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

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The effects of basic psychological needs satisfaction and mindfulness on solicitors' well-being

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ABSTRACT

Rising reports of poor mental health and well-being in lawyers across multiple jurisdictions, notably the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom (UK), have led to a growing international focus on this topic. Yet there remains a paucity of empirical data on the well-being of solicitors practising in England and Wales. Framed by self-determination theory (SDT), we undertook a cross-sectional survey of 340 trainee and qualified solicitors in England and Wales to (1) benchmark the psychological well-being of solicitors against other UK occupational groups and adult population norms; and (2) test relationships between mindfulness, satisfaction of basic psychological needs (perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work) and psychological well-being. The SDT components positively and significantly related to well-being. Mindfulness partially mediated the pathway between basic psychological needs satisfaction and well-being, suggesting that satisfaction of these needs may in themselves facilitate higher mindfulness, thereby contributing to greater levels of well-being. We conceive that autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work provide the psychological space necessary for mindfulness to be cultivated, within which well-being can thrive. These findings support the importance of a systemic approach to solicitors' well-being to safeguard basic psychological needs in the workplace.

Introduction

In recent years, increases in stress, anxiety and depression have been identified from surveys conducted by both the Law Society and Bar Council of England and Wales. The Wellbeing at the Bar survey reported low mood and high work-stress levels among barristers (Positive 2015). Of the 2,456 barristers who participated, most or all of the time: 33% reported they found it difficult to control or stop worrying, 35% said they tended to dwell on their mistakes, 24% felt nervous, anxious or on edge, and 28% reported experiencing negative physical symptoms arising from stress. In the solicitors' profession, the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of England and Wales published findings from its Resilience and Wellbeing Survey conducted between January and March 2019 (The Law Society 2019). Of the 1,803 junior solicitors (including trainees, newly qualified and solicitors with up to five years' post-qualification experience), 93.5% reported stress in their role in the month before completing

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the survey, with 24.8% of respondents experiencing severe to extreme levels of stress. A recent survey of 1,713 legal professionals in the United Kingdom (UK), Channel Islands and Republic of Ireland also reported considerable risks of burnout among participants, particularly relating to exhaustion (LawCare 2021).

Reports of poor psychological well-being in lawyers have also emerged from the United States of America (USA) and Australia. A cross-sectional survey of 12,825 attorneys in the USA measured incidence rates of alcohol use, drug use, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. The survey established a high prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse in the surveyed participants with significant levels of depression, anxiety, and stress reported (Krill *et al.* 2016). The Annual Professions Survey conducted in Australia in 2006 which surveyed 7,551 professionals across accounting, engineering, management consulting, law, patent attorneys, actuarial, IT services, architectural, insurance underwriting, and insurance brokering, found that legal professionals presented with higher rates of moderate and severe levels of depressive symptoms compared to the other professional groups surveyed and to the general Australian population (Beaton Consulting 2007). Lawyers were also more likely to resort to negative coping methods, including consumption of alcohol and other drugs, to reduce or manage feelings of dejection and depression when compared with the other professional groups. Another study surveyed a cross-section of 924 solicitors and 756 barristers in Australia and found high levels of psychological distress and risk of depression compared with Australian community norms (Kelk *et al.* 2009).

Globally, the International Bar Association's (IBA) survey on mental well-being found well-being scores were markedly lower than the world's general population using the World Health Organisation's well-being index (IBA 2021). These global concerns have triggered a growing literature base on the potential causes of, and contributors to, poor mental health and well-being in the legal profession. However, there remains a paucity of empirical data employing psychometrically valid instruments and robust statistical methods to analyse relationships. The primary aim of our study was to contribute to addressing this evidence gap.

Benchmarking Solicitors' psychological well-being

We defined psychological well-being broadly to embody both hedonic (subjective well-being and happiness) and eudaimonic (cognitive functioning and flourishing) elements, proposing that when individuals are thriving or fully functioning, their state of subjective happiness and life satisfaction accrues (Ryan and Huta 2009). Research conducted in the USA and Australia suggests lawyers experience poorer levels of well-being compared to other occupational

groups and normative populations (Benjamin *et al.* 1990; Kelk *et al.* 2009; Krill *et al.* 2016).

