

Millennial Lawyers: *Challenges and Opportunities for Law Firms in Leeds*

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1. Introduction

The way in which legal careers are planned and managed has been brought sharply into focus by the SRA's SQE plans¹ (with possibilities for a greater variety of workplace training experiences). These developments take place within a context of transformative change within legal services, including permission of new providers of legal services (Law Society, 2016), the growth of new technologies

(Susskind and Susskind, 2015) and an increasingly bureaucratised approach to the organisation of legal work. This project explores how different generations within the profession are able to negotiate these changes. In

This project is designed to explore how different generations within the legal profession negotiate the transformative change the sector is experiencing. In particular, academic and press discussion has drawn attention to how the Millennial generation have grown up, studied, interacted with the world and each other and the ways in which these conditions may differ from those experienced by previous generations.

particular, academic and press discussion has noted the changing conditions in which the 'Millennial generation' have grown up, studied, interacted with the world and each other and the ways in which these conditions may differ from those experienced by previous generations.

Millennials are also known as Generation Y and sometimes the Net Generation. Generally the term is applied to individuals who reached adulthood around the turn of the 21st century. Although the exact range is used in a variable way, for the purpose of this project we are applying the term to anyone who is 32 or under and is employed as a lawyer, or equivalent, within the legal sector.

Previous research has noted that Millennials, as a generation, are focused on empowerment, personal development, flexible working and work/life balance, and has argued that law firms need to overhaul their processes to engage them (Bresman, and Gardner and Sheehan, 2015). While the ascription of particular characteristics on the basis of generational membership has been challenged (Fineman, 2011), nevertheless, references to generations can serve as a pragmatic shorthand (Foster, 2013).

1.1 What is said about Millennials?

Millennials have grown up connected within a world of technology. They are ethnically diverse and are said to be more tolerant of perceived difference than other generations. Another important difference is that they are likely to be the first that are less economically successful than their parents (Savage 2018). Other accounts emphasise their engagement with social media, experiences of austerity and quality of life concerns. The fee regime within higher education, competition for training contracts and growing employment flexibility are also important contextual differences between Millennials and previous generations.

¹ <https://sra.org.uk/solicitorexam/>

While recognising that the Research Project explicitly recruited on the basis of interest in the generational challenge of 'Millennials', one of our most striking findings was that the Non-Millennial generation (HR directors and Partners) were much more likely to make use of the term, than the Millennials themselves. Moreover, this was frequently (although not uniformly) done on the basis of negative comments, including the inability to receive feedback, a lack of organisational loyalty, being incapable of anything other than instant gratification, and generally being less robust in taking criticism (Law Society, 2015; Foster, 2013). One partner drew on a particular example, which exemplifies common refrains:

I had one guy who came in and he was... he did a blog for us, absolutely atrocious, called him in told him to go back and do it again. He said, 'I'm not doing it again', you know, and I was sort of sitting there absolutely flabbergasted thinking this is an opportunity for you to learn, etc, how he'd got so far in the process of becoming a solicitor to have that attitude, I was a bit 'like hang on a second'... [Partner Group, Male]

By way of contrast, there were other, more positive attributes ascribed to the incoming generation of lawyers including the fact that younger men and women were more likely to call out sexual harassment, better at recognising the need for work/life balance, more likely to be positive about the value of structured training and coaching, better at asking for feedback, could understand issues of stress and mental health, and generally able to work harder. This could be a catalyst for wider change.

We can all take something from this, what we see from the younger generations coming through and actually this is probably where you look and say that's where things start to change. [Partner Group, Female]

Following Fineman, we are hesitant in the ascription of characteristics on the basis of generation. Although there were differences between the Millennial lawyers and those holding senior roles, there are strong commonalities among the responses of all those participating. While it was noted that the professional cultures of the profession may be changing, it is less easy to directly attribute that to the particular generation (i.e. 'Millennial') into which more junior lawyers were born. It is perhaps more helpful to think about the context (education, economy, society and/or the profession) which shapes the environment within which lawyers at all stages are working (IPSIS Mori 2017).

1.2 Method and Key Questions:

The project has been designed in partnership with the Leeds Law Society, as part of the Centre for Innovation and Research in Legal Education's (University of Leeds)² commitment to developing partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in legal education and professional practice.

The primary research questions included:

- To what extent do different generations identify and address challenges in contemporary legal practice?
- What are the ways in which younger, newly qualified lawyers (aged under 32) conceptualise key professional and work-based issues?
- Which professional and work-based challenges (e.g. organisational commitments, career progression and motivation) do partners / HR managers identify?

² <http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/research/centre-for-innovation-and-research-in-legal-education>

- To what extent do these views align? And, if not, how do they differ?

A survey of over 250 Millennial lawyers who are members of Leeds Law Society was conducted in Summer 2017, followed by four focus groups with key stakeholders: Millennial lawyers at smaller firms or working in-house at the Local Authority ('Millennial Group One'); Millennial lawyers at larger firms ('Millennial Group Two'); Human Resources (HR) personnel; and partners from a range of law firms.³

Survey respondents	Paralegal	Trainee	0-2PQE	2-5PQE
210	11.4%	23%	21.9%	16.7%

Focus groups		
Millennial lawyers: High St, Local Authority, Commercial	HR Directors	Partners with Training and Management Responsibilities
20	10	10

1.3 Key findings

There are strong commonalities among the responses of all surveyed and interviewed.

1.3.1 Work-Life Balance

1. All recognised that there had been increased interest in the value of work-life balance. Moreover, the increased interest was not solely from younger lawyers.
2. Defining work-life balance varied enormously; it was a subjective assessment, not easily capable of universal definition.
3. However, flexible working was seen (by all) as a key way to achieve work-life balance.
4. Identified barriers to this included:
 - a. Supervision concerns by firms.
 - b. Unexpected and unplanned demands on time and the broader pressures of practice.

1.3.2 Workplace Cultures

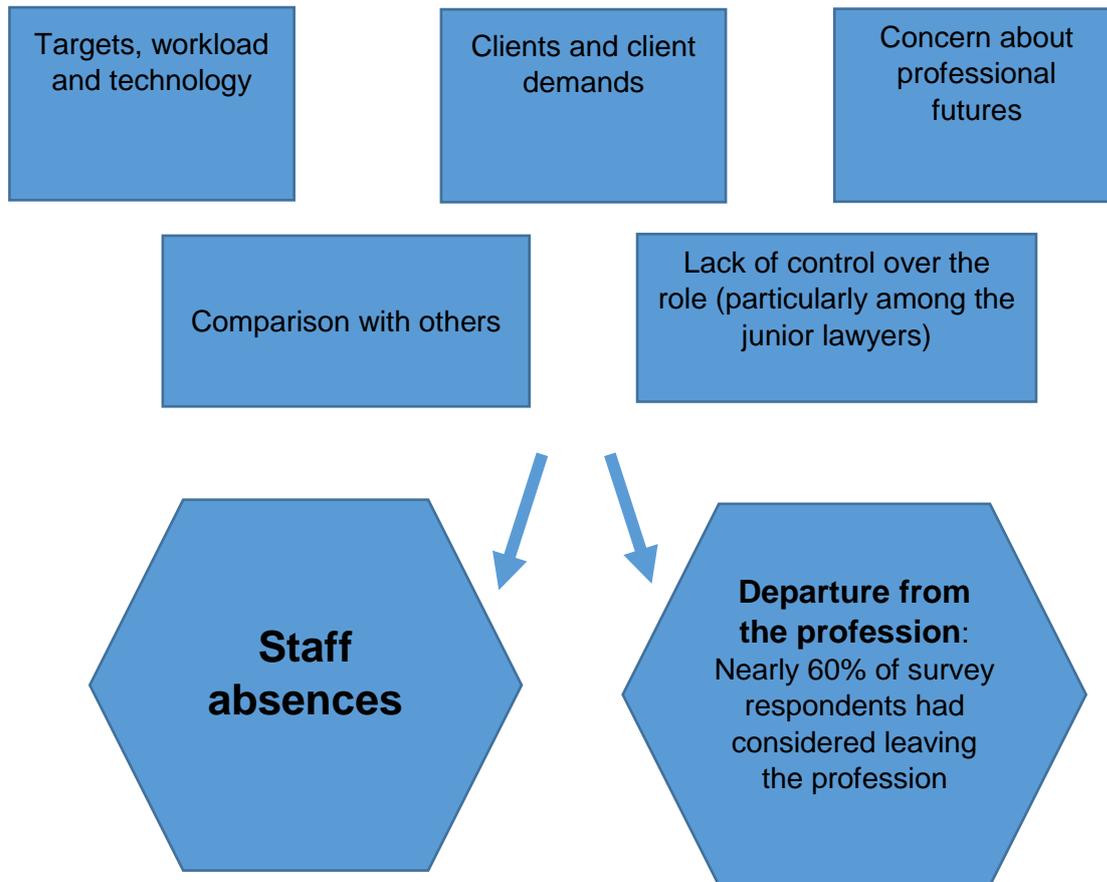
1. Workplace culture was identified by the majority of survey respondents as the single best thing about their firm.
2. Focus group respondents were consistent in their understanding of the features of a good workplace.
3. The HR Directors, in particular, emphasised formal policies, while senior lawyers were more likely to stress the importance of 'unspoken cultures.' Millennial lawyers, to an extent, expressed a desire for more formalised workplace cultures, including through structured and transparent promotions criteria.
4. Valued good practice included support provided to junior lawyers, often from senior lawyers.

