusive (section 8)

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 (see section 3 below). A “free text” box was provided at the end for respondents to add comments regarding their other survey answers (section 9).

The survey links were sent out to CIPA and CITMA members (including members of the CIPA Informals) and subscribers to the “IP Inclusive Updates” mailing list. They were also publicised through the IP Inclusive and Jonathan’s Voice websites and social media channels (see <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/newsandfeatures/our-2022-mental-wellbeing-survey/> for the post on the IP Inclusive website).

The surveys were open from 26 April to 31 May and from 4 to 22 July 2022.

## 3 The respondents

### 3.1 Response rates

This year's survey extended to both CIPA and CITMA members. Unlike those in 2018 and 2019, it also extended to business support professionals working in patent and trade mark organisations, who are not necessarily members of either institute; these respondents were catered for in the paralegals' version of the survey.

Response levels were lower than in 2019, but completion rates good.

**Table 1: Response & completion rates**

	Students	Paralegals & bus sup	Others
<b>Total responses</b>	111	183	181
<b>2019 response numbers</b>	253	155	608
<b>Completion rate</b>	81%	76%	85%
<b>Typical time spent</b>	7m 31s	8m 57s	7m 8s

### 3.2 Professional body membership

Respondents in all three versions of the survey represented both CIPA and CITMA. As expected, because this year's paralegals' survey was open to a wider range of business support professionals, a large proportion of its respondents were not members of either institute.

**Table 2: Professional body membership**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
(No. of respondents)	111	181	179
<b>CIPA</b>	94.6	22.1	78.2
<b>CITMA</b>	4.5	8.3	16.2
<b>Both</b>	0.9	8.3	5.6
<b>Neither</b>	N/A	61.3	N/A

### 3.3 Area of work/professional role

#### 3.3.1 Main survey

Respondents to the main survey were asked: "What job do you do?"

**Table 3: Professional role (main survey)**

	%
(No. of respondents)	181)
<b>Patent attorney</b>	77.4
<b>Solicitor</b>	1.1
<b>Trade mark attorney</b>	15.5
<b>Paralegal/IP administrator/formalities clerk</b>	1.1
<b>Searcher or information scientist</b>	0.6
<b>Other</b>	4.4

As in 2018 and 2019, the majority of these respondents were patent or trade mark attorneys, at a ratio of roughly 5:1.

Unfortunately an error in the survey did not allow the respondents to select (as intended) more than one option. Therefore, half of the people who selected “other” said that they were both patent and trade mark attorneys. The remaining “other” responses included “IP manager”, “patent examiner”, “general IP strategist” and “IP-related business & careers consultant”.

### 3.3.2 Paralegals’ & business support professionals’ survey

Respondents to the paralegals’ and business support professionals’ survey were asked: “Which of the following best describes the area you work in (please select more than one if applicable)? If none of these applies to you, please select ‘other’ and tell us more about your role.”

**Table 4: Professional role (paralegals and business support professionals)**

	%
(No. of respondents)	180)
<b>Paralegal role</b>	46.1
<b>Records or docketing</b>	19.4
<b>Formalities</b>	31.7
<b>Renewals</b>	15.6
<b>Finance</b>	9.4
<b>HR</b>	10.0
<b>IT</b>	8.3
<b>Marketing</b>	3.9
<b>Other</b>	13.9

A good range of roles were represented by the respondents, with many selecting more than one response. This suggests that many respondents are multi-skilled, working across roles, which may be indicative of the internal systems within an organisation. The respondents worked primarily on the paralegal, records and formalities side but also included professionals in other, not directly IP-related, areas such as HR, IT and marketing.

25 individuals replied “other” to this question working in roles such as systems, knowledge management, receptionist, business development, administration and research.

### 3.4 Career level

Across the three surveys, respondents represented a good range of career levels, from unqualified through to senior professionals with management responsibilities and/or business ownership. Table 5 shows the spread of other institute respondents (main survey); Tables 6, 7 and 8 show the spread of paralegal and business support respondents; and Tables 9 and 10 show the spread of CIPA and CITMA student respondents respectively.

#### 3.4.1 Main survey

Respondents to the main survey were asked “What career level are you at?”

**Table 5: Career level (main survey respondents)**

	%
(No. of respondents)	181)
<b>Not yet qualified</b>	N/A
<b>Qualified</b>	24.9
<b>Senior qualified (more than three years post-qualification)</b>	20.4
<b>Senior qualified with some management responsibilities</b>	12.7
<b>Director or senior manager (non-owner)</b>	10.5
<b>Partner, member or director with business ownership</b>	29.3
<b>Other</b>	2.2

The respondents were fairly evenly spread with around 40% being senior manager/director/partner level, 30% senior qualified (with or without management responsibilities) and 25% less than three years post-qualification.

The four “other” responses referred to being an in-house VP (two respondents), an associate examiner, and a paralegal.

#### 3.4.2 Paralegals’ and business support professionals’ survey

Respondents in this category were asked: “If you work as a paralegal, which of the following best describes your career level?”

**Table 6: Paralegal career level**

	Paralegals & bus sup %
(No. of respondents)	176)
<b>Not applicable; I don’t work as a paralegal</b>	38.1
<b>I am training, or intend to train, to qualify as a CIPA or CITMA paralegal member</b>	5.1
<b>I do not intend to qualify as a CIPA or CITMA paralegal member</b>	14.2
<b>I have been a qualified CIPA and/or CITMA paralegal member for less than 2 years</b>	8.0

	Paralegals & bus sup %
I have been a qualified CIPA and/or CITMA paralegal member for 2-10 years	24.4
I have been a qualified CIPA and/or CITMA paralegal member for more than 10 years	10.2

Around 60% of the respondents worked as a paralegal, and of those around two-thirds were qualified paralegal members of CIPA and/or CITMA, a small number were in training for this qualification, and a quarter did not intend to qualify.

They were also asked: “Are you responsible for managing more junior colleagues?”

**Table 7: Management of junior colleagues**

	Paralegals & bus sup %
(No. of respondents)	179
Yes	37.4
No	62.6

Around a third of the respondents did have management responsibilities.

Respondents in this category were also asked: “How long have you been working in the patent and trade mark professions?”

**Table 8: Length of time in the professions**

	Paralegals & bus sup %
(No. of respondents)	180
Less than a year	12.2
1-3 years	16.1
4-10 years	29.4
More than 10 years	42.2

Most of the respondents had been working in the patent and trade mark professions for more than 4 years, with 42% having more than 10 years’ experience. Only 12% had been working for less than a year in the professions.

### 3.4.3 Students' survey

Student respondents were asked: "If you are a student member of CIPA, how far are you into your training?" and "If you are a student member of CITMA, how far are you into your training?"