By measuring the psychological well-being of solicitors practising in England and Wales using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS; Tennant *et al.* 2007), our study will enable us to benchmark our sample's scores against available WEMWBS data from the adult population in England (NHS Digital 2017), and previous research on the well-being of UK veterinary surgeons (Bartram *et al.* 2011) and teachers working in England (Kidger *et al.* 2016). Consistent with findings from the USA and Australia, we expect our sample will demonstrate lower levels of well-being when compared to these populations.

Hypothesis 1: Our sample of solicitors in England and Wales will exhibit lower levels of psychological well-being compared to a general adult population in England and other UK professional groups.

Perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work

Several studies concerning lawyer populations outside England and Wales have attributed poor well-being to low job autonomy resulting in lawyers having little choice and control over their workload, strained work relationships attributable to the pervasive high competition and pressured work environments in which lawyers work, and limited opportunities for lawyers to develop their mastery and skill to feel effective in the work they do (e.g. Bergin and Jimmieson 2014; Chan *et al.* 2014; Costa and Ferreira 2014; Geok-choo *et al.* 2008; Krieger and Sheldon 2015; Omari and Paull 2013; Tsai *et al.* 2009). Collectively, these studies suggest a trio of work-related factors – job autonomy, relatedness, and perceived competence at work – to be influential on lawyers' well-being. Drawing on self-determination theory (SDT) as the underlying theoretical framework, our study investigated the significance of these factors.

SDT proposes that autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work are essential for human flourishing, and the deprivation of these factors leads to harmful psychological health outcomes in life and the workplace (Deci and Ryan 2000). The need for autonomy refers to the need for individuals to experience ownership of their actions, to have volition and choice, and to be in control in a self-regulating sense, rather than being coerced, controlled, or compelled by external forces (Deci and Ryan 1985). The need for relatedness refers to feeling socially connected, supported and cared for, and to have a sense of valued membership within one's work environment (Deci and Ryan 2000; Weinstein and Ryan 2010). Finally, the need for competence relates to feeling effective in one's environment, experiencing opportunities to develop mastery and skill, and expressing capacities and talents (Deci and Moller 2005).

Referring to these factors as basic psychological needs, SDT considers that if any are thwarted or neglected in the workplace, the individual will suffer harm to their cognitive, affective, and motivational states, and will experience diminished psychological well-being; they will not fully function and thrive. Conversely, if all three needs are satisfied, the individual will flourish (Ryan and Deci 2017).

We investigate the well-being of trainee and qualified solicitors practising in England and Wales through the lens of SDT, which is a broad framework applied across life domains. Our study focuses on the workplace and adds to the work of Jones *et al.* (2020) and Strevens *et al.* (2020) as the first SDT-guided empirical research on lawyers' well-being in England and Wales. Notably, other work in this jurisdiction suggests the design of traditional law school curricula encourages professional identity formation based on extrinsic as opposed to intrinsic goals, resulting in the frustration of law students' basic psychological needs and a decline in their well-being that may endure into legal practice (e.g. Duncan *et al.* 2020; Huxley-Binns and Ferris 2013; Strevens and Wilson 2016). Notwithstanding the important role to be played by legal educators as identified by these scholars, participants' prior legal education was not captured, as our interest focused on their current experiences of legal practice.

Krieger and Sheldon's study (2015) applying SDT to the legal profession in the USA identified significant and positive relations of these basic psychological needs to attorney well-being. In line with these findings, we expect higher perceived satisfactions of autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work to significantly relate to higher levels of solicitors' psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 2: Higher perceived satisfactions of autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work will be significantly associated with higher psychological well-being in solicitors practising in England and Wales.

Mindfulness

In August 2017, the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, initiated by the American Bar Association, published a report with practical recommendations to tackle the poor state of mental health and well-being of lawyers (National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being 2017). One of the recommendations endorsed in the report was the practice of mindfulness to enhance and promote lawyer health and well-being.