1.3.3 Stress, Anxiety and Contemporary Legal Practice

Although the causes of stress and anxiety varied depending on seniority, role and sector, there was a clear acceptance from all participants that stress and anxiety were simply part of the

³ It is to be noted that the latter two groups largely comprised this intended set of respondents, but there were some participants who fell outside of these categories e.g. a consultant; a Head of a Law School – all of whom had substantial practice experience as qualified solicitors.

DNA of the profession. There were a number of sources of stress identified, along with particular outcomes of that stress.



1.3.4 Paralegals: Precarious Employment for Millennials

The belief within the Millennial focus groups was that the paralegal role dangles the (however remote) carrot of a training contract. Additional pressures and anxieties are absorbed as a result:

1. Heightened experience of the pressures outlined in 1.3.3, which are compounded by a low salary and (often) a lack of clarity in terms of career progression.
2. The absence of support from peers– “Hunger Games”.
3. A perception that they receive the least amount of understanding from senior figures.

1.3.5 Gendered Disadvantage: Continuing Challenges for Women

The challenges that women face have been highlighted by law firms’ gender pay gaps and the under-representation of women at partnership level. A number of respondents within the survey and the focus groups presented workplace difficulties in gendered terms.

Although focus group participants felt that women’s experiences had improved, it required little prompting before men and women (at all levels) provided examples of disadvantage, sexist behaviour and outright discrimination experienced by women lawyers.

1.3.6 Recommendations

Although some focus group members were of the view that legal practice is resistant to change, there is evidence that law firms do adapt. The increased recognition of the importance

of diversity and equality issues, leadership skills, mentoring and some firms' moves away from billable hours were seen as positive changes by all. Furthermore, the extent to which the Millennial lawyers, in particular, reflected upon how the culture of their firms differed demonstrates that 'it doesn't have to be this way' – individual firms can determine their own cultures and, in doing so, can potentially influence the culture of the industry as a whole.

Further areas for firms to proactively address – as part of a cultural shift – include:

- Demonstrating the value of employees.
- Enhanced support in the workplace.
- Ensuring greater clarity of expectations (from all parties), including with respect to paralegals.
- Developing steps to recognise and address stress and anxiety.

2. Work-life Balance Concerns across the Legal Generations

Work-life balance is frequently identified as a central concern within the legal profession (Thornton, 2016; Collier, 2016) and it has been attributed as a key generational concern amongst Millennials (IPSIS Mori 2017). Moreover, it has often ascribed to them negatively in terms of an unwillingness to work at a level of intensity required by the organisation, or having unrealistic expectations of the work-based flexibility that might be open to them (Foster 2013).

A consideration of these work-life concerns goes to the core of motivation and interest in work from among the 'Millennial' lawyers, and allow us to examine the firms' willingness and/or ability to create structures and working practices that will enable employees to achieve an effective work-life balance.

2.1. Importance of Work-Life balance

All recognised that there had been increased interest in the value of work-life balance. Moreover, the increased interest was not solely from younger lawyers. There was a recognition across the data sets that not only was achieving work-life balance important, but the desire to achieve it had grown in recent years. The achievement of work-life balance was clearly very important to the younger lawyers and shaped some of their career choices.

For me, it's very important to feel like something other than a lawyer. I need to have another identity on my weekends. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Solicitor]

I said to the NQs 'How do you pick where you want to qualify as a first year trainee?' They said that the team that they've gone into was a big part of that. It wasn't necessarily their subject area that interested them but what the teams and their approach to work was, but also the work/life balance. Everything came into it, like retaining their individuality. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Trainee]

However, it is absolutely clear that a recognition of the importance and benefits of a sustainable work-life balance was also articulated by the more senior lawyers and HR Directors who were also explicit about its benefits to all employees.

It's not bad to go for a run or a swim, it's not bad to spend [time with your family]... you are not neglecting your client when you go and see your kids play football or do something for your own wellbeing and I do think we need to look at it and say well how do we need to start re-shaping the profession in a way because it will get re-shaped if the cohort that's coming through has a different value system. [Partner]

I actually try not to work really long hours because I try to go home and...do something that [provides] a balance, and I find that drives my creativity into my work. [Partner]

The importance of work-life balance over salary has been identified as a Millennial characteristic (Jacobowitz, Lachter, and Morello, 2016: 8), and some of the younger lawyers did talk about their career decisions in these terms:

I took a salary cut [to move to Leeds] because I was in a City firm ... although it was a one third pay cut on salary, I got more than a third more house, if you like. I'm closer to work. I've got better hours. I actually find I'm doing better quality of work here than I was doing in London. [Millennial Group Two, Male, Solicitor]

I think people of sort of our era are 'money is less important'.... salary is probably less important than work/life balance. [Millennial Group One, Female, Solicitor]

However, it should be noted that salary concerns and considerations still featured heavily in the survey responses, particularly in terms of motivations for moving jobs. Thus, although aspects of culture and working practices featured heavily in terms of what respondents valued in their current positions, salary and career progression were the key drivers for considerations of moving firm. This indicates that suggestions that 'organisational loyalty' among Millennials is capable of being addressed by a focus on e.g. culture and work-life balance (Law Society, 2015) are only part of a complex picture.

2.2. Defining the Indefinable – you know when it's not there ...

How work-life balance was defined within the focus groups varied enormously; it was a *subjective assessment*, not easily applied across the board.

It's being able to try and do all the things that you want to be able to do and not feeling that you're significantly comprising one of those areas because of work. [Millennial Group Two, Male, solicitor]

It's having some sort of ability to control when you're going to be able to go out and do things you want to do, so you can plan and be reliable to people and you show up on time... I suppose there is a cut-off [time] where I feel like I'm winning or losing each day. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Solicitor]

You go in thinking, 'Tomorrow is clear. I can get away at half five. I can get away at six' and [then] something big gets dropped on you, that's when it really starts to wear me down if that happens too often...I would also say maybe, I'd like to just have hours that you actually stick to. [Millennial Group Two, Male, Solicitor]

I don't think I see work/life balance as sort of 9 to 5, it's not necessarily an 'hour space' balance it's sort of...being able to go and do things that you commit to or you enjoy, sort of complementary to your work, it doesn't have to be one or the other, it should be that there's flexibility to do both. [Millennial Group One, Female, Solicitor]

While there were variations in terms of how it was defined, there was a recognition from all constituencies was that there was immense value in having other activities in one's life that one had time for. Part of the challenge in delivering this, or in enacting the transformations required within the practice environment, is the lack of clarity about what it involves. As one HR Director summed it up:

Work/life balance is different for everybody. I think because it depends on your home life, what you want and you're expecting to feel. [Any] conflict between the younger ones and the older ones [is] because they, maybe, have different expectation of what work-life balance is.

It is less clear that the differences in understandings of what work/life balance is rests on a division between older/younger lawyers (although it is interesting to note that the perception was that there was a difference). What seems more important is that everyone, no matter what stage of their career, is likely to have a slightly different conception of what work-life balance looks like for them personally. The critical issue for law firms appears to be understanding these different expectations and developing clearly communicated and consistent responses to them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given their role, HR Directors found it easier to identify when a work-life balance was not being met:

I think you can spot it when it's not happening. I think it's easy to recognise it the other way around...rather than actually trying to define it as something that you really should be doing or not. When it goes wrong, you can spot it. From an HR point of view, it's easy to recognise...the warning signs...whether it's behavioural, or absence related, or presenteeism related. [HR Group]

2.3 Achievability of Work-Life balance

While there was a clear recognition of the importance of work-life balance from all surveyed and interviewed, it was also clear that this was not universally experienced in reality.

On the positive side, when the survey respondents were asked directly what was the one thing that their firm could do to improve their work-life balance, 12.4% said that it was already there (with a further 26.7% leaving the response blank). A number of focus group participants also spoke positively about how they had been able to achieve a positive work/life balance. However, this was often presented by way of contrast with their experiences in previous firms or settings.

I'd say I've got a good balance now. As a trainee I had quite different experiences in one, more commercial, department. I used to regularly stay in the office until about 7pm to get all my work done which was well past when I was supposed to finish. And then one day I came in at like a minute to 9 o'clock and I got an absolute telling off and I said, 'I'm so sorry I got stuck behind a tractor'. I'm late and I was actually running into the office and I said 'I was even running to get here on time'. And the partner said, 'oh yes, I know, I saw you out the window' and I was like, 'why are you even telling me off when I'm running'. And it wasn't like it, you know, it had happened before so yeah, I thought that was a bit cheeky because they had no idea how much kind of time I was putting in outside of my hours. [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

I recognise that my firm, compared to others, is good with the flexibility. There's no judgement culture, even though it was open plan offices... So yeah, the flexibility is there and it's really helpful, especially considering what it could be like. [Millennial Group Two, Male, Solicitor]

One partner, in particular, spoke very powerfully about the choices that she made in order to achieve a work-life balance. What was striking about her explanation was that she had been able to exercise a certain level of control and autonomy in her dealings with clients.

