

Minutes of a meeting of the Wellbeing Committee (“the Committee”) held at the Isle of Man Law Society, 13 Mount Havelock, Douglas, Isle of Man on the 22 July 2020 at 10.00.

Present: Tim Swift (Chairman)
Sara-Jayne Dodge (SJD)
Sarah Kewley (SK)
Hannah Quinn (HQ)
Kate Alexander (KA)
Lorcan O'Mahony (LOM)
Juan Moore (JSM)

1. Opening

Tim Swift was appointed Chair and opened the meeting.

2. Action Plan

JSM thanked everyone for attending. JSM reminded the meeting that this was the third meeting of the Committee but the first where everyone was able to attend. JSM said it was good that we could now meet in person. JSM said that he hadn't prepared minutes from the previous meetings but reminded the meeting that details of the discussions had been circulated.

Survey of members

The Chairman referred to the England and Wales Law Society resilience and wellbeing survey 2019 and asked members for their comments.

HQ reminded the meeting that this was discussed at the last meeting and that we should proceed with that survey only tweaking it, where required, for advocates' Manx requirements.

After due consideration it was agreed that everyone would review the questionnaire and forward any changes to the questions to JSM shortly.

JSM said that when he spoke to LawCare had asked if the survey should be open to all staff. LawCare agreed that it was important the survey should be for staff and advocates. It was agreed that the survey should be open to all staff and advocates.

The method of delivering the survey was discussed and it was agreed that confidentiality was essential. JSM informed the meeting that he had spoken to his website providers who said that they could set up a webpage in the general area that everyone could access to answer the survey but will be hidden and so only those with a link could access it. JSM said another option was Survey Monkey. JSM said that because of the size of the survey he would have to take out an annual subscription. JSM said that another possible option might be obtaining assistance from LawCare. JSM said that he liked this idea as it would be totally separate from the LawSociety and might encourage more people to complete it. JSM said that he could also speak to LawCare to see if they could provide assistance in collating the results.

It was agreed that JSM speak to LawCare accordingly.

It was further agreed that the results of the survey should be ready in time for the AGM if possible.

Publicity

It was agreed that including Mental Health in the newsletter was not be best way to raise the issues. The newsletter was often detailed, and the message might simply get missed.

It was agreed that a separate monthly circular be issued to the membership.

Whilst discussing the newsletter it was agreed that a copy of the current newsletter be printed off for the robing room.

It was agreed that an email be sent to all members from the Chairman, in his capacity as President, to introduce the Committee and to describe the work that it will be undertaking. LOM said that he would draft the email and circulate to the Committee. It was agreed that the email issued by the Chairman would send the message to members that mental health is a top priority of Council. The Chairman agreed and added that he will be making a statement about mental health at the AGM.

The membership of the Committee itself was considered. It was noted that there were no corporate advocates on the committee, and that most of the Committee were younger members of the Society. It was further noted that the age group 40-60 was a key group with regards to Mental Health issues.

The Chairman said that he would approach some more members to see if they might be willing to join the committee. The Chairman said that he would raise the profile of Mental Health at Council and encourage firms to look at this issue.

It was further agreed that notices from the Committee should be included in a monthly circular to be sent to members separate to the newsletter. Articles for the circular were discussed. KA, SJD, HQ and SQ agreed to prepare articles on why Mental Health was important to them and why they undertook the Mental Health First Aid course. JSM said that LawCare have numerous articles that we could use for such a circular. LOM said that he would be happy to discuss mental health issues or prepare articles should the Committee wish.

It was agreed that there should be a dedicated page on the website for Mental Health. That page should include links to charities, LawCare etc together with detailing the work of the Committee, copies of the Mental Health Circulars and with upcoming events.

It was agreed that there should be mental health training sessions. SK said that her husband could provide a mindfulness talk. JSM said that there was a mindfulness presentation given sometime ago but unfortunately very few members attended. SK said that she is aware that those who did still talk of how it has helped.

After further discussion it was agreed SK ask her husband to give a mindfulness talk and make it available online. It was further agreed that to encourage members to attend there be a social event afterwards where members would have an opportunity to meet the Committee.

The importance of exercise in maintaining good mental health was discussed. Walk and talk lunchtime sessions and possibly a yoga session were discussed to encourage members to take time out during a lunch break.

3. Mental Health student lectures

It was agreed that it would be a good idea to include mental health as a part of the student lectures. KA said that she would discuss with V Unsworth, who runs the lecture programme, and SJD said she would discuss with a lecturer to include within one of the lectures.

JSM informed the meeting that he had been given various leaflets from LawCare that are currently in reception. JSM then distributed the leaflets, which the Committee agreed were very good. The Committee agreed to distribute in their offices and in the robing room.

It was agreed that students should be given some leaflets when they are interviewed by Council. The Chairman said that he could ensure that Mental Health is raised at interview and trainees be advised of the services that are available. The Chairman said that he would amend the interview form accordingly.

4. Network for Mental Health First Aiders

It was discussed how best to encourage firms to train Mental Health First Aiders. It was agreed this would be included within the Chairman's address to members. JSM was asked to see if St John's might be willing to run a course for advocates. JSM said he would do but said that he tried arranging a first Aid course just for firms, where the take up was disappointing. HQ said that hopefully with it being open to all advocates and staff, and with the encouragement of the Chairman there should be a better response.

5. Guidance for members/Workplaces

JSM said that following the survey the Committee might wish to provide guidance for members/firms to encourage mental wellbeing. JSM said that he is aware that LawCare and the England and Wales Law Society have lots of information on guidance.

It was agreed that this should be reviewed following the survey.

9. AOB

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting.



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Timothy John Swift
Chairman