Mindfulness has been contemporarily defined as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience, moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 145). Such open attention to, and awareness of, what is happening in the present moment has been found to yield positive well-being. In work contexts, mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been shown to

decrease employee stress and improve resilience and work engagement (Aikens *et al.* 2014), reduce employee psychological distress (Virgili 2015), enhance a sense of work-life balance (Allen and Kiburz 2012; Michel *et al.* 2014), reduce emotional exhaustion and increase work satisfaction (Hülshager *et al.* 2013), and boost work performance (Dane and Brummel 2014).

The potential benefits of mindfulness practice on lawyers' well-being have not gone unnoticed. In 2018, global law firm Dentons announced the findings of an eight-week programme of MBI which the firm had deployed internally to 60 of their lawyers from across Europe. Almost one third of participants reported a reduction in stress following the intervention, with a 75% improvement in social well-being, 18% improvement in emotional well-being, and a 16% improvement in self-efficacy (Dentons 2018). While details of the study are not publicly available, these findings appear supportive of the effectiveness of MBIs in commercial legal practice. Beyond this industry-led study, little empirical data exist on the association between mindfulness and psychological well-being specifically in lawyer populations. Our study provides evidence of this relationship and, in line with the wider mindfulness literature, we expect higher mindfulness will be associated with greater psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 3: Higher levels of mindfulness will be significantly associated with greater psychological well-being in solicitors practising in England and Wales.

Our study additionally seeks to investigate how perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work might relate to mindfulness to affect solicitors' psychological well-being. Returning to SDT's central assumption, that the collective satisfaction of these three basic psychological needs presents fertile ground for well-being to flourish, we theorise that they will not only directly relate to well-being, but will also indirectly create the psychological space for mindfulness to grow, which in turn will facilitate well-being. We therefore expect mindfulness will partially mediate the relationship between perceived satisfactions of autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work, and psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 4: Mindfulness will partially mediate the relationship between the collective satisfaction of autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work, and psychological well-being.

Materials and methods

Participants

Between February and May 2019, trainee and qualified solicitors in England and Wales were recruited to take part in an online survey measuring psychological well-being, perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work,

and mindfulness. Three hundred and forty participants completed the survey, including 255 individuals identifying as female (75.2%) and 81 as male (23.9%). One hundred and fifteen (33.9%) participants were trainees or solicitors with up to 5 years' post-qualification experience (PQE), 134 (39.5%) had between 5 and 15 years' PQE, and 89 (26.3%) had over 15 years' PQE. Most participants (83.5%) worked in private practice (17.4% in small firms of between 1 and 4 partners, 24.8% in medium firms comprising 5–25 partners, and 41.3% in large firms of 26 or more partners), 42 (12.4%) worked in-house, and 10 (2.9%) were self-employed. Two hundred and thirty-five (69.1%) participants said they had not undertaken mindfulness training in the past, while 103 (30.3%) said they had.

Measures

Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

The WEMWBS (Tennant *et al.* 2007) measured both subjective well-being and psychological functioning. Participants responded to 14 statements, including “*I've been dealing with problems well*”, using a five-point scale from 1 (*none of the time*) to 5 (*all of the time*), based on the frequency with which each statement had been experienced over the previous two weeks. Scores ranged from 17 to 65, from a possible score range of 14–70. The measure demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha (α) of .92, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Basic psychological needs satisfaction scale – work domain (BPNSS-WD)

The BPNSS-WD (Deci *et al.* 2001; Ilardi *et al.* 1993; Kasser *et al.* 1992) measured the three constructs of perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work via 21 statements that included “*I feel pressured at work*”. Participants responded using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). After reverse scoring where applicable, scores ranged from 29 to 144, against a possible score range of between 21 and 147. This measure demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = .93$).

Five-Facet mindfulness questionnaire (FFMQ-15)

The shortened 15-item version of the FFMQ assessed five facets of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-reacting to inner experiences, and non-judging of inner experiences (Baer *et al.* 2008). Statements included “*I find myself doing things without paying attention*”. Participants responded using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never or very rarely true*) to 5 (*very often or always true*). Scores ranged from 17 to 70, and the possible score range was 15–75. The measure demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .84$). A single item question was also included asking participants if they had undertaken any mindfulness training in the past, with options for yes, no, and prefer not to say.