Since I've started working on my own, I've got relationships with clients that I've had for years, I mean they've followed me for 15 years let's say, and I feel really comfortable now saying to some, well most of my clients, "I'm sorry I can't do that for you now, does it need doing now?" And they'll say, nine times out of ten, no, tomorrow's fine. And I actually do say I'm just going to football practice with [my child]...I do think people, if you give them the opportunity to understand you and the relationship with you as a professional, they are also quite prepared to give and take.

While this contrasts with the importance of the client demands dictating the contemporary professional marketplace (Hanlon, 1999), more senior lawyers are clearly able to draw on greater experience and the development of relationships over a longer period of time in order to arrive at a manageable outcome with their clients. This contrasts explicitly with the lack of control reported by the Millennial lawyers (see further 4.1.5). Furthermore, real barriers were identified which prevented work-life balance for lawyers. In general, these barriers could be summarised as the pressures of contemporary practice (see further Section Four). In the words of one survey respondent:

Culture in the sector is the only way this [better work-life balance] would happen. Not going to happen. [Corporate, male, 31-36, 2-5 PQE]

2.4 Work-Life balance and Flexible Working

Given the diverse and subjective way in which participants defined work-life balance, it was striking that flexible working was the most frequently cited response to issues of work-life balance. When the survey respondents were asked what was the *one* thing that their firm could do to improve their work/life balance the largest single response was flexible working – 35.2%. Strikingly, a recent survey found that that ‘flexible working patterns’ was the most preferred ‘perk’ or ‘workplace benefit’ among lawyers (Scott, 2018). However, for firms, there were real supervision concerns, with senior lawyers having to re-think supervision and management practices in response to the demands of colleagues for more flexible approaches to working in order to achieve a better work-life balance.

It’s about the essence of that supervisory work; the stuff that leaves the door from the law firm has to be as near as perfect in order to go out to the clients. I think people are still used to just showing you this before it goes out and...that sort of behaviour. I’m thinking of Dickensian style and saying, ‘Here, write down and scribe it and check it like that.’ [HR Director]

My experience of other people talking to managers about working flexibly and changing their hours or changing their location of work, that’s usually met fairly negatively and often resulted in being moved into a non-fee earning role or some sort of alternative role to achieve that style of working. For core teams in the firm, flexible working really isn’t achievable. [Millennial Group Two, Male, Solicitor]

For paralegals and trainees, the absence of control which they were able to exercise in their work, and the (often) unspoken cultures which created expectations to work longer, was a particularly pronounced theme within the focus groups (see 3.2 and 4.1.5). This meant that the younger lawyers frequently referenced situations whereby any commitment to work-life balance and flexible working on the part of the firm was undermined by the realities of contemporary practice, and the demands of the client. An additional way in which we can potentially understand the anxiety generated by these situations is the dissonance that these experiences highlight between their expectations of the autonomy of a legal professional and the reality of heavily constrained working life – whether that be constrained by the whims of last-minute work demanded by partners (see 4.1.5), or by clients. The value of work-life balance might be recognised by lawyers at every career stage and by their HR Directors, but ‘work’ demands more – and it seems that it is invariably ‘life’ that gives.

If you get an email at 9 o’clock at night and haven’t picked it up and then you get in at 9 the next morning and someone says, ‘oh have you not responded’, it’s like ‘no, I haven’t responded actually.’ And then you get criticised for that and I don’t think that’s right. [Millennial Group One, Female, Solicitor]

I think that might be unavoidable now though ... it’s kind of too late...if you know you can get the partner on the other end of the phone at 9pm on a Friday [with another firm], you’re going to go for them. So, you’ve got to, it’s almost like you can’t get rid of it now. [Millennial Group One, Male, Solicitor]

2.5 Summary

It is clear from the data that work-life balance is becoming an increasingly important priority for the legal profession in Leeds as elsewhere. Although there were suggestions that Leeds,

as a centre, offered a better balance in terms of exposure to quality work, reduced housing and transport costs and a vibrant city with a beautiful natural hinterland, themes concerning work-life balance issues are similar to those expressed elsewhere (Law Society, 2015; Douglas Scott, 2018; Kelan, 2012).

However, it is important to recognise that this should not necessarily be a site of generational conflict (Jacobowitz, Lachter, and Morello, 2016). Within the focus groups, there was a belief at all levels of the profession that a sustainable balance between work and other aspects of life was important for individual and organisational wellbeing. Fundamentally, the key challenge in this area appears to be conflict generated by efforts to achieve a work-life balance alongside the demands of contemporary legal practice (see Section Four). This should not be a site within which the demands of one generation are necessarily set against another; rather, it is a generational challenge for all within the legal profession in terms of how the demands of contemporary practice are met.

3. Workplace cultures

There are multiple ways of defining 'cultures' within a workplace.⁴ For the purposes of this section, the authors regard the term as encompassing the expectations, behaviours and approaches which are most commonly associated with a specific workplace (Maiman et al, 1999).

Within the survey, workplace culture was identified as the single best part of working for the respondent's current employer. This was disproportionately the case for trainees (and those in the 22-25 age bracket). Among possible motivations for applications to the current position, 'workplace culture' received 66.8% of all responses (although the most popular response overall was career progression at 77.4%). Interestingly, workplace culture did not feature as a potential reason to move amongst survey respondents who suggested they might do so - career progression and salary were the most likely reasons to be given.

Within the focus groups, the culture of a firm was thought – in part – to be generated by a mixture of HR policies on matters of strategic importance to the firm, as well as by junior lawyers themselves (who some partners and HR managers credited with changing the legal profession for the better, particularly in terms of their increased focus upon personal wellbeing). Within all focus groups, there was a recognition that senior lawyers were also a significant influence on the culture of the firm through the example they set for junior lawyers, as well as through their approach to management. Millennial focus group interviewees in particular were very aware of the way in which the culture of their workplace – informed by senior management – affected their stress and the pressure placed upon them:

*The previous role I was in, I had a Blackberry and I was expected to be available on it all the time. I took it on my honeymoon. I was expected to check it. I'm lucky my wife didn't kill me with it. The chap I work for a lot of the time now has got a much better attitude...about that and about work/life balance generally...He's got a young family and they're a priority for him. If he's on holiday, he's pretty much unavailable, which is a lot of pressure, but he does everything he can to get it to a point where he can leave the office. That's the expectation of the way that we like to do it in the team.*⁵ [Millennial group Two, Male, Solicitor]

3.2 Unspoken cultures

There are numerous expectations which need to be communicated within any workplace context, for example the anticipated working hours, dress code, mode(s) of communication, and how flexible working practices operate (if they are available).

Within the focus group discussions, there were some examples of when expectations were explicitly communicated. These were most commonly expressed by members of the HR focus group who, along with the Millennial focus group participants, were most likely to be aware of the benefits of clearly communicated expectations,⁶ including countering the possible effects of detrimental cultures being reinforced through observation by junior lawyers:

⁴ <https://hbr.org/2013/05/what-is-organizational-culture>

⁵ See <https://hbr.org/2015/12/proof-that-positive-work-cultures-are-more-productive> for a discussion of the effect of negative and positive workplace cultures

⁶ The benefits of which include enhanced employee accountability (<https://hbr.org/2016/01/the-right-way-to-hold-people-accountable>); greater connection to – and therefore buy-in – with the workplace's strategy (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2016/01/21/the-best-managers-always-set-clear-expectations/#f81867355f20>); and increased employee motivation (<https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/why-your-employees-are-losing-motivation>).

...even if there isn't a spoken expectation, observing the senior folk, and how they've got to their levels of success, I think sends a massively powerful message out to the junior lawyers. Unless there is an explicit discussion about boundaries and what's acceptable, then I think there's going to be a natural drift for people to think, 'I need to behave like that in order to be successful.' [HR Group]

The increasing diversity of members of the profession (SRA, 2017) was recognised as another reason to expressly communicate expectations, with one HR focus group member reporting expressly telling apprentices 'basic' forms of office etiquette (for example, not to put mobile phones on desks). Others discussed the explicit communication which was given to members of their firm about how work mobile phones were to be used, for example (*'we made it very clear, 'Look, this is not to ensure 24/7 operation. This is very much to help you work and if you work...from home to have that facility. This is not to create additional workload'*); managing career expectations by setting out clear promotion frameworks for employees to work towards; and creating explicit policies:

We put together a policy about Agile and Flexible Working which was actually done from a focus group of people who were both juniors, the supervisors and managers. That really helped because it created that trust and within there, there are basic sacrosanct rules, like you have to be available at all times; you tell your manager if you're going home because half the day, you need to be around because the gas man is there and that's fine but...it kind of creates that sense of rules. [HR Group]⁷

Nevertheless, it was common for partners, or other HR representatives, to reference 'observational practices' as a way of junior lawyers learning what was expected of them. Some referenced the fact that those entering the profession should have had some work experience, so should understand something about the nature of the workplace (Francis, 2015). Such assumptions potentially run counter to drives to promote diversity within the profession (SRA Corporate Strategy 2017-2020), as does equating paralegals working weekends with a genuine desire to get a training contract; relying upon occasions involving alcohol for senior lawyers to see the personalities of trainees; and graduate partners favouring graduates of certain universities (all of which were referenced, positively and negatively, within the focus groups).