**Table 9: Stage of training/qualification (CIPA students) 2022**

	No. of Students
(No. of respondents)	109)
<b>I haven't taken any exams yet</b>	20
<b>I've passed at least some of the Foundation exams or an equivalent (eg Queen Mary) course</b>	13
<b>I've passed all of the Foundation exams or an equivalent course</b>	35
<b>I've passed some of the Final exams and/or some of the EQEs</b>	29
<b>I'm part-qualified (either EPA or CPA but not both)</b>	12

**Table 10: Stage of training/qualification (CITMA students) 2022**

	No. of Students
(No. of respondents)	9)
<b>I haven't started any course yet</b>	5
<b>I'm currently completing the Queen Mary University or Bournemouth University course</b>	3
<b>I'm currently completing the Nottingham Law School course</b>	1

Around a fifth of the CIPA students hadn't yet taken any exams, almost half had passed some or all of the Foundation exams or an equivalent, around a quarter had passed some of the Final exams and/or EQEs and around 10% were either EPA- or CPA-qualified (but not both). Of the CITMA students over half hadn't started any course yet and the remainder were attending one of the relevant courses.

### 3.5 Type of organisation

All respondents were asked: "What type of organisation do you work in? (Note that for this question, 'in-house' also covers government agencies and charities.)"

**Table 11: Type of organisation**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
(No. of respondents)	110	179	181)
<b>Sole practitioner</b>	0	0.6	4.4
<b>Small private practice (1-20 people)</b>	12.7	6.2	9.9

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
<b>Medium private practice (21-80 people)</b>	9.1	11.7	7.7
<b>Large private practice (&gt;80 people)</b>	69.1	52.5	56.9
<b>Very large private practice (&gt;500 people)</b>	5.5	15.6	9.4
<b>Small in-house (1-10 people)</b>	0.9	5.0	7.2
<b>Medium in-house (11-50 people)</b>	2.7	3.0	2.2
<b>Large in-house (&gt;50 people)</b>	0	2.8	1.7
<b>Other</b>	0	1.7	0.6

The vast majority of the students surveyed worked in private practice with less than 5% working in-house. In contrast around 10% of the respondents in both the other surveys worked in-house. In all the surveys the largest group of respondents worked in a “large” private practice (>80 and <500 staff, including partners/members/directors).

In the main survey, one “other” respondent indicated that they work in a small patent practice in a very large law firm. In the paralegals’ and business support professionals’ survey one “other” respondent indicated that they work for a brand protection service provider.

### 3.6 Geographical location

All respondents were asked: “If you work some or all of the time on your company's premises, where are they based?”

**Table 12: Geographical location**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
(No. of respondents)	111	180	180)
<b>Not applicable: retired or not currently working</b>	0	0.6	0
<b>City centre (London)</b>	40.5	22.8	39.4
<b>City centre (not London)</b>	30.6	41.1	31.1
<b>City outskirts (Greater London)</b>	0	1.1	1.1
<b>City outskirts (not London)</b>	9.0	3.9	5.0
<b>Town centre</b>	7.2	9.4	6.7
<b>Town outskirts</b>	0.9	1.7	0.6
<b>Out-of-town business/science park or campus</b>	6.3	3.3	6.1
<b>Smaller town, village or rural location</b>	1.8	2.8	3.9
<b>Outside the UK</b>	0.9	6.1	2.2
<b>Variable</b>	2.7	3.3	1.1
<b>Other</b>	0	3.9	2.8



Most of the respondents in each survey worked in the centre of London or another city centre, with the remainder working largely in town centres or in the outskirts of cities other than London. A few worked on business/science parks or campuses, with a minority working in more rural locations or abroad.

Of the people who answered “other” to this question, most of them stated that they worked from home or that their time was split between offices.

### 3.7 Remote working

All respondents were asked: “Roughly how many days a month do you work from home or another remote location of your choosing? (If you work part-time, please put the full-time equivalent.)”

**Table 13: Proportion of remote working**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents)	111	180	181)
<b>Less than 1 day a month</b>	5.4	4.4	2.2
<b>1-2 days a month</b>	5.4	2.2	2.2
<b>3-4 days a month</b>	8.1	6.7	2.8
<b>5-10 days a month</b>	21.6	18.3	18.8
<b>11-15 days a month</b>	35.1	35.0	39.2
<b>16-20 days a month</b>	6.3	12.8	20.4
<b>More than 20 days a month</b>	18.0	20.6	14.4

At the time of the survey, the majority of respondents were working remotely more than 10 days per month. The proportions of responses in each category were fairly even across all three surveys, demonstrating that the proportion of time spent working remotely was largely not linked to role. However, 40% of students were working remotely 10 days a month or fewer, compared to around 30% of paralegals/business support staff and 26% of the main survey, which is perhaps indicative of a preference for students to be in the office whilst training.

## 4 How you feel at work (the last twelve months)

### 4.1 General

People were asked to respond to these questions based on their experiences over the preceding twelve months.

### 4.2 Which of the following have adversely affected your work (please select as many as applicable)?

In all three categories, the figures suggest a high proportion of respondents suffering from the more common mental health complaints.

For the main survey respondents, and in particular the student respondents, these figures show considerably higher levels of anxiety, stress, depression and other mental health problems than in 2019. Only 16% of the student respondents and 17% of the main survey respondents stated that they had suffered from no mental health problems in the previous 12 months, compared to 31% and 29%, respectively, in 2019. The most common problems were high stress levels and anxiety, each affecting more than half of the student and main survey respondents.

For the paralegals' and business support professionals' survey, levels appear to show better mental health than in 2019, although the constituency is different so these results are not directly comparable. 37% of these respondents stated that they had suffered from no mental health problems. Again, high stress levels and anxiety were the most common issues (50% and 45%, respectively).

**Table 14: Stress & mental health problems (last 12 months)**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents)	100	154	168
<b>High stress levels</b>	72.0	50.0	59.5
<b>Anxiety</b>	62.0	45.5	56.0
<b>Depression</b>	36.0	21.4	27.4
<b>Other mental health problem (formally diagnosed or not)</b>	12.0	3.9	9.5
<b>None of these</b>	16.0	37.0	17.3

### 4.3 Did your employer (or at least your line manager or HR department) know you were experiencing these problems?

This year's respondents seem to be better able to disclose their mental health problems to their employers, at least in part. In all three categories, figures for "no" and "not sure" were lower than in 2019. The definite "yes" responses were however lower in both the student and the main version of

the survey, suggesting there are still barriers to full disclosure (paralegals and business support professionals again fared better in this regard).

**Table 15: Employer awareness**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents)	100	154	167)
<b>Yes</b>	11.0	20.8	15.0
<b>Yes, but not the full story</b>	28.0	20.1	19.8
<b>No</b>	40.0	20.8	41.3
<b>Not sure</b>	5.0	4.6	5.4
<b>Not applicable</b>	16.0	33.8	18.6

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

This year's figures are marginally better from the main and in particular the student surveys than in 2019 (fewer respondents taking no time off at all, more taking at least some recovery time). For the paralegals' and business support professionals' version, the figures appear worse than in 2019 (although are not directly comparable because of the nature of the survey cohort).

When considered in light of the Table 14 figures, it is clear that a high proportion of respondents had not taken time off to tackle the problems they were experiencing.

**Table 16: Time off due to mental health problems**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents)	100	153	167)
<b>None</b>	78.0	87.6	83.8
<b>A few days</b>	13.0	9.2	12.0
<b>1-3 weeks</b>	6.0	2.0	3.0
<b>&gt; 3 weeks</b>	3.0	1.3	1.2

#### 4.5 Which of the following caused you to take less time off work than you would have liked or than you felt you needed (please select as many as applicable)?