Analysis and ethics

The research was approved by the second author's University Ethics Committee before data collection commenced. Correlation and hierarchical regression analyses were performed in SPSS. The PROCESS tool (version 3.3) for SPSS (Hayes 2017) was employed to explore the mediation effect of mindfulness. An α level of 0.05 and confidence intervals of 95% were used for all statistical analyses.

Results

Benchmarking Solicitors' psychological well-being

By measuring psychological well-being using the WEMWBS, we were able to benchmark the well-being of our sample of solicitors against population scores for England and those obtained of other UK professional groups using the same measure. In support of our first hypothesis, solicitors in our sample averaged lower in their psychological well-being ($M = 44.28$ (8.42)) compared to the most recent data available of 6,995 adults in England, extracted from Health Survey for England 2016 ($M = 49.80$, $t = 11.28$, $p < .001$; NHS Digital 2017). Both female and male solicitors demonstrated poorer well-being ($M = 43.67$ (8.03) and $M = 46.21$ (9.34), respectively) compared to national means for females and males ($M = 49.57$, $t = 11.28$, $p < .001$ and $M = 50.10$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .001$, respectively; NHS Digital 2017). Solicitors in our sample also averaged lower in their well-being scores compared to data from 1,796 UK veterinary surgeons ($M = 48.85$, $t = 9.06$, $p < .001$; Bartram *et al.* 2011) and 555 teachers in England ($M = 47.2$, $t = 4.90$, $p < .001$; Kidger *et al.* 2016).

Basic psychological needs and mindfulness on the well-being of solicitors

Table 1 summarises the means, standard deviations, and correlations for each of the variables we investigated. The three basic psychological needs (perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work) and mindfulness each showed a moderate to strong, positive and significant relationship with psychological well-being, in line with our hypotheses 2 and 3.

Of the three basic psychological needs, feeling satisfied in one's competence at work demonstrated the strongest association to psychological well-being ($r = .62$, $p < .001$) while relatedness at work represented the weakest, though still moderate, positive correlation to well-being out of the three basic needs ($r = .49$, $p < .001$). Autonomy at work correlated positively with moderate associations ($r = .55$, $p < .001$).

While autonomy, relatedness and competence at work correlated moderately and significantly with each other, collinearity diagnostics did not suggest multicollinearity ($VIF < 3$; tolerance > 0.3), suggesting these three factors were distinct from each other.

Table 1. Mean scores, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables (N = 340).

	M	SD	Psychological well-being	Autonomy satisfaction	Relatedness satisfaction	Competence satisfaction	Mindfulness
Psychological well-being	44.28	8.42	–				
Autonomy satisfaction	30.31	8.34	.55	–			
Relatedness satisfaction	39.51	9.15	.49	.62	–		
Competence satisfaction	28.85	6.80	.62	.74	.57	–	
Mindfulness	47.17	8.46	.64	.32	.30	.39	–

Notes: N = total number of participants. M = mean score. SD = standard deviation. $p < .001$ for all correlations.

We controlled for the potential effects of gender, level of PQE, organisation type, and whether participants had undertaken previous mindfulness training, by performing a hierarchical regression analysis. Analysing these demographic factors in model 1 revealed they collectively had no statistically significant effect on well-being ($R^2 = .025$, $F(4, 334) = 2.15$, $p = .075$). However, model 2, incorporating our predictor variables of autonomy, relatedness, competence, and mindfulness, explained 60.1% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = .601$) and was statistically significant ($F(8, 330) = 62.07$, $p < .001$). As illustrated in Table 2, standardised coefficients demonstrated that mindfulness had the strongest individual effect on psychological well-being, followed by perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness at work.

Finally, and in support of hypothesis 4, mediation analysis confirmed that mindfulness partially mediated the pathway between perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work, and the psychological well-being of solicitors (direct effect: $b = .176$, $p < .001$; indirect effect: $b = .072$, 95% CI [.050, .094]).