Some participants within the partner focus group expressed concern about the extent to which expectations in the workplace were routinely met by more junior lawyers, and the extent to which junior lawyers understood the profession prior to entry:

I mean at the end of the day you are in a service industry. People do come into this profession thinking I will work 9 to 5, I'm going to be the best solicitor I can be and I'm going to do 9 to 5. It doesn't happen...I think there has to be that realisation that we are there to provide a service and clients will go somewhere else if you don't. [Partner]

Interestingly, when those participants were asked 'how are you communicating expectations to the fee earners?' none of the respondents expressly stated how they communicated such expectations to junior lawyers. What was far more likely were references to what was not

⁷ It is notable that flexible working arrangements are associated with greater employee loyalty, and with perceptions of greater employee productivity and engagement (*The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2017*

Apprehensive Millennials: seeking stability and opportunities in an uncertain world
<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-deloitte-Millennial-survey-2017-executive-summary.pdf>, page 21)

expected, but without a clear sense of whether – and how – this was communicated within the firm:

...it's perfectly ok at the end of the working day to go and stick a laptop in your locker and lock it away and go home without it, you know, we haven't said to people you must keep that on your person the whole time. [Partner]

I don't think we've ever actually said to people you've got to be available kind of out of normal hours if you like. [Partner]

Nevertheless, Millennial focus group participants reported being *largely* clear about what to expect before they entered the profession, and in the main found the profession to be as expected. The impression given was that the working practices were not unexpected: in similar ways to partner focus group participants, Millennials said they understood they would be required to work longer hours on some occasions, and none of them referenced 9-5 hours as feasible or desirable. However, other aspects of working life which mattered to them weighed heavily e.g. the need to feel valued, and the fact that felt they were in an insecure financial position many years after their peer group appeared to have such security.

Overall, there was a sense that the senior and junior lawyers were not as far away from each other as they might initially think, certainly when it came to their understanding of what a desirable workplace culture is. Nevertheless, the gap between what some partners expect, and what some Millennials want or expect, and how the expectations of the firms are communicated, do have some consequences – it is to those consequences which attention now turns.

3.3. Consequences of unspoken or unclear expectations

3.3.1 Lack of clarity regarding career progression

There were generally very positive responses in the survey (80%) around the support offered for career development and enhancement. Within the focus groups, feedback was much more mixed. From the Millennials' perspective, there remained a clear interest in career progression (although becoming a partner was not universally referenced as an ideal), coupled with frustration about the lack of clarity regarding how to progress:

In my firm I know that there's not sort of a job description...like a set list of boxes that if you want to meet that next level here's everything you've got to tick. So how do you know what you're working towards if you don't know what's required of you at that level? [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

A preference for greater clarity was noted by at least one partner, but it is notable that when the partner focus group was asked how widely shared and known the paths for promotion were within the organisation, there was no clear articulation of whether, or how, this happens. Several partners suggested that junior lawyers are simply less interested in becoming a partner than previous generations were, whether from anecdotal evidence or from surveys conducted with their own members. However, previous research has suggested that Millennials are more concerned with career progression than might commonly be assumed:⁸

⁸ Within the United States, for example, CEB Global's quarterly survey of 90,000 US employees has previously found that, for 33% of Millennials, future career opportunities are a key priority in joining a company, as compared with 21% for other generations. (<http://www.inhouselawyer.co.uk/mag-feature/myths-and-Millennials/>)

the question might simply be how 'professional success' is to be defined in the future. The definition might well become broader, and less focused upon specifically becoming a partner.⁹

There was a sense of the junior lawyers perhaps being braver about making decisions about how they want to work, and being clearer about what matters to them, earlier within their career. For example, one partner suggested that the Millennials who were not keen upon the traditional partnership or senior leadership model were not necessarily different to those more senior lawyers who similarly shunned partnership for another career path:

I think [there's a lack of interest in partnership] because, and I may be speaking out of turn, but I think that's because there's been 10 or 20 years of people watching...other people striving to get to the top and I also think that a lot of people at an earlier stage sit back and look at the people at the top and think, 'I don't want to be a partner with you' and therefore at that point they take their foot off the gas.[Partner]

The lack of interest in a career of which the pinnacle was partnership did not mean that Millennial participants were disinterested in career progression per se: on the contrary, there was a firm interest in being able to understand more about career progression steps, most notably through a transparent framework for promotion.

3.3.2 Skills development

Survey respondents who were 0-2 years PQE were disproportionately more likely than any other grouping (with strong statistical associations) to indicate that the worst thing about their work was the lack of support that they received. Overall, 0-2 Years PQE respondents also disproportionately reported that the worst thing about their firm was the lack of management support. 0-2 PQE appears to be a key point of transition in terms of fully assuming a professional identity and set of responsibilities, but one in which the younger lawyers are not feeling supported. Millennials in the focus groups were particularly concerned with how prepared they were for aspects of their post-qualification work, most notably in networking with potential clients. Feedback suggested not all firms were providing explicit support for this, which was a source of some concern and anxiety:

I've certainly found as a trainee if you want to go and get involved in any sort of network or anything like that there was absolutely no support, it was not encouraged...it doesn't really set you up for when you are then thrust into the situation where they're expecting you to do that. If you haven't had that support going through to that point, then you're not going to feel comfortable doing it. [Millennial Group one, Female]

Some partners also reflected upon the need to provide such support, for example:

...we've talked about hard work and clients and billing and all of that, what we've not talked about is business development and networking...that's what I think may be missing in the Millennial generation...it's all that mentoring that needs to go on. [Partner]

Again, such findings are not limited to the legal profession: those under 30 rate 'opportunities for personal growth' more highly than 'management that cares about people,' as far as their requirements for potential employers are concerned (IPSIS MORI, 2017:64).

⁹ This experience is not limited to the legal sector: PWC, for example, report that 'becoming a partner is no longer enough to spark high levels of engagement' (<https://hbr.org/2014/11/the-us-chairman-of-pwc-on-keeping-Millennials-engaged>)

3.4 Summary

Millennial lawyers and more senior lawyers were more aligned on their expectations of the intensity of work required within the legal workplace than the popular 'Millennial narrative' might imply. Nevertheless, for the junior lawyers, uncertainty existed around aspects of career progression, as well as around expectations of the role technology ought to be play within their daily working lives. Such uncertainty was exacerbated by, in some cases, the absence of formal policies and a reliance upon 'unspoken cultures' within firms.

4. Stress and the Pressures of Contemporary Legal Practice

Stress within the legal profession is well-documented. LawCare, the charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the legal community received 900 phone calls within 2017, 27% of which related to stress. This covers a range of issues, including a lack of suitable training coupled with an unavailable supervisor, through to a toxic work atmosphere and unrealistic billing targets.¹⁰ The Junior Lawyer's Division Annual Resilience and Wellbeing Survey found more than 90% of respondents had experienced stress in their role, and more than 38% had experienced a mental health problem in the last month (2018: 2).

Within the Millennial and partner focus groups for this research, there was a sense that stress is simply part of the DNA of the profession: client demands, the competitiveness of the industry, and the difficulty in securing jobs within it, are simply a 'fact of life' within law, and the job is therefore inherently stressful.

4.1 Sources of stress

Within the surveys, 'pressure'-related concerns tended to be highlighted by those in the older age brackets (31-36) as the single worst aspect of their working lives. In a similar vein, Millennial focus group members identified numerous sources of stress, some of which were also identified by Human Resources and partner participants.

4.1.1 Targets, workload and technology

There were several references to the pressure of targets, and workload more generally, within both the survey and the focus groups.

The work-life balance can be poor, especially when raising a family. The job is high stress and high responsibility. Making a difference versus making a decent salary is a conflict which I have not been able to resolve. [Female solicitor, 2-5 years PQE, 26-30, Private Practice Commercial]

...there is an unwritten rule that we work past our official finish times on a daily basis. There is too much work for one Solicitor to do - the volume is driven by the need to make money and billing targets...I think about quitting on a near daily basis, but still struggle with leaving it entirely after the huge sacrifices that were made to get here. [Female Solicitor, 2-5 years PQE, Private Practice Litigation]

Well the workload is just phenomenal. I think it was as though somebody looked at how many hours they had in the day, how much could you get through and then stuck another 25% on top of that. And on top of that you were then also getting reports daily or weekly saying you've got these tasks overdue or you need to get your work down on this. [Millennial Group One, Female]

However, by far the biggest point of discussion around stress was the effect of technology upon lawyering (despite the fact technology has the potential to allow greater flexibility in work location, which is associated with greater work satisfaction).¹¹ The possibility of remote working brought about by the advent of technology was regarded as a point of stress for senior lawyers, particularly those who are more accustomed to understanding commitment to work as being evidenced by presenteeism.