For all three groups, the feeling that "you should be able to cope anyway" was one of the top three causes for not taking time off work in response to mental health problems. For students, another was concern about impact on career prospects. In both cases this provides a further indication of stigma surrounding mental ill-health.

High workload was also one of the top three causes, again in all categories. For respondents to the main survey and the paralegals’ and business support professionals’ survey, the next biggest cause was not wanting to let colleagues down, probably linked to the high workload issue.

As in 2019, for the main survey respondents fear of letting clients down was higher than concern about their own career prospects.

**Table 17: Barriers to time off work (top 3 answers asterisked)**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others</b>
(No. of respondents	100	152	167)
<b>Not realising you were allowed to take time off for your mental health</b>	34.0	16.5	12.0
<b>Having too much work to do</b>	55.0*	45.4*	59.9*
<b>Not wanting to make life difficult for colleagues</b>	48.0	46.7*	49.7*
<b>Not wanting to let clients down</b>	19.0	7.9	38.9
<b>Concern about its impact on career prospects</b>	54.0*	19.1	35.3
<b>Concern about loss of income</b>	17.0	9.9	12.0
<b>Feeling you should be able to cope anyway</b>	65.0*	40.1*	46.1*
<b>Embarrassment</b>	34.0	20.4	18.6
<b>None of these / not applicable</b>	17.0	32.2	20.4
<b>Other</b>	13.0	4.6	17.4

As in 2019, it is clear that high workloads cause significant numbers of professionals to struggle on at work despite stress or mental ill-health, as do the desire not to let people down and a sense of personal inadequacy. These factors have a bigger impact than for example embarrassment or worries about loss of income.

Several key themes emerged from the “other” respondents. Some found it hard to take time off if they worked alone or within a smaller department/team. Others said that it was challenging to get others to cover their workload.

There was also a reluctance to take time off since being away from work was likely to result in deadlines building up, leading to further stress. The pressure to achieve billable hours was also given as a reason to not take time off work.

Others noted that they felt that their issues were not bad enough to merit time off or that it was difficult to take time off when everyone in the department/team was under the same stresses.

Some noted a fear of being judged by colleagues, commenting that an assumption exists that they should be “getting on with it”. Some indicated that their employer was not understanding of mental health and some felt unable to tell their employer that time off was for mental health issues.

Some student respondents indicated that they were simply too busy with work and exams to take a break.

In contrast, some of the paralegal and business support respondents said that they had continued working since it was a distraction from their mental health and it helped them to stay busy.

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

For this question, student respondents were given slightly different response options, with references to exam performance fears but not to management-related issues.

As in 2019, the key sources of stress and anxiety continue to be workload-related: deadlines, billing targets where applicable, insufficient control over the workload, long hours and client demands, the latter being a particular issue for the main survey respondents. Insufficient support and (especially for student respondents) poor management are also key factors. For the students, exam-related issues were understandably the two most-cited sources of stress and anxiety.

**Table 18: Causes of stress and anxiety (top 7 answers asterisked)**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
(No. of respondents)	99	152	168)
<b>Exam performance fears</b>	57.6*	N/A	N/A
<b>Finding the time for exam preparation</b>	68.7*	N/A	N/A
<b>Deadlines</b>	50.5*	37.5*	60.1*
<b>Billing targets</b>	48.5*	5.3	44.1*
<b>Long hours</b>	22.2	27.0*	31.6*
<b>Client demands &amp; expectations</b>	13.1	19.7	45.2*
<b>Insufficient control over your workload</b>	38.4*	33.6*	32.1*
<b>Insufficient support</b>	30.3*	29.6*	35.7*
<b>Your immediate working environment (eg comfort and privacy at your work station)</b>	4.0	7.9	11.3
<b>The resources available to you at work (eg IT and infrastructure)</b>	6.1	11.2	14.3
<b>On-the-job training</b>	24.2	N/A	N/A
<b>External training (eg courses)</b>	11.1	N/A	N/A
<b>Keeping up with changes in the law</b>	N/A	5.9	7.1
<b>Ineffective or inappropriate management / senior colleagues' behaviour</b>	26.3	21.7*	24.4
<b>Hearings or litigation</b>	N/A	N/A	15.5
<b>Performance reviews/appraisals</b>	29.3*	10.5	17.9
<b>Salary and/or benefits</b>	14.1	21.1	13.7
<b>Opportunities for career progression</b>	N/A	11.2	19.1

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
Team-working with colleagues (eg the extent to which you do this or how well the interactions work)	14.1	18.4	14.9
Training others	N/A	14.5	16.7
Activities outside your comfort zone (eg presentations, formal hearings or "networking")	13.1	10.5	25.6
Bullying (including inappropriate banter) or harassment	5.1	5.9	6.0
Discrimination	6.1	4.0	4.8
Your journey to and from work	8.1	25.0*	7.7
On-the-job travel	5.1	0.7	3.0
Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities	18.2	26.3*	32.7*
International clients, different time zones and the need for 24-hour availability	1.0	2.6	8.3
Managing junior colleagues	N/A	9.2	14.3
Business development	N/A	N/A	16.7
Business- or management-related worries (eg financial, regulation and compliance, legal, HR)	N/A	N/A	13.1
Covid-19-related health and safety concerns	15.2	17.1	19.6
Other health and safety concerns	0	2.6	6.0
None of these	8.1	15.8	3.6

Looking specifically at EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion)-related factors, we see higher reported levels of bullying, harassment and discrimination for student respondents than in 2019. It is possible that people of this generation are growing more alert to, and better equipped to speak about, these issues, for instance due to the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements. Conflict with home life is a bigger issue for the main survey respondents than for the other two groups.

**Table 19: Causes of stress and anxiety (EDI factors)**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
(No. of respondents	99	152	168)
<b>Bullying (including inappropriate banter) or harassment</b>	5.1	5.9	6.0
<b>Discrimination</b>	6.1	4.0	4.8

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
<b>Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities</b>	18.2	26.3	32.7

#### 4.7 If you can, now please select from those the three things you think have had the biggest impact on you.

For student respondents the biggest causes of anxiety were finding time for exam preparation, exam performance fears, deadlines and billing targets. For respondents to the main survey, deadlines and billing targets were of most concern, followed by client demands and expectations and conflict with home life and/or personal responsibilities. For paralegals and business support respondents, the biggest concerns were insufficient control over workload and insufficient support, as well as ineffective or inappropriate management behaviour and conflict with home life and/or personal responsibilities.

