Industry Stress Affecting Legal Sector?

Denver s Burke
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Three-quarters of UK lawyers say they are more stressed than five years ago, according to a study conducted by Legal Futures. LawCare has complemented this dreary survey by claiming that 60% feel overloaded with too much work, 53% bemoan poor management or lack of appreciation, and 53% feel unsupported. And it only gets worse...41% work long hours and 30% feel that they are paid poorly. Okay, we’ll put the violins away now and focus on the topic at hand.

How is all this Cumulative Stress Affecting the Legal Sector?

A poll conducted revealed that one-fifth of all law firms in the north-west (that deal with personal injuries) are considering shutting up shop. By their estimates, more than 100,000 jobs will be lost over the next year. But what has caused this mass exodus from the world of personal injury law?

With the recent changes to legislation, the personal injury industry has taken one too many hits to the head. Largely due to their bad name as ‘ambulance chasers,’ the government has largely blamed personal injury lawyers for an alleged ‘compensation culture.’ As a response, they have banned the use of referral fees to gain law firms personal injury victims. You’ve probably seen the adverts of these claim farmers: “have you been in an accident that wasn’t your fault...?” etc.

However, that’s not necessarily been the final blow for personal injury solicitors. There are ways and means around the new law, involving alternative business structures. Basically, the law firm absorbs an existing claims management company and the money-swapping continues to occur.

Hard crackdowns on the personal injury sector will hopefully reduce insurance premiums for all. Yet, it will mean less compensation goes to the claimants, whether that’s overstretched personal injury solicitors struggling to give the case the time it needs or having to pay a large chunk of their compensation towards solicitor’s fees.

As it becomes less financially viable to claim compensation, personal injury victims are less likely to head to the nearest law firm if they find themselves in a motor accident or an incident at work. Of course, this means that money is coming out of personal injury lawyer’s pockets and firms are facing closure, as a result.

The Results of Legal Pressure

Basically, it’s a bad time to be in the personal injury business, if you belong to anything but a highly successful firm. As more personal injury employees are let go, as a result of falling business, the remaining solicitors will find themselves with greater working pressures and time constraints, which will in turn increase the current levels of occupational stress.

When the personal injury lawyers are claiming for workplace injuries themselves (yes, occupational stress is a claimable offence, if it leads to health problems and you can prove employer neglect), perhaps we should start getting a little worried about the future of our legal system.

Nevertheless, at Jigsaw Law, Ellesmere Port Cheshire solicitors, as this is recognised as a problem, we will look to produce a series of follow up posts which focuses on the problems.