¹⁰ <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/news/callers-to-helpline-at-record-high>

¹¹ <https://hbr.org/2014/01/employees-perform-better-when-they-can-control-their-space>

I've just left Corporate and it was very much like the Old Boy's thing of you stay in the office, even if you've got nothing to do, just to keep your face in. [Millennial Group Two, Female]

I think technology has had a massive effect. They think, 'Why do I need to be sitting at a desk when I've got a perfectly good office in my house and I can do the same job?' People want to be able to work from home. People want to be able to spend time with their kids and go to gyms and do things for themselves. I think that comes into wellbeing. I think that comes into thinking about your own longevity and what you want out of your life... There isn't that rigidity of nine to five thirty. I think [trust] has been a thing to overcome. When working from home first started being talked about, it was like, 'Yeah, but you're really sitting on the sofa watching TV'. We all know that you get more done at home than you do in the office because you're uninterrupted. I think that's a sort of mindset change that's probably a generational thing. [HR group]

Millennial lawyers considered themselves to be under particular pressure as a result of the advances in technology, and the client expectations coupled with them:

You talk to people in practice before emails and they'd say, 'I used to love it when a letter came in. I'd have a day for it to come in and I'd read it and then I'd think about it. I'd then draft a reply and that could go on a week. Obviously, you'd receive the letter on the other side and they would come up to you and someone would hand it to you'. If you think about now, it's sent by email and bang! It's just constant and I think that technological pressure has morphed the profession and it's created more stress which we're, perhaps, at the fore of because we're at the junior end of the profession. [Millennial Group Two, Male]

4.1.2 Clients

56% of respondents to Junior Lawyer's Divisions 2018 Resilience and Wellbeing Survey cited client demands and expectations as a cause of stress, which was the second highest response. Within the focus groups for this Research Project, there was a recognition that clients and their expectations are a significant source of stress. This was primarily connected with the expectation of instantaneous responses:

It's more of a 24/7 culture now. The older solicitors have always worked hard and they had to be in the office but I think now, they are expected to take that call at 10 o'clock at night, even when they're at home on a weekend and so we have to be more flexible because if you're going to expect them to be taking calls or answering emails all the time, then we have to be flexible with that... You can actually do [work] somewhere else, so there is more flexibility, but then I think the expectations are from clients. It's not driven by firms; it's driven by clients because the clients are younger, and the clients are Millennials, and we have to respond to that. They want an answer now and they're not used to waiting, so a lot of it is client demand. [HR group]

Additional sources of client-related stress for the Millennial lawyers came from the manner in which they were supported – or not – with clients who exhibited unacceptable behaviour:

I specifically had an occasion where someone said, 'This is a difficult client to deal with and regardless of the client, they're known to be misogynistic. This is a difficult client to deal with, so if you girls are having problems, then just come to me'. I was just fuming. If there is an issue, address it head on. It's like admitting defeat before something is even happening and saying, 'Don't worry about it if you can't do it'. I was just so angry. [Female, Millennial Group Two]

4.1.3 Concerns about professional futures

In the case of partners, the pressure of protecting one's future within the profession was typically linked to concerns about having responsibility for the firm:

You still have to have that quality and partners are very conscious of that and if they get it wrong, there are huge consequences and so it has to be right. [HR group]

I think they're the owners of the businesses. They've got the future of the firms in their hands and that comes with a lot of pressure. [HR group]

At the junior end of the profession, Millennial participants were also concerned about their future within the profession, most notably in respect of competition for jobs and with making mistakes. Such concerns are not limited to this sample: 8% of LawCare's helpline phone calls were about concerns over making, or having made, mistakes.

I'm thinking, 'I've got no idea what the answer is' but every time I'm sending something, I'm sending it as if I'm so sure and risking my whole career on every little email I'm sending. I'm sending 100 emails and each time you do it, you worry. [Millennial Group Two, Female]

The competition for jobs was also a particular concern, particularly at the very junior end of the profession. Millennial focus group participants reflected upon the detrimental effect this can have upon working relationships, and upon individual stress levels – these are considered further within Section Five.

4.1.4 Comparisons with others

Within the focus groups, comparisons manifested themselves through competitiveness within the job market and salary in particular. Salary comparisons were made to fellow lawyers (e.g. how much paralegals are paid relative to trainees, even when offering extensive guidance to those trainees), and to friends in other professions:

I think it's the expectation that you will get not a lot, more than what you get. But also because it can be a really slow process to actually qualify¹² you're a fully grown up person with a salary of like almost a student but you have to live a life... you know you're invited to weddings and you want to get, I don't know married or get a house and your salary, you can't even imagine to do this stuff. And then you see other people from different professions...who can afford all this stuff because they are on more decent salaries because they didn't have to wait ten years until they qualified. [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

It is important to bear the financial context of Millennials in mind: the Intergenerational Commission of the Resolution Foundation found that, in real terms, Millennials typically earn £8000 less during their 20s than the previous generation did at the same age.¹³ Furthermore, it is expected that, on average, graduates will leave University with in excess of £44000 worth of debt (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2012). This is a generation which is undeniably in a relatively poor financial position as compared with their predecessors, a fact which makes comparisons across salary ranges – and the length of time taken to reach certain salary levels – understandable.

¹² The average age of those entered onto the roll in 2016-17 was 29.7 for males and 29.2 for females (<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/law-careers/becoming-a-solicitor/entry-trends/>)

¹³ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/stagnation-generation-the-case-for-renewing-the-intergenerational-contract/>

4.1.5 Control

The inability to control individual schedules of work on any given day was a source of stress for many participants:

So, you've got a task list, you know your deadline, you can manage it but then a partner will come to you and say, 'oh have you done that yet?'... 'no, because you said the deadline's next week,' 'oh no, I need it now,'... I had a plan, I knew what I was doing and now I've just thrown it all out of the window... it's just when somebody else messes up my time and my organisation that annoys me and stresses me out. [Millennial Group One, Female]

I think it's hard basing your day around how other people manage their time. [Millennial Group Two, Female]

In essence, these comments were born out of frustration that the time of these participants was seemingly not valued by those more senior to them: their time was seen as a commodity to be used as others saw fit, regardless of the consequences for the junior lawyer.

4.2 The effects of stress

The effects of stress included quite pronounced physical effects culminating in periods of absence from work on the grounds of ill-health:

I've seen a number of people who don't take care of themselves and then end up on sick leave... would you rather have somebody who works well and manages their life and not as long hours but isn't taking up intermittent sick leave or a whole week off every sort of four to six months. [Partner]

The headaches can be more regular. You can have nerves if you know there's a big deadline coming up and you haven't necessarily managed your time perfectly that week and you need to get this in by tomorrow. I can feel quite sick from time to time. It can be quite physical and not just worry. [Millennial Group Two, Male]

Lack of sleep. [Millennial Group Two, Female]

Stress also had an effect upon the identity of some lawyers. One, for example, reflected upon the effect of her corporate law seat upon her ability to retain commitments outside of work which were important to her:

I've just come from Corporate and I think I did lose my individuality. I lost my personality. I was constantly checking my phone, checking for emails, stressing about deadlines and stressing if I'd done it properly. I stopped doing things in an evening because I thought, 'I can't be that flaky person who always cancels on everyone'. I stopped being able to [be a youth group leader] [Millennial Group Two, Female]

Similarly, a partner reflected upon the knock-on effect that an all-consuming approach to work can have upon family life:

Coming back to the culture and the health thing [of putting clients first, remembering it's a business, being commercially aware]... I get it and I know that's how it is, and I do it myself... but then you get to a certain point and you think well hang on a minute, at this point if I carry on like this I'm not ever going to see my children... although I do understand the reason for being at your client's will and the business commerciality of it, I think there's got to be a different way. [Partner]

4.3 Firm responses to stress

There was a level of awareness among those in HR and senior leadership roles about issues of stress and anxiety within their firms, with a reflective discussion of the various responses that have been developed, including sessions with Mental Health charities, and training and guidance sessions for management. Some of the Millennial lawyers also talked about the different approaches that firms take in response to supporting staff and how that can assist in stress management:

I've got my own secretary now and she just works for me, she's almost like a personal assistant which I'm not sure whether that would happen in any other firm so we got quite lucky about that. But I found that just having that one on one support is such like a stress relief I guess, she just organises everything and deals with the calls. [Millennial Group One, Female, Solicitor]

However, many of the Millennial lawyers reported apprehension about whether those in management roles would recognise or respond to warning signs of stress.