**Table 20: Three biggest causes of stress and anxiety (top 4 answers asterisked)**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
(No. of respondents	100	150	168)
<b>Exam performance fears</b>	38.0*	N/A	N/A
<b>Finding the time for exam preparation</b>	43.0*	N/A	N/A
<b>Deadlines</b>	34.0*	16.7	33.3*
<b>Billing targets</b>	26.0*	3.3	32.1*
<b>Long hours</b>	9.0	16.7	19.1
<b>Client demands &amp; expectations</b>	3.0	11.3	23.8*
<b>Insufficient control over your workload</b>	20.0	24.0*	17.9
<b>Insufficient support</b>	15.0	17.3*	19.1
<b>Your immediate working environment (eg comfort and privacy at your work station)</b>	2.0	4.7	0.6
<b>The resources available to you at work (eg IT and infrastructure)</b>	0	4.7	3.6
<b>On-the-job training</b>	6.0	N/A	N/A
<b>External training (eg courses)</b>	3.0	N/A	N/A
<b>Keeping up with changes in the law</b>	N/A	3.3	0.6
<b>Ineffective or inappropriate management / senior colleagues' behaviour</b>	14.0	17.3*	10.7
<b>Hearings or litigation</b>	N/A	N/A	4.8
<b>Performance reviews/appraisals</b>	11.0	4.7	7.1
<b>Salary and/or benefits</b>	8.0	16.7	4.8

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
<b>Opportunities for career progression</b>	N/A	8.0	8.3
<b>Team-working with colleagues (eg the extent to which you do this or how well the interactions work)</b>	4.0	6.7	5.4
<b>Training others</b>	N/A	4.0	2.4
<b>Activities outside your comfort zone (eg presentations, formal hearings or "networking")</b>	5.0	5.3	10.1
<b>Bullying (including inappropriate banter) or harassment</b>	3.0	6.0	2.4
<b>Discrimination</b>	3.0	2.7	1.8
<b>Your journey to and from work</b>	2.0	16.7	2.4
<b>On-the-job travel</b>	2.0		
<b>Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities</b>	7.0	18.0*	20.8*
<b>International clients, different time zones and the need for 24-hour availability</b>	0	0.7	1.2
<b>Managing junior colleagues</b>	N/A	2.7	6.6
<b>Business development</b>	N/A	N/A	7.1
<b>Business- or management-related worries (eg financial, regulation and compliance, legal, HR)</b>	N/A	N/A	6.0
<b>Covid-19-related health and safety concerns</b>	3.0	12.0	7.7
<b>Other health and safety concerns</b>	0	4.7	2.4
<b>Not applicable; none of them have caused you significant stress or anxiety in the last 12 months</b>	9.0	16.0	4.8

#### 4.8 Which of the following negative feelings have troubled you at, or because of, work (please select as many as applicable)?

In this part of the survey, the 2022 questions combine aspects of several questions in the 2019 version.

Compared to the 2019 results, higher numbers of respondents in all categories felt they were not up to the job. The fear of making mistakes was also high for all three groups and significant numbers in all groups also felt they didn't fit in. As previously, qualified respondents had the same fears around being up to the job and making mistakes as students, and this was also mirrored to a lesser extent in the paralegal and business support responders. Overall, lack of confidence in a high stakes, high quality working environment seems to be a key issue for everyone working in the sector.



Significantly more students felt anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, the need to hide aspects of themselves, and loneliness than the other two groups.

**Table 21: Negative feelings**

	Students	Paralegals & bus sup	Others
(No. of respondents	100	151	168)
<b>Feeling you're not up to the job</b>	78.0	42.4	64.9
<b>Feeling you don't fit in</b>	30.0	20.0	25.0
<b>Pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with</b>	16.0	11.9	14.3
<b>Fear of making mistakes</b>	78.0	48.3	59.5
<b>Fear of redundancy</b>	21.0	9.9	12.5
<b>Anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability or mental health</b>	31.0	13.3	22.0
<b>Needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues</b>	23.0	13.3	11.9
<b>Ethical concerns about the work you're asked to do</b>	7.0	2.7	3.0
<b>Loneliness</b>	27.0	14.6	22.0
<b>None of these</b>	10.0	24.5	11.9

Table 22 looks particularly at the negative feelings linked to EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion). These were more common amongst student respondents than the other two groups.

**Table 22: Negative feelings (EDI factors)**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others
(No. of respondents	100	151	168)
<b>Feeling you don't fit in</b>	30.0	20.0	25.0
<b>Pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with</b>	16.0	11.9	14.3
<b>Anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability, mental health</b>	31.0	13.3	22.0

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues</b>	23.0	13.3	11.9

#### 4.9 Which of the following have you experienced as a result of work-related stress (please select as many as applicable)?

Again in this part of the survey, the 2022 questions combine aspects of several questions in the 2019 version.

In all three groups, significant numbers of work-related mistakes have been made or nearly made as a result of work-related stress, that would not have happened otherwise. Around three-quarters of the respondents of both the main and student surveys have experienced difficulty concentrating and reduced productivity as a result of work-related stress.

Half of student responders and 40% of the other responders have considered leaving their current job and large numbers have also considered leaving the profession. These numbers are a significant increase compared to 2019 and should be a concern for businesses.

Worryingly, among the student and main survey respondents, the numbers noting thoughts of self-harm or suicide have also increased significantly since 2019.

**Table 23: Negative outcomes/situations**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others</b>
(No. of respondents	100	149	168)
<b>Making a work-related mistake that would not have happened otherwise</b>	35.0	27.5	17.3
<b>Nearly making a work-related mistake that would not have happened otherwise</b>	30.0	34.2	34.5
<b>Finding it hard to concentrate on your work</b>	72.0	49.7	75.6
<b>Reduced productivity</b>	73.0	35.6	73.2
<b>Considering leaving your current job</b>	50.0	40.3	41.1
<b>Considering leaving the profession</b>	43.0	21.5	33.9
<b>Problems with relationships outside of work</b>	25.0	10.7	29.8

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Wanting to harm yourself</b>	10.0	3.4	7.7
<b>Suicidal thoughts</b>	12.0	6.0	9.5
<b>None of these</b>	8.0	19.5	8.3

#### 4.10 Which of the following physical symptoms have you experienced that you believe resulted from work-related stress (please select as many as applicable)?

This is a new question for this year's survey, although some of the response options (eg fatigue and sleeping problems, appetite problems) were incorporated into other questions in 2019.

Respondents in all three categories reported high levels of fatigue and of appetite and sleep problems. Overall the student respondents reported the highest levels of physical symptoms, in line with the higher levels of stress and other mental health problems reported among this group. Respondents to the main survey reported the highest levels of increased dependency on alcohol, nicotine or recreational drugs.

**Table 24: Physical symptoms**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents)	96	150	167
<b>Severe fatigue</b>	45.8	40.0	38.9
<b>Sleeping problems</b>	64.6	58.0	60.5
<b>Appetite problems (eg loss of appetite or comfort eating)</b>	44.8	24.7	32.9
<b>Increased dependence on alcohol, nicotine or recreational drugs</b>	13.5	12.0	17.4
<b>Severe headaches/migraines</b>	18.8	24.0	21.6
<b>Skin complaints</b>	28.1	14.0	16.8
<b>Digestive problems</b>	35.4	29.3	19.2
<b>Any other negative impact on physical health</b>	10.4	7.3	13.8
<b>None of these</b>	13.5	22.0	20.4

## 5 The support you have at work

### 5.1 General

The questions in this section are the same as those asked in the 2019 survey.

### 5.2 Do you feel able to talk to colleagues about stress and mental health problems?

The paralegals and business support professionals, and in particular the main survey respondents, seemed marginally better able to discuss mental health with colleagues than their 2019 counterparts. For student respondents, however, there was not much improvement in the responses to this question compared to the 2019 results. In all categories, a significant proportion of respondents still appear unable to be fully open about their mental wellbeing among colleagues, emphasising the continuing need to destigmatise mental health problems in our workplaces so as to be able to address them appropriately.