Discussion

In line with patterns observed in the USA and Australia (Benjamin *et al.* 1990; Kelk *et al.* 2009; Krill *et al.* 2016), our sample of solicitors practising in England and Wales displayed lower psychological well-being when compared to the general adult population of England, and data collected from earlier studies on UK veterinary and teaching professions.

Higher mindfulness and greater satisfactions of the three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work) corresponded with

Table 2 . Hierarchical regression analysis of variables against psychological well-being, controlling for gender, level of PQE, organisation type, and previous mindfulness training ($N = 340$).

Model		β	t	p	R^2
1	(Constant)	–	16.85	<.001	.025
	Gender	.13	2.41	= .017	
	Level of PQE	.04	.78	= .433	
	Organisation type	.00	-.01	= .998	
	Previous mindfulness training	-.09	-1.61	= .108	
2	(Constant)	–	2.67	= .008	.601
	Gender	.04	1.03	= .304	
	Level of PQE	-.09	-2.38	= .018	
	Organisation type	.01	.31	= .758	
	Previous mindfulness training	-.03	-.86	= .391	
	Autonomy satisfaction	.13	2.16	= .031	
	Relatedness satisfaction	.11	2.21	= .028	
	Competence satisfaction	.29	5.35	< .001	
Mindfulness	.47	12.24	< .001		

Notes: Dependent variable = psychological well-being. N = total number of participants. PQE = post-qualification experience. β = standardised coefficient (effect size). t = inferential t-test statistic. p = statistical significance level.

higher levels of psychological well-being. Consistent with the central assumption in SDT, our findings suggest the trinity of basic psychological needs operates both uniquely and collectively as necessary conditions for lawyers to thrive and flourish at work (Ryan and Deci 2017), and add support to the findings reported by Krieger and Sheldon (2015) on lawyers in the USA. We also note how our findings differ from those reported by Krieger and Sheldon. Associations between perceived autonomy and well-being, and perceived relatedness at work and well-being were slightly weaker in our study ($r = .55$ and $r = .49$ respectively) compared to those observed in the American study ($r = .66$ and $r = .65$ respectively). Several factors may explain these discrepancies. Methodologically, our study adopted a broader definition and measurement of psychological well-being which included not only hedonic (subjective well-being and happiness) but also eudaimonic elements (cognitive functioning and flourishing). In terms of cultural differences too, variations in the practice of law between the USA and England and Wales is likely to be a relevant factor. The division of legal professionals in England and Wales into several distinct groups, including solicitors and barristers among others, is absent in the USA where attorneys typically assume all the various authorised activities of regulated lawyers in England and Wales. Furthermore, Krieger and Sheldon's study (2015) targeted a much wider population of the legal profession in the USA to include judges sitting within the multiple jurisdictions. In contrast, the present study limited the scope of investigations to solicitors (trainee and qualified) practising in England and Wales.

We also found that higher mindfulness corresponded with greater psychological well-being, consistent with previous studies to have investigated this relationship in other work domains (e.g. Hülshager *et al.* 2013; Slutsky *et al.* 2019; Virgili 2015). While our evidence offers some support to the growth of mindfulness initiatives witnessed in the legal profession over the past decade, the cross-sectional design of our study limits inferences we can make regarding how effective those mindfulness initiatives are. To further our knowledge, intervention research similar to that adopted by Slutsky *et al.* (2019) could be conducted within a law firm environment. In a randomised controlled trial of 60 employees in a digital marketing firm, they found that participants who undertook mindfulness training over a 6-week period demonstrated reduced work-life conflict and increased job satisfaction compared to participants on the waiting list.

Finally, our findings suggest that lawyers who are satisfied in their autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work also experience higher levels of mindfulness, which in turn contributes to their well-being. Higher satisfactions of these needs may create the necessary psychological space within which mindfulness may be cultivated, thus boosting levels of well-being experienced. This evidence supports SDT, which proposes the three basic psychological needs to be collectively and primarily paramount to employees' subjective well-being, cognitive functioning, and flourishing.