I think what's interesting there is that stress is all relative and I think you'll have that situation where you might go to the partner in question and say, 'Look, I'm really stressed'... I think there are a lot of people would just say, 'You think you've got problems? Here's my To Do list, mate'. I think, with law, it's emphasised because we're in a naturally stressful environment and our managers are probably stressed as well. I think, regrettably, people are very quick to have one-upmanship and say, 'You think you've got problems?' I think, unfortunately, that's something that you face. [Millennial Group Two, Male, Solicitor]

I just have to take myself off to the toilet for five minutes and just sit down and say, 'Look, it's not that important' because if you're scared that if someone sees you stressed, they think you're not right for the job. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Solicitor]

4.4 Summary

The profession was regarded as inherently stressful across the focus groups, and Millennial focus group members did not appear to think that this aspect of working life would change. Nevertheless, there was a sense amongst those lawyers that there was potential for different approaches to be taken to working life between firms. Features of working life which were regarded as important to Millennial focus group participants (feeling valued; having support; seeing a path to career progression; have a decent work life balance; and understanding a clearly articulated culture in which they were operating) would be potentially toxic to their willingness to remain within a firm if unmet *and* if combined with working within an environment regarded as inherently stressful. Those interviewees who had moved between firms pointed to at least one of these as a reason for having moved: if junior lawyers are comparing themselves to others (something which may well be learned behaviour from during their time at Law School – see Bleasdale and Humphreys, 2018), they will compare those features of working life which matter to them and will potentially make a decision to move on that basis.

5. Paralegals – Precarious Employment for the Millennial Generation

5.1 Introduction

The market for entry into the solicitors' profession has dramatically shifted in recent years, with the increasing acceptance that significant numbers of aspirant solicitors will spend time in paralegal positions. Estimates of paralegals range from 60,000 to 300,000.¹⁴ Their ambiguous and precarious position is reinforced by an acknowledgement from law firms that positions vary from 'career' paralegals with little chance for progression (Sommerlad, 2016a) to paralegals effectively engaged in extended training contract interviews (Francis, 2015). While there have been various attempts at professionalisation and accreditation, overall the role is one clouded in uncertainty for firms, consumers, and paralegals themselves.

5.2. Paralegal or Paralegal.....: The 'carrot of the training contract'

The level of competition to secure an entry position (and the level of debt that they are already carrying), means that Millennial (and other younger) lawyers are unlikely to differentiate between the various different types of paralegal positions. Firms may have clear expectations as to what they envisage their paralegal role(s) as encompassing:

[Paralegals] tend to have the same training opportunities as trainees, so we tend to class them as trainees and they get invited to the same things as trainees, but it depends what they want. We've got some older ones who are happy doing what they want to do and they're what we call 'Career Paralegals.' [HR Group]

It is for harder for students to rationalise these choices when they are in an environment of very significant competition for an entry level position. The expectations generated (perhaps through a lack of sector knowledge, but compounded by the emotional and financial investment that has been made) means that, however remote, a paralegal position does carry the tantalising prospect of the training contract - the incentive that fuels the need to continue – even if the firms do not advertise all their paralegal positions on this basis. One trainee summed up the bleakness of the situation particularly starkly:

No-one makes you aware that actually those expectations are unlikely to be met. I'll always remember at my last firm I was talking to another paralegal because she wanted a training contract and I remember saying to her 'do you really want to be a solicitor' and she said 'yes' and I said 'why' and she said, 'because I've worked so hard.' Which isn't really a reason; it doesn't really explain why you want to do it, it's explaining that you really feel that you've got to now... Many people probably get to a certain stage and feel that they've wasted time, they've got that debt and are they ever going to get that training contract? [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

Paralegals in the survey were disproportionately more likely than any other occupational category to say that the *best* thing about their job was the training/learning experience that it provided. Thus, the benefit for this group is fundamentally the fact that the role exists. A paralegal role dangles the (however remote) carrot of a training contract, and additional pressures and anxieties are absorbed as a result:

¹⁴ Allaboutlaw (2017) 'Paralegals: The backbone of legal sector'
<https://www.allaboutlaw.co.uk/law-careers/paralegal/paralegals-the-backbone-of-legal-sector>

A common response, when I raised the issue of how much extra time I was putting in [as a paralegal] was, 'well, you want the training contract don't you?' [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

However, the implicit nature of the carrot tangling, and the way that it encourages paralegals to work above and beyond may not be readily understood or admitted by the firm, who simply see an enthusiastic and committed paralegal:

For example, we've had an excellent girl who offered to work weekends when we had a big project, we didn't ask her to but was like, wow she offered!! Of course you can if you want to, but it does depend entirely on where they are set on heading, whether it's with us or to a different firm. [Partner]

5.3 Pressures of practice at the bottom of the legal hierarchy

The paralegal experience is one within which the precariousness and the pressures of contemporary legal practice are felt particularly acutely. The individual paralegal is already working in a role which they did not envisage themselves undertaking when they began studying (Hardee, 2014), plus there is a considerable lack of clarity about the nature of the role, and about their position in times of an economic downturn. The experience of being the lowest in a clearly understood hierarchy of professional practice was keenly felt:

It was a much less secure job as a paralegal, if anyone goes you're the first out the door and so it's much more of proving yourself constantly...you feel like the axe is always there so to speak...you're the most junior, you're the most expendable. [Millennial Group Two, Female]

I've come across trainees who think you're their dogsbody as well as the team's dogsbody. That's when it's much more difficult to deal with. [Millennial Group Two, Female]

I know paralegals who work so much more, so many more hours than the trainees, so it could be a culture in many firms. [Millennial Group One, Female]

These heightened pressures are compounded by low salary. Paralegals responding to the survey were the most likely group of legal workers to say that their salary was the worst thing about their firm, and this was a recurring theme within the Millennial focus groups:

I could work in Tesco for the same salary as a paralegal... if you're doing those long hours and then if you actually depressed yourself by dividing it up into how much you were being paid per hour, it's below minimum wage. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Paralegal]

A lot of people are having to put time in as paralegals before they become trainees, you're really kind of putting people's lives on hold. You know you can't get a mortgage on a paralegal's salary so then you're kind of stuck on you know low salary, high expenditure, particularly in London... you would not be able to afford living on your own or even living in a house share, you'd have to live with your parents. [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

For the firms, this low salary was consistent with their expectations of the work that paralegals perform:

Their remuneration will be commensurate with a more routine job, won't it? [HR Group]

Strikingly, these concerns are echoed in other sectors as well (Savage 2018). Millennials are said to be the first generation to be less financially successfully than their parents, and a number of studies have drawn attention to the reliance on rented accommodation and the mental health implications of this (Cosslett, 2018). There appears to be a particularly challenging set of circumstances confronting younger lawyers. It is taking longer to qualify,

and on lower salaries, following a more extended investment in higher and professional education, which is clashing with the expectations of law as a high status and well-remunerated profession. Alongside this, professional practice has seen a significant expansion in the paralegal role. Looking to the future, a further cause of uncertainty for this group may, in fact, be the reduction of the paralegal role as firms continue their investment in Artificial Intelligence systems (Tromans, 2016).

5.4 The Hunger Games – Katniss the Paralegal¹⁵

Kelan suggests that Millennials like to see co-workers as friends and like to feel part of a community (Kelan, 2012). Deloitte (2017: 17) also found that Millennials ‘appreciate working in a collaborative and consensual environment’. Among those completing the survey, we found that workplace cultures was identified as the single *best* part of working for current employer for all respondents overall. This was disproportionately the case for trainees (and those in the 22-25) age bracket. The trainees appear to be enjoying and benefitting from their workplace environment. The importance of the environment to the group was underlined by 66.8% of all respondents who said workplace culture was a motivation for applying for current position (highest was career progression).

Crucially, however, the paralegals experienced real difficulty in achieving a supportive and friendly working environment:

I have seen it turn friends against each other. They were really close friends. You can't really get over it. Once you've realised that someone would stab you in the back, you're not going to get over it. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Trainee]

You see what another paralegal is doing and think, 'I need to step my game up' and it gets very competitive and people that you are friends with suddenly become enemies because someone's attitude changes...you don't talk to each other about what one or the other is doing because you're all going for that one job if there's one. [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

Not only does this add to the stress and the anxiety as to whether a former friend is going to undermine you, there was some sense that this can also drive up the long hours culture for paralegals:

That's the only way you can measure it as a paralegal is with training, you're not necessarily seeing the other work the paralegals are doing but you know if they're in the office later than you or earlier than you so that's the only way you can really compete. [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

When another paralegal gets to go out with a partner you're thinking, 'God, they're making a good impression while I'm in the office.' [Millennial Group Two, Female, Paralegal]

Thus, although the partner and HR groups were clear about the division between career paralegals and the potential trainee paralegal, the pressure of the possibility of a training contract, and the acute competition being generated among this tier of legal workers appears to exacerbate the long hours culture experienced more widely.¹⁶

¹⁵ The Hunger Games is a series of novels (and films) which focus on a dystopian state within which children from different Districts are forced to take part in a series of ‘Games’ – a fight to the death in which only one remains.

¹⁶ See further Bleasdale and Humphreys (2018) for an overview of the acute comparisons which can happen with the Law School setting.