**Table 25: Ability to talk to colleagues**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
(No. of respondents)	100	150	168)
<b>Yes</b>	15.0	26.7	16.1
<b>To a limited extent (eg only to certain colleagues and/or about certain types of problem)</b>	62.0	56.0	67.9
<b>No</b>	21.0	15.3	13.1
<b>Not sure</b>	2.0	2.0	3.0

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

Table 26 shows the forms of support that our survey respondents said they had access to through their work, together with figures for the “not sure” and “none at all” responses. For each survey the top 5 responses are asterisked.

As in 2019, the most common types of support were those provided by colleagues in the form of sympathetic line managers and HR personnel. Organisations have clearly invested in workplace support for mental health: the proportion of respondents with access to a trained mental health “first-aider” has more than doubled since the 2019 survey, whilst access to (a) private health care which extends to mental health problems and (b) EAPs (employee assistance programmes) has also increased significantly across all respondents.

Support which is available to fewer respondents (20% or less) includes: support networks or groups, trained counsellor, exercise or relaxation classes, wellbeing training, back to work support, and access to relaxation facilities.

Fewer than 10% of all respondents indicated that they had access to no support at all, which is an improvement since the 2019 survey.

The “other” responses referred to sympathetic support staff and colleagues, an autism specialist support worker, regular check-ins, informal welfare resources and regular webinars on health and wellbeing topics.

**Table 26: Available workplace support (top 5 answers asterisked)**

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
(No. of respondents	100	150	168)
<b>A sympathetic line manager</b>	51.0*	57.3*	53.6*
<b>Sympathetic HR personnel</b>	32.0*	28.7*	35.7*
<b>A trained mental health “first-aider”</b>	58.0*	40.0*	54.2*
<b>Another type of internally-appointed mental health champion</b>	4.0	6.0	8.3
<b>A personal mentor</b>	23.0	4.0	14.9
<b>Private health care which extends to mental health problems</b>	43.0*	26.7*	39.3*
<b>A third party-managed “employee assistance programme”</b>	36.0*	33.3*	47.0*
<b>Support networks or groups (eg for women, LGBT+ or minority ethnic professionals, disabled people or carers)</b>	16.0	12.0	20.2
<b>A trained counsellor</b>	4.0	2.7	4.8
<b>Training on physical and/or mental wellbeing</b>	17.0	10.7	16.7
<b>Exercise or relaxation classes</b>	18.0	15.3	21.4
<b>Access to relaxation facilities such as a gym, games room or quiet room</b>	4.0	8.0	8.3
<b>"Back-to-work" support following absence due to stress or mental illness (for example a phased return, counselling or regular follow-up reviews)</b>	9.0	9.3	13.7
<b>Not sure</b>	14.0	11.3	9.5
<b>None at all</b>	9.0	9.3	6.6
<b>Other</b>	4.0	4.0	3.6

## 5.4 How much flexibility do you have in your working arrangements?

All respondents reported significantly more flexibility than in 2019. In all three categories, far fewer respondents report having no, or insufficient, flexibility in their working arrangements. This is perhaps unsurprising given that everyone’s working practice was forced to change in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.

**Table 27: Flexibility in working arrangements**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents	100	150	167)
<b>Plenty</b>	26.0	27.3	47.9
<b>A moderate amount</b>	62.0	58.0	42.5
<b>Not enough</b>	10.0	12.7	8.4
<b>None at all</b>	2.0	2.0	1.2

## 6 How you support yourself

### 6.1 Which of the following forms of mental wellbeing support have you drawn on (please select as many as applicable)?

Respondents were asked to answer this question based on their experiences over the previous twelve months. The same question was asked in the 2019 survey.

The answers to this question are summarised in Table 28. They indicate, as in 2019, that most of our respondents had turned to other people (friends, family and colleagues) for support. Students were most likely to have sought professional support in the form of a GP, counsellor or therapist. Notably, the number of student respondents who had received support from a counsellor or therapist had trebled since 2019, and the number of respondents in the main survey seeking this support had almost doubled. In contrast around the same percentage of paralegals and business support professionals received support from a counsellor or therapist as in 2019 (although recall the altered composition of this group).

The mental health guides produced by Jonathan’s Voice were used by 13% of student respondents and nearly 10% of respondents from the other surveys. The resources on the IP Inclusive website were used by significantly more respondents than in the 2019 survey.

Answers in the “other” category included medication; mental health first aiders; a 3<sup>rd</sup> party employee assistance programme; an NHS-provided app and talking therapy; online/published resources; psychiatrists; Samaritans and the Health Assured 24-hour hotline.

**Table 28: Support drawn on**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents)	99	151	167)
<b>Family or friends</b>	70.7	68.2	62.9
<b>Sympathetic colleagues</b>	32.3	45.0	32.9
<b>GP practice</b>	23.2	14.6	15.6
<b>Counsellor or therapist</b>	29.3	13.9	27.0
<b>The mental health guides produced by Jonathan's Voice</b>	13.1	8.0	9.0
<b>The "Mental Health and Wellbeing" page on the IP Inclusive website</b>	6.1	5.3	4.2
<b>The LawCare helpline, online chat service or website</b>	3.0	0	4.8
<b>Another helpline or charity (eg Samaritans) (please use the box below to specify which)</b>	1.0	1.3	1.8

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
<b>The CIPA Informals' online support (informalswelfare@gmail.com)</b>	3.0	N/A	N/A
<b>None of these</b>	16.2	21.2	21.0
<b>Other</b>	3.0	2.0	5.4



## 7 Covid-19

### 7.1 How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected how you feel in relation to each of the following?

This is a new section in the 2022 survey, aimed at looking at the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The questions in this section were aligned with some in the 2020-21 LawCare "[Life in the Law](#)" survey<sup>5</sup>, allowing us to compare the impacts in the patent and trade mark professions with those in the wider legal sector.

Most respondents in each survey indicated no change in how they felt about job security since the pandemic, although around a fifth were more concerned. Likewise, most respondents in each survey indicated no change in how they felt about their career progression. However, nearly a third of the student respondents and a quarter of the main respondents did feel more concerned about their career progression since the pandemic.

Similarly, most respondents in each survey indicated no change in how they felt about managing client demands and control over their workload, although around a fifth of respondents in the main and paralegal and business support staff surveys were more concerned about managing client demands and nearly a third of these respondents were more concerned about control over their workload.

The responses regarding control over working hours were more varied with around a third of respondents feeling more concerned than before the pandemic, around a third indicating no change and around a quarter feeling less concerned in this area.

Most respondents to the student and main surveys were less concerned about control over where they work since the pandemic, but this was not the case for all respondents to the paralegal and business support survey. Although a third of these respondents indicated they felt less concern in this area, around a third also indicated feeling more concerned.

Across the three surveys, many respondents felt more concerned about their work-life balance than before the pandemic. This was particularly the case with respondents from the main survey, where nearly half indicated that they felt more concerned in this area, perhaps due to high workloads or perhaps suggesting difficulties in switching off from work when at home. Similar concerns over work-life balance were also reported in the 2020-21 LawCare survey (conducted during the pandemic), where 59% of participants reported being more concerned about increased pressures around work-life balance.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/life-in-the-law/>

For those with parental or other caring responsibilities, a significant proportion were more concerned about these responsibilities since the pandemic, particularly in the main and paralegal and business support surveys.