Practical implications

While our study offers empirical evidence of the associative positive effect of mindfulness on the psychological well-being of solicitors, our findings also suggest that the degree to which solicitors are satisfied in their autonomy, relatedness and competence at work is an equally important factor to consider. This is particularly so given the indirect positive effects which we found, suggesting that satisfaction of these basic psychological needs may in themselves facilitate higher mindfulness, thereby contributing to greater levels of well-being.

Organisational strategies would therefore benefit from considering the work environment of solicitors, and how work conditions and job design can enhance perceived satisfactions of autonomy, relatedness and competence at work. This systemic approach to well-being aligns with the core principles advocated in occupational health psychology, which predicated a principal focus on primary interventions to alleviate antecedents of work-related stress. For example, the UK Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards approach (HSE 2019), which was developed to help organisations assess and manage six work-related hazards of job demands, control, support, relationships, role, and change, has been found useful in tackling workplace stress in high-pressured occupations, such as health and social services (Carpi *et al.* 2021; Kerr *et al.* 2009).

Limitations and the impact of covid-19 and beyond

We acknowledge our findings cannot be generalised to represent all solicitors in England and Wales. Future research with a much larger representative sample is an important next step, utilising time lagged or other more sophisticated designs to counteract common method bias. We cannot discount the possibility that solicitors who felt more negatively affected in their well-being were perhaps more inclined to take part in the study. In addition, we acknowledge that solicitor well-being issues may start and be fuelled by experiences during law school. Future research could compare and contrast how issues such as the interplay of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivating factors, but also work demands and personal characteristics, interact to further or hinder well-being at work over time.

Our study also concluded in the summer of 2019, just months before the consequences of COVID-19 were felt across the world, as all workplaces made myriad adjustments such as increases in digital working. We therefore acknowledge that our findings were situated in a particular context which, at the time of publishing this paper, continues to evolve. Yet focus on perceived job autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work, and their effect on well-being is likely to remain important regardless of context for employers seeking to safeguard the well-being of their employees now and into the

future. This is especially pertinent as many law firms seek to implement new “hybrid” ways of working, incorporating office and remote working practices.

Conclusion

Our study represents the first SDT-based empirical analysis of lawyers’ well-being in England and Wales. Focusing on the solicitors’ profession, we found significant positive relationships between mindfulness, psychological needs satisfactions, and psychological well-being. In support of SDT, higher levels of autonomy, relatedness, and competence at work corresponded with greater well-being, with mindfulness partially mediating this pathway.

While solicitors may now have a greater degree of autonomy in how and where they work, our findings suggest that the more solicitors feel they belong, are socially connected at work, and feel competent and effective in the work they are doing, the more likely they are to experience greater psychological well-being. Solicitors need to feel they belong, are socially connected at work, and have regular intimate contact with their colleagues, rather than feeling lonely and uncared for. This can pose a challenge for employers, particularly where a proportion of their workforce works remotely, physically separated from their colleagues. However, social support, including the exchange of information and emotional care, can be delivered via several methods, which have been found to be effective in combatting the negative effects of professional isolation. Increasing the frequency of communications via social networking tools, maintaining virtual face-to-face interactions, ensuring regular access to developmental opportunities such as virtual mentoring, and having informal virtual social events are all methods which have been found effective in enhancing social support in remote workers (Golden *et al.* 2008).

We also found that feeling competent, capable, and effective at work was strongly associated with higher levels of experienced psychological well-being in solicitors. Likewise, this poses the challenge to employers of ensuring solicitors are satisfied that they feel competent and effective while working remotely. This may be considerably challenging for more junior solicitors who previously benefited from face-to-face learning and development from more senior colleagues. While the impact of COVID-19 may have altered perspectives on more flexible ways of working, regular check-ins, opportunities for training, and effective supervision may all be achieved in the new hybrid work settings which will no doubt characterise solicitors’ work in the future.

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The first and second authors contributed to the study’s conception and design. Material preparation, data collection, and analysis were performed by the first author. The first

draft of the manuscript was written by the first author. All authors commented and contributed to previous versions of the manuscript and read and approved the final manuscript.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Declaration of interest statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest, nor have they received any financial interest arising from the direct application of this research.

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