5.5 Generational differences in understanding paralegal pressures

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the difference between the firms' view of the role and the lived experiences of paralegals, it was here that that we saw the least amount of understanding from those in senior positions. They were relatively dismissive of the concerns of paralegals, or simply had not seen this as a potential issue:

They tend to work very sensible hours. They don't stay around too long. No, there's never been any real concerns expressed like, 'Crikey, I'm being flogged here', or 'I'm struggling', or anything of that nature. [HR Group]

When the issue was raised, it was generally dealt with in terms of attributing blame to private providers of professional education for failing to match the numbers of students with the numbers of available contracts. They addressed the situation as effectively the natural consequence of these patterns of credential inflation – more people are more qualified:

Nowadays, it seems to be the norm that everyone becomes a paralegal.... If you can pay [for an LPC] which a lot of people do, they will get in and, of course, then there's a massive glut of people and then I think that feeds onto the profession. [Partner]

5.6 Summary

Paralegals have benefitted from the expansion of higher education in terms of the ability to develop further qualifications, but have studied at a time when the debt burden has increasingly fallen on the individual. They are faced with rising house prices and extraordinary competition for an increasingly finite number of jobs.

While the prioritisation of work life balance over salary concerns has been identified as a generational trope for Millennials (Foster, 2013) and one that to a certain degree our participants also echoed, this only appears to work when the salary level is viewed as falling within acceptable parameters. In reality, the paralegal experience cuts to the bone: for many, they are part of a 'whole generation...stuck in a kind of extended adolescence' (Coslett, 2018) in precarious legal employment, with limited support from their peers.

6. Gendered Disadvantage: Continuing Challenges for Women

6.1 Introduction

The challenges that women face in the legal profession have been highlighted by the recent publication of law firms' gender pay gaps (Chilton, 2018) and the continued under-representation of women at the highest levels of law firms (Aulakh et al, 2017). The #MeToo movement in response to the Weinstein revelations has also drawn attention to the conduct and behaviour associated with law firms. Thus, a number of law firms were in attendance at the notorious President's Club dinner and felt compelled to issue apologies, explanations and excuses (Jackson, 2018).

A recent SRA Report highlighted that 'the prospects of becoming a partner are markedly higher for white males than any other' and overall 'given that large corporate firms account for nearly 70% of the partner population, and that their probability of becoming a partner in other firms is also low, females – and BAME females especially – are disadvantaged when it comes to career progression in the solicitors' profession' (Aulakh et al, 2017). Similarly, a 2018 Law Society Report identified the ongoing difficulties faced by women, and drew particular attention to the unconscious biases shaping the kinds of expectations that clients and firms have about the contributions that women can make at the highest levels of the profession.¹⁷

Our study did not explicitly set out to explore the issue of gender in the legal profession (the empirical stages, in fact, predate the Weinstein revelations). However, the gendered dimensions of family life and the expected and/or experienced incompatibility of practice life were raised by survey participants:

I became disenchanted with traditional law firm models, particularly the fact I experienced sex discrimination in the workplace with talented female lawyers being overlooked for progression because of their sex and anticipated part time working in the future. [Female solicitor, 31-36, 8 years PQE.]

...too much pressure, prejudice against women (especially young women that are seen as a 'risk' or 'pushy'), lack of progression [Female, solicitor, 31-36, 2-5 years PQE]

When the issues of gendered experiences for women were raised in the focus group, broadly speaking all participants (across the generations or career stage) felt that things had improved. However, more of the older lawyers than the younger lawyers felt things had improved significantly. There was a strong sense that it was the younger women who were at the front line for a number of reasons.

6.2. Not as bad as it used to be...

A Law Society 2018 Report identified that nearly half of the 8,000 survey respondents did think there had been progress for women in the legal profession over the last five years. However, this was not evenly distributed - 74% of the male respondents reported progress, matched by only 48% of females.

When the issue of gender was raised in the focus groups, the instinctive and overwhelming response was that things had improved for women, and that the situation in the contemporary profession was not as bad as it used to be.

¹⁷ <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/press-releases/largest-ever-survey-on-gender-equality-in-legal-profession/>

I think ... women [of a certain age] might [have been] a bit shafted in the workplace because what they've tended to do is take mat leave and then go back working part-time and they've missed out on quite a lot, potential promotions. [Partner, Female]

I think women are prepared to stand up for themselves a little bit more than they used to do in the past as to draw a line and where that boundary is. I think in the past they may have thought 'oh I can't really do that because it's going to have an impact'... I think now there's a line that says, right, stop now, there's HR functions, there's other functions where you can go and discuss that. [Partner, Female]

Other signs of progress are identifiable in the national level data, for example 'the share of white males becoming a partner has decreased' (Aulakh et al, 2017: 6). There were also observations that in house or the public sector could have advantages to women (Aulakh et al, 2017; Webley and Duff, 2007):

I feel like working for the public sector has benefits if you're a woman because I think they are more flexible and it is a more inclusive kind of environment to work in, in the sense that they understand that you know as a woman you might have family commitments, or you might want to take them to nursery, and there's things in place to allow you to do that and then not be discriminated against. I think the way in which like jobs are applied for ... [The] recruitment process is very much competency based and it's about equality of opportunity, it's where you can't just be sort of tapped on the shoulder and offered something, you have to show that you can do the job as well as everybody else ... And then I think in that way there's a lot of team leaders who are women in our office and in a lot of senior positions, our solicitor is a woman. And in that way, I think there's benefits to working in the public sector more as a woman. [Millennial Group One, Female, Public Sector]

However, it required little prompting before men and women (at all levels) provided recent examples of disadvantage, sexist behaviour and outright discrimination that had been experienced by women lawyers.

6.3 Contemporary Challenges for women

Perhaps the most visible way in which the continuing problems were apparent to the participants was in terms of the representation of women at partnership level. This was generally the moment in the focus groups where the discussion moved from statements of positivity, to an attempt to reconcile the experience of improvement with the realities of male-dominated partnerships.

It's changing and it's changed in the five or six years that I've been there. It's definitely becoming more proportional but it's still quite male dominated. [HR Group, Male]

It's still male dominated at that level. [HR Group, Female]

We've got about 200 members of staff and I think there's about 60% women. But when you look at the actual detail, it's a lot more men and particularly partners, we have 30 partners and I think 4 women partners, 26/27 men so it is very male heavy in that way. [Millennial Group One, Female, Solicitor]

These observations are borne out by the national level data. Thus, notwithstanding the narrative of progress (both within our study and nationally), the data suggests that partnership remains dominated by white men, in all firm types, with the probability of becoming partner lowest for women and for BAME women in particular (Aulakh et al, 2017).

There were also problems in terms of the continued valorisation of values gendered as male:

I don't think that's unique to law, I think that's something that if you are going to be a consultant in a hospital and you're a woman, or a man, you've just got to be tough, the issue is about gender stereotyping in that tough in a man is sort of seen as macho, tough in a woman is seen as a bit of a harridan!! That's something that comes from the culture we live in and it's challenging that and saying it's actually ok to be female and assertive but you need it in whatever you do. [Partner, Female]

There were also a number of concerns reported about the experiences of younger women, including facing a lack of support from older women within their firms (see also Webley and Duff, 2007):

One thing that I've observed across my three firms is that frequently female partners, particularly older female partners can be very hard on younger women actually, a lot harder than they are on the men. And it's almost this – 'I had to deal with it, I had to deal with this culture so you're going to deal with it' [yeah from others]...in my first firm I sat behind our head of department and I heard everything you know and I would listen to the way that she spoke to the female trainees and the male trainees and there was a huge difference. You know quite almost nasty actually on the girls and the guys could almost do no wrong with no other discernible difference other than the fact that some were men, and some were women. [Millennial Group One, Male, Solicitor]

Yeah, I've been on the receiving end of that before and it seems to be as you say the sort of older thing, 40, 45 plus generation yeah, it's not pleasant. [Millennial Group One, Female Solicitor]

I've noticed women partners sort of keeping younger women, and actually probably younger women that are threatening their position, at arm's length. I don't know if they do feel threatened, but it certainly comes across that way. And then they'll have a conversation with another male trainee and be completely different... but the females are spoken to very differently. [Millennial Group One, Female, Solicitor]

This experience has been labelled in some studies as the 'Queen Bee' syndrome (Hurst et al, 2016:61) Wider research (Derks et al, 2011) has challenged the basis upon which these assumptions are made, highlighting either the incidences of supportive women, or questioning the gendered assumptions behind particular kinds of support. Nevertheless, these were genuinely reported experiences from the Millennial groups. Research which highlights the organisational cultures within which mentoring may (or may not) take place (Derks et al, 2011) is probably more constructive than generational or gendered ascriptions of the mentoring approach that older women will adopt by virtue of their identity as older women.