**Table 29: Impact of Covid-19**

	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>	<b>Others %</b>
(No. of respondents	100	148	167)
<b>Your job security:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	21.0	23.3	22.8
<b>No change</b>	55.0	69.2	71.9
<b>Less concerned</b>	11.0	6.2	4.2
<b>Not applicable</b>	13.0	1.4	1.2
<b>Your career progression:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	29.0	17.7	25.8
<b>No change</b>	52.0	72.1	64.7
<b>Less concerned</b>	10.0	6.8	6.6
<b>Not applicable</b>	9.0	3.4	3.0
<b>Managing client demands:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	14.0	19.4	21.0
<b>No change</b>	63.0	66.0	72.5
<b>Less concerned</b>	9.0	4.2	6.0
<b>Not applicable</b>	14.0	10.4	0.6
<b>Control over your workload:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	21.0	32.2	27.5
<b>No change</b>	60.0	58.9	65.9
<b>Less concerned</b>	8.0	6.2	5.4
<b>Not applicable</b>	11.0	2.7	1.2
<b>Control over your working hours:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	34.0	35.6	36.5
<b>No change</b>	30.0	41.8	35.9
<b>Less concerned</b>	28.0	21.9	26.4
<b>Not applicable</b>	8.0	0.7	1.2
<b>Control over where you work:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	18.0	35.4	19.2
<b>No change</b>	17.0	26.5	24.6
<b>Less concerned</b>	57.0	37.4	56.3
<b>Not applicable</b>	8.0	0.7	0
<b>Your work-life balance:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	37.0	40.5	47.9
<b>No change</b>	28.0	26.4	27.0
<b>Less concerned</b>	27.0	33.1	24.6
<b>Not applicable</b>	8.0	0	0.6

	Students %	Paralegals & bus sup %	Others %
<b>If applicable, your parenting or other caring responsibilities:</b>			
<b>More concerned</b>	6.0	23.1	27.9
<b>No change</b>	12.0	19.4	23.6
<b>Less concerned</b>	4.0	10.5	9.7
<b>Not applicable</b>	76.0	47.0	38.8

Students were also asked about the impact of the pandemic on their training and exams (Table 30). Around half of respondents are more concerned in these areas since the pandemic.

**Table 30: Impact of Covid-19 (student-only questions)**

	Students %
(No. of respondents	100)
<b>Your training:</b>	<b>1.75</b>
<b>More concerned</b>	53.0
<b>No change</b>	30.0
<b>Less concerned</b>	6.0
<b>Not applicable</b>	11.0
<b>Your exams:</b>	<b>1.78</b>
<b>More concerned</b>	48.0
<b>No change</b>	36.0
<b>Less concerned</b>	6.0
<b>Not applicable</b>	10.0

## 8 Additional questions in paralegal/business support survey

### 8.1 How have your working arrangements changed in the last 2-3 years, in terms of where you work from?

90% of respondents indicated a change in their working arrangements in terms of where they work from in the last 2-3 years, which is unsurprising in view of the pandemic. Over 80% indicated that they used to be fully office-based and now work from home either some or all of the time.

**Table 31: Changes in working arrangements**

	Paralegals & bus sup %
(No. of respondents)	148)
<b>I used to be fully office-based; now I do all my work from home</b>	11.5
<b>I used to be fully office-based; now I do part of my work from home and part in the office</b>	72.3
<b>I used to be partly office-based; now I do all my work from home</b>	2.0
<b>No significant change</b>	8.8
<b>Other</b>	5.4

### 8.2 Would you be interested in joining an IP Inclusive group dedicated to paralegals and other business support staff in the IP professions, and/or taking part in its activities?

There was significant interest in joining an IP Inclusive group dedicated to paralegals and other business support staff or taking part in its activities, with 62% of respondents answering “yes” or “possibly”.

**Table 32: Support for dedicated IP Inclusive group**

	Paralegals & bus sup %
(No. of respondents)	150)
<b>Yes</b>	26.0
<b>No</b>	38.0
<b>Possibly</b>	36.0

### 8.3 If applicable, please let us know what you would like out of such a group.

There were 49 responses to this question and several themes emerged.

Some respondents wanted support groups who meet outside of work. These would be a useful forum to air concerns, discuss working environments, and to share knowledge and experiences.

Others wanted a group to provide networking opportunities including ones for those working within HR and support staff roles. Some respondents went further and stated that they wanted us to ensure that the voices of paralegals are heard and the resources available to attorneys are made available to them as well.

Other suggestions were for more anonymous support, informal catch-ups, a practical guide on managing work-related stress, advice surrounding how to balance workloads, and information on progression in the IP sector.

#### **8.4 Would you be willing to help set it up?**

In this question, respondents were reminded that their answers were anonymous, so we wouldn't be able to chase them up on this; we just wanted to gauge levels of interest. The response was encouraging, with 41% of respondents answering “yes” or “possibly”.

**Table 33: Willingness to help set up an IP Inclusive group**

	<b>Paralegals &amp; bus sup %</b>
(No. of respondents)	137)
<b>Yes</b>	16.1
<b>No</b>	58.4
<b>Possibly</b>	25.6

## 9 Additional free text comments

### 9.1 General

At the end of the survey, respondents were offered the chance to add “free text” comments regarding their survey answers.

### 9.2 Main survey

In the main survey, 24 respondents provided additional comments. Some of these drew upon there not being enough support for mental health in the workplace and there being “toxic positivity” in the profession. One respondent even mentioned that they had moved firms to escape these pressures. There was also mention of a reluctance to report any issues due to the stigma surrounding mental health.

Another respondent commented that the pandemic was the best thing to happen in terms of work-life balance. It was felt that CITMA and CIPA should focus on ensuring there is not a push to return to the office full time. Despite this better work-life balance, the stress of online exams was also referred to as exceptionally high.

Managing a team was also mentioned as a source of stress. For some, being in a senior position means they are less likely to be open about anxiety and stress due to the belief that they should support those who are in more junior roles.

Individuals also commented on specific challenges depending on their situation. For example, one respondent commented that there are challenges when balancing parental responsibilities with work. Another felt that there was a lack of understanding towards people who live with someone who is immunocompromised, where returning to work creates significant stress due to the risk of infection.

### 9.3 Responses from paralegals and business support professionals

In the paralegals’ and business support professionals’ survey, there were 11 additional comments. One respondent commented that their line manager is sympathetic but does nothing meaningful such as reducing workload or bringing in more support staff. Another commented that managing an office when most people are working from home is challenging. Respondents also mentioned that support functions and paralegals should be more involved in mental health discussions.

### 9.4 Student responses

In the student survey, 16 additional comments were given. Many of these comments surrounded examinations. There was a suggestion that the European Qualifying Examination (EQE) Secretariat should commit to a specific day for releasing exam results to reduce anxiety. Respondents also commented that it is challenging to find time to prepare for examinations. It was also felt that there could be more support for parents taking exams.

Another issue raised was that working from home promotes better work-life balance which leads to better mental health. This is something that should be encouraged.

Whilst there are lots of resources some felt they cannot utilise them. For example, one individual did not feel comfortable using work resources and also did not feel they were struggling enough to use services like Samaritans or LawCare.

Finally, one respondent commented that firms should be held accountable for toxic behaviour.

## 10 Discussion

### 10.1 Caveats

We would like to repeat here the caveats from our previous survey reports, which apply equally to interpretation of the 2022 results. To these should be added the cautions discussed at 1.3 above, regarding comparisons between the 2022 data and our 2019 and/or 2018 data.

Firstly, not all CIPA and CITMA members took part in the survey, and response rates to the main and student surveys were lower than in 2019. There may have been various reasons for this, including potentially the very problems that the survey set out to explore, for example lack of awareness, too little spare time or a reluctance to discuss a subject that is still taboo.

Secondly, 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 may be more likely to understand the importance of engaging with the issue, whereas those with good mental health may think the exercise unnecessary. There may in fact be far lower rates of mental ill-health than the current data suggest.

Equally, we should be open to the opposite possibility: that there are actually more problems than the current responses revealed. 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 others in the profession who are struggling but did not feel able to discuss that even in an anonymous survey.

As such, the data must be interpreted with caution and with an open mind.

It is always possible, of course, to view statistics either optimistically or pessimistically: one could for example worry that 72% of the student respondents had been adversely affected by high stress levels, or one could be encouraged that 28% had not. Our starting point is that if significant numbers are suffering then that is a problem that needs addressing, even if the others are fine, but our analysis should be read in that light.

Subject to these caveats, however, we believe that the results of this survey have value in illustrating general trends within the patent and trade mark professions; 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 and CITMA members and potentially of other IP professionals.

### 10.2 Key outcomes

The following key points emerge, regarding mental health and wellbeing in the patent and trade mark professions, from the responses outlined in sections 4 to 9 above.

- Higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression were recorded than in 2019, particularly among students.



- Significant numbers of respondents felt unable to talk to their employer about their mental health problems or take time off work, many feeling that they should be able to cope.
- High workloads appear to be contributing significantly towards mental health problems and also impeding their alleviation, since having too much work and not wanting to let colleagues or clients down were also significant reasons for not taking time off work.
- High numbers of respondents had the feeling they were not up to the job and many feared making mistakes at work.
- Negative feelings linked to EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) such as feelings of not fitting in, pressure to conform, or anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, were relatively common, particularly amongst student respondents.
- Work-related stress has a significant impact on our respondents in terms of difficulties concentrating on work and reduced productivity.
- Significant numbers were considering leaving their current job or leaving the profession.
- Symptoms experienced commonly included fatigue and sleeping and appetite problems. Others had increased dependence on alcohol/drugs and some had considered self-harming or had suicidal thoughts.
- Workplace support for mental health appears to have increased, eg increasing numbers of trained mental health “first-aiders” and improved access to private health care which extends to mental health problems and to EAPs (employee assistance programmes).
- However, both quantitative data and free text comments suggest that stigma around mental health problems remains, along with a belief that poor mental “resilience” is a sign of failure.
- The majority of respondents have at least a moderate amount of flexibility in their working arrangements since Covid, levels of flexibility being significantly higher than in 2019.
- The effects of Covid both across and within the different groups of respondents was varied, although the majority of student responders felt more concerned about their training and exams since Covid. Significant numbers of respondents, particularly in the main survey, felt more concerned about their work-life balance than before the pandemic, many of them also feeling more concerned about control over working hours.

## **Annex I:**

### **Links to survey response summaries**

For each version of the 2022 survey, a pdf summary of the responses is available alongside this report on the IP Inclusive website: see <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/newsandfeatures/the-results-of-our-2022-mental-wellbeing-survey/>. These summaries are generated through SurveyMonkey and do not include free text answers.

The full report of our 2019 survey is also available on the IP Inclusive website; see:

<https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/190915-ipi-mhaw-survey-report.pdf>

and the accompanying blog post at:

<https://ipinclusive.org.uk/newsandfeatures/our-2019-mental-wellbeing-survey-2/>

The full report of our 2018 survey is also available on the IP Inclusive website; see:

<https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/1809-ip-inclusive-mental-wellbeing-survey-report.pdf>

and the accompanying blog post at:

<https://ipinclusive.org.uk/newsandfeatures/our-mental-health-awareness-week-survey/>

## Annex II: 2019 (and 2018) survey results

The tables below, from the 2019 survey, have been numbered “A##”, where “##” correlates to the corresponding table with the 2022 responses in the main part of the report above. Where data from the 2018 survey is also included in these tables this is marked accordingly.

**Table A1: Response rates**

(Figures in brackets are from the 2018 survey)

	Student survey			Paralegal survey			Main survey		
<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	253 (191)			155			608 (180)		
<b>= percentage of membership category</b>	21.3 (20.2)			22.6			15.5 (6.2)		
<b>Of which, no. of respondents</b>	<b>CIPA</b>	<b>CITMA</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>CIPA</b>	<b>CITMA</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>CIPA</b>	<b>CITMA</b>	<b>Both</b>
	222	31	0	72	62	19	415	139	49
<b>= percentage of membership category<sup>6</sup></b>	21.5	20.5		19.8	19.3		15.1	11.9	
<b>Completion rate (%)</b>	89 (84)			85			88 (83)		
<b>Average time spent (mins)</b>	6			6			6		

**Table A3: Main survey respondents – professional role**

	<b>%</b>
<b>Patent attorney</b>	67.9
<b>Trade mark attorney</b>	22.1
<b>Paralegal/IP administrator/formalities clerk</b>	2.8
<b>Searcher or information scientist</b>	0.0
<b>Other</b>	7.3

**Table A5: Career level (main survey respondents)**

	<b>%</b>
<b>Not yet qualified</b>	1.5
<b>Qualified</b>	14.4
<b>Senior qualified (more than three years post-qualification)</b>	24.1
<b>Senior qualified with some management responsibilities</b>	13.4
<b>Director or senior manager (non-owner)</b>	13.2
<b>Partner or director with business ownership</b>	31.0
<b>Other</b>	2.5

<sup>6</sup> These figures are somewhat distorted by the overlap in institute membership; for the paralegal and main surveys they will be slightly on the conservative side. Also note that 2 paralegal and 5 main survey respondents skipped this question.