A number of women, particularly from the commercial law firms, were very concerned about how their ability to progress would be affected by pregnancy (see also Kay et al, 2016). In ways that resonate with existing research in the area (Sommerlad, 2003), it was often the perception of them by their firms as *potential mothers* that they felt was the cause not only of anxiety on their part, but outright discrimination by firms and lawyers:

When I was thinking of going into law and the partner that I was speaking to, in London...I was with a guy who brought up making partner and he said to the guy, 'You could probably make partner by about 40' and then he looked at me and said, 'Might be a bit later for you'. He meant because of children and said, 'Inevitably, you'll have to stop for kids'. That was the first time. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Solicitor]

The impression I was given which was that if it was a choice between me and a guy, because I was in that age bracket and especially when they found out I was in a long term

relationship, they said, 'You might turn round and say, 'I'm pregnant', so you'll probably be skipped over. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Solicitor]

I had a conversation with the other trainees and my intake was all girls. We said, 'What would happen if you did get pregnant?' ... we were talking about it amongst the group because it was a real concern. We were worried for our careers but we shouldn't have to worry for our careers. We should feel supported. [Millennial Group Two, Female, Trainee]

For some, this was not just a background concern exacerbated by occasional, indiscreet remarks. The culture is reinforced by a climate of sexism, as well as inappropriate and potentially unlawful remarks, with quick assumptions of pregnancy (when suffering from food poisoning), comments made about short skirts, and the perpetuation of gendered networking events. The sexualisation of younger women in particular (Sommerlad, 2016), continues to be a key dimension of the working lives of the Millennial generation.

6.4 Summary

As the sections above highlight, all those within the profession, but particularly the younger women, are facing the challenges and contradictions of building a successful career in law. The legal profession has demonstrably improved by a variety of measures, but as this data (supported by other research) shows, women still experience challenges in the profession – and younger women appear to be on the front-line of these negative experiences, whether that be because of assumptions of pregnancy, sexualisation and harassment or a lack of support from older women. Indeed, somewhat paradoxically, part of the evidence given by the HR Directors and partners for things having improved was that younger women were now more likely to challenge behaviour – which highlights the point that they still have to challenge inappropriate behaviour, and perhaps also, that it is seen as their responsibility to do so.

Although not explicitly articulated as such, this dissonance between expectation and reality can also be a source of tension and anxiety (Costello, 2005). Younger women have been successful in academic and professional terms and have entered a competitive profession which is held out to them as equal, having made significant strides in terms of diversity in recent years. And yet, they are faced with a reality that does not match these expectations.

However, notwithstanding the concerns that had been articulated about the behaviour of some senior women lawyers to their more junior female colleagues, the young women were clear that they would really value a female mentor to support them through their career and to be able to ask open, honest and non-judgemental questions about building a career, and (potentially) also having children.

Actually, it would be a bit nicer if you were sort of a more supporting mentor figure as a woman in power...I don't know about other people around the table but as a woman I always think about the fact that you've been a paralegal for three years first and it sort of delayed your career so you're getting older. It's like well actually 'when do I take mat leave, when's an acceptable time to take mat leave'. I don't have any plans to get pregnant but do I need to be two, three years qualified before I do it because I don't want to ruin my career...I think having someone who was an authoritative woman, a partner, a woman who had done that and had children and was still working five days a week as a partner. It would be nice to have someone like that as a mentor that you could speak to about things like that. [Millennial Group One, Female, Trainee]

The desire for mentoring (from both men and women) and from inside and outside the firm, was a recurrent firm of the discussions and one that we will return to in the Recommendations.

7. Recommendations

The following section sets out a series of recommendations based on our analysis of the data, which we would urge the profession to consider seriously. These recommendations relate to action on the part of not only individuals and organisations, but also the wider professional community, including Leeds Law Society. A key point to note is that many of these recommendations are drawn directly from examples of best practice articulated within the focus groups themselves.

7. 1 Demonstrating the value of employees

Across all focus groups, there were examples of how the value of employees to their firm might best be demonstrated. Most strikingly, the manner in which work filters down from those more senior lawyers very obviously conveyed a message about how the time of junior lawyers is valued. Many Millennial focus group participants reflected upon 'artificial deadlines' and the effect of those upon their sense of value to the firm:

I've seen the other side of it where artificial deadlines are set and you're just sat there thinking, 'This doesn't need to be done. Why are you doing it?' A colleague of mine, who was in one of the Magic Circle firms...he's in the lift down with colleagues and one of them turned to the other and he said, 'The deadline has pushed until next Friday. What do you think?' He said, 'Well, we'll still get the team in over the weekend. It's good to keep them working.' [Millennial Group Two, Male]

'It's sort of like a fake deadline thing so if someone comes to you and says this is really urgent, you have to do this...if it sits on their desk then for weeks at a time you just think, 'well, why am I slogging my arse off if you're not even looking at it'...so next time they come to you and say something's really urgent...well it might be, but is it...you start to feel like what you're doing is not valuable, and you don't understand why you're being put that pressure on for them to not then deal with it, and that is frustrating. [Millennial Group One, Female]

Other demonstrations of the value of an individual's time came through explicit expectations about working hours, particularly in light of technology; and receiving dedicated administrative support (even in the early stage of your career).

Salary was a particular concern amongst both survey respondents and focus group participants. Despite its importance, there was a recognition by Millennial focus group participants that more pay was not necessarily desirable in and of itself: it had to be balanced against the extra workload which might be associated with that, and the consequent effect upon work-life balance. A key context here, is how the younger lawyers measured their salary levels against peers from other professions, particularly in light of the qualification challenges that they felt that they had had to overcome.

A **clear route to career progression** was valued by Millennial focus group participants, even if partnership was not necessarily their overall aim. Encouragingly, partner focus group participants were alive to the need to consider how career progression might be achieved, and in particular how to pay heed to the professional development of junior lawyers:

I think in the past law firms of course had lots of interest in people and all the other attributes, but I think in the last five years, and certainly after having experienced five years of retirement and to have come back into legal recruitment, I see there is a huge emphasis now on actually really not just paying lip service to it but really investing. The younger

generation really want that, and they see that as more important in some respects than what they are being paid. [Partner]

The importance of connections between Millennials and those around them extended to a desire to **influence the strategic direction** of the firm: focus group participants reflected positively upon initiatives (such as Innovation Challenges) which provided them with an opportunity to generate ideas about the firm's activities and direction (see Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010, on the importance of open communication to Millennials). There was nevertheless scepticism about the extent to which their views were actually valued by firms – 'Yeah, [we] love a good bit of innovation [laughter]' – although HR focus group participants gave some cause for optimism in this regard:

[Firms are] looking for the more junior people to come up with ideas because they are very innovative. [HR Group]

From the perspective of self-determination theory,¹⁸ a sense of autonomy over one's ultimate destination in working life, and over one's day-to-day working life, would seem to enhance that person's motivation. Such autonomy was sorely lacking on the part of some of the Millennial lawyers, **particularly those who were paralegals**. Whilst complete autonomy would not be advisable, firms should consider how to ensure the views of more junior lawyers are genuinely and consistently fed into a firm's strategic vision, and its policies, in order to foster a sense of ownership on the part of those lawyers.

7.2. Support in the workplace

Within the focus groups, having the opportunity to seek support – whether through **asking questions**, or through seeing **role models** of future professional selves – was regarded as particularly good practice. This was interpreted as a sign of a supportive workplace culture, with the challenge for employers being balancing that desire for support with the desire for individuals to demonstrate initiative. In light of the findings regarding informal workplace cultures, detailed in Section Four, employers might particularly consider whether they need to be **explicit about what level of support will be provided where, and why**. Of course, in doing so, employers will need to be mindful of the effect of cultures upon the individual, and their working practices.¹⁹

Support opportunities can occur in a structured way, rather than necessarily having to occur organically. For example, a culture of collegiality and collaboration was associated with **open plan** offices by the partners and the HR focus groups, and the benefits of such open spaces (such as being able to easily ask questions), were also noted by the Millennial focus group participants. Some partner focus group members also recognised the need for such support, including through a **support structure to bridge the gap between the training contract and**

¹⁸ This seeks to explain the basis on which individuals are motivated to act and to persevere with a course of action (Deci and Ryan, 2017)

¹⁹ See, for example 'Drained' high-flyer escapes strike-off despite dishonesty finding (Law Gazette, 5th February 2018) at <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/drained-high-flyer-escapes-strike-off-despite-dishonesty-finding/5064665.article>; and Tribunal shows mercy to junior who worked in 'culture of fear' (Law Gazette, 10th January 2018) at <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/practice/tribunal-shows-mercy-to-junior-who-worked-in-culture-of-fear/5064270.article>

being newly qualified. One member of the partner focus group had recently moved into law from another industry, and reflected upon the cliff edge which NQTs appeared to step off:

I was just staggered that we didn't [offer more support to NQs] to be brutally honest...you are literally throwing them out into the lion's den and I was like, you don't have a one to one after three months and six months? [Partner]

In the context of trainees and NQTS, support could include '**soft skills**' development in the areas of networking, for example.

Further lessons which focus group attendees thought the legal profession could learn from other industries included, but were not limited to:

- having **regular competency reviews** with lawyers at all stages of their careers;
- having a **mentoring** system (for all stages of the profession, including for paralegals and those approaching retirement, and potentially going across industries);
- moving beyond billable hours as a sole **indicator of success** and productivity; and
- having a clear, structured route to **career progression** (with the NHS banding structure being referenced as one template for doing so).

Mentoring systems