**Table A6: Career level (paralegals) 2019**

	%
<b>0-2 years post-qualification</b>	29.0
<b>3-10 years post-qualification</b>	36.2
<b>More than 10 years post-qualification</b>	34.9

**Table A9: Stage of training/qualification (CIPA students) 2019**

	% <sup>7</sup>	No.
<b>I haven't taken any exams yet</b>	32.6	74
<b>I've passed at least some of the Foundation exams or an equivalent (eg Queen Mary) course</b>	12.3	28
<b>I've passed all of the Foundation exams or an equivalent course</b>	19.8	45
<b>I've passed some of the Final exams and/or some of the EQEs</b>	26.4	60
<b>I'm part-qualified (either EPA or CPA but not both)</b>	8.8	20

**Table A10: Stage of training/qualification (CITMA students) 2019**

	% <sup>8</sup>	No.
<b>I haven't started any course yet</b>	35.9	14
<b>I'm currently completing the Queen Mary University or Bournemouth University course</b>	33.3	13
<b>I'm currently completing the Nottingham Law School course</b>	30.8	12

**Table A11: Type of organisation**

	Students	Paralegals	Others
<b>Sole practitioner</b>	1.2	0.7	4.8
<b>Small private practice</b>	4.0	5.2	8.6
<b>Medium private practice</b>	21.7	22.6	16.0
<b>Large private practice</b>	68.0	51.6	52.6
<b>Small in-house</b>	0.8	7.7	5.8
<b>Medium in-house</b>	1.6	6.5	7.4
<b>Large in-house</b>	2.0	3.2	4.0
<b>Other</b>	0.8	2.6	0.8

**Table A12: Geographical location**

<sup>7</sup> Percentage of the respondents who answered this question (CIPA students only)

<sup>8</sup> Percentage of the respondents who answered this question (CITMA students only)

	Students	Paralegals	Others
London	34.8	32.3	32.5
City, not London	52.2	43.9	39.0
Smaller town/village	9.5	14.8	13.3
From home	0.8	2.6	6.9
Outside UK	0.8	0.7	5.9
Other	2.0	5.8	2.3

**Table A14: Stress & mental health problems (last 12 months)**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
High stress levels	47.0	51.7	61.2	58.4	66.9
Anxiety	44.8	51.7	53.2	42.8	55.4
Depression	22.0	27.3	23.0	20.4	30.7
Other mental health problem (formally diagnosed or not)	6.9	4.1	7.2	4.7	3.0
None of these	30.6		20.9	29.2	

**Table A15: Employer awareness**

	Students	Paralegals	Others
Yes	13.1	31.1	19.1
Yes, but not the full story	15.3	17.0	18.9
No	53.2	43.7	46.7
Not sure	18.5	8.2	15.4

**Table A16: Time off due to mental health problems**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
None	84.1	81.5	76.1	87.0	82.4
A few days	14.2	12.1	15.9	8.7	11.5
1-3 weeks	0.4	5.2	6.5	3.3	4.9
> 3 weeks	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.1	1.2

**Table A17: Barriers to time off work (top 5 answers)**

	Students	Paralegals	Others
Feeling you should be able to cope anyway	44.2	46.0	37.2
Having too much work to do	39.0	51.8	57.4
None of these / not applicable	35.1	25.2	26.4
Not wanting to make life difficult for colleagues	34.2	54.0	38.8

	Students	Paralegals	Others
Concern about its impact on career prospects	28.6	23.0	
Not wanting to let clients down			41.6

**Table A18: Causes of stress and anxiety (top 7 answers + “none”)**  
(2019 figures in brackets were not part of the top 7 but are included for reference.)

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
Exam performance fears	55.6	66.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Finding the time for exam preparation	54.7	66.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Deadlines	44.4	53.1	46.8	48.3	56.1
Billing targets	32.8	25.9	(13.0)	(27.3)	32.9
Insufficient control over your workload	32.3	N/A	32.4	35.0	N/A
Ineffective or inappropriate management / senior colleagues' behaviour	21.1	27.2	39.6	29.1	40.9
Insufficient support	20.7	N/A	35.3	34.7	N/A
Client demands & expectations	(18.1)	18.5	(18.7)	42.0	43.3
Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities	(15.5)	23.5	28.1	32.7	46.3
Long hours				28.9	35.4
The daily commute			28.8		
Your working environment & available resources (eg IT & infrastructure)			25.9		
None of these	9.1	N/A	7.2	10.2	N/A

**Table A19: Causes of stress and anxiety (D&I factors)**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
Bullying (including inappropriate banter) or harassment	3.5	6.2	10.1	7.5	8.5
Discrimination	3.0	1.9	2.9	3.4	2.4
Conflict with home life and/or personal (eg caring) responsibilities	15.5	23.5	28.1	32.7	46.3

**Table A21: Negative feelings (top 5 answers + others of importance)**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
<b>Fear of making mistakes</b>	62.9	N/A	61.2	52.2	N/A
<b>Feeling you're not up to the job</b>	61.1	75.2	41.7	46.4	68.4
<b>Feeling you don't fit in</b>	26.6	26.1	19.4	23.6	29.6
<b>Considering leaving your current job</b>	23.6	37.9	35.3	30.9	46.7
<b>Considering leaving the profession</b>	16.2	30.7	20.1	(20.3)	28.3
<b>Needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues</b>	(14.9)	19.6	19.4	(14.2)	19.7
<b>(Wanting to harm yourself)</b>	(4.4)	(3.9)	(2.2)	(2.3)	(5.9)
<b>(Suicidal thoughts)</b>	(6.1)	(6.5)	(5.8)	(5.8)	(7.2)
<b>None of these</b>	(14.4)	N/A	(13.0)	21.0	N/A

**Table A22: Negative feelings (D&I factors)**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
<b>Feeling you don't fit in</b>	26.6	26.1	19.4	23.6	29.6
<b>Pressure to conform in ways you're uncomfortable with</b>	7.4	7.8	10.8	14.6	20.4
<b>Anxiety or isolation linked to something personal, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, physical disability, mental health</b>	12.2	16.3	15.1	10.8	19.1
<b>Needing to hide aspects of yourself or your life from colleagues</b>	14.9	19.6	19.4	14.2	19.7

**Table A25: Ability to talk to colleagues**

	Students	Paralegals	Others
<b>Yes</b>	16.7	22.6	17.7
<b>To a limited extent (eg only to certain colleagues and/or about certain types of problem)</b>	59.7	56.9	58.5
<b>No</b>	20.2	19.7	20.4
<b>Not sure</b>	3.5	0.7	3.4

**Table A26: Available workplace support (top 7 answers + "not sure" & "none")**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
A sympathetic line manager	57.4	61.8	47.8	40.4	28.0
Sympathetic HR personnel	43.5	44.7	31.2	32.1	25.5
Private health care which extends to mental health problems	24.8	21.8	27.5	31.3	17.2
A third party-managed "employee assistance programme"	23.0	20.6	32.6	31.0	22.9
A trained mental health "first-aider"	20.4	1.2	15.9	16.9	1.3
Not sure	19.1		(10.1)	(11.2)	
A personal mentor	16.1	21.8			
Exercise or relaxation classes			18.1	15.6	
None at all	(9.6)	13.5	17.4	14.1	37.6

**Table A27: Flexibility in working arrangements**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
Plenty	15.2	15.9	19.7	35.7	31.1
A moderate amount	45.7	57.7	46.7	50.3	55.9
Not enough	29.1	21.8	21.9	11.3	13.0
None at all	10.0	4.7	11.7	2.7	N/A

**Table A28: Support drawn on**

	Students	Students 2018	Paralegals	Others	Others 2018
Family or friends	74.2	64.2	66.7	69.5	66.9
Sympathetic colleagues	32.8	N/A	44.2	32.3	N/A
GP	13.1	20.8	29.7	15.3	19.3
Counsellor or therapist	10.0	17.9	15.2	15.1	21.1
The LawCare helpline or website	2.6	0.6	0.0	1.3	1.2
Another helpline or charity (eg The Samaritans)	2.2	4.6	1.5	0.7	1.2
The "Mental Health & Wellbeing" page on the IP Inclusive website	1.8	N/A	0.0	1.5	N/A
None of these	21.0	28.9	19.6	23.2	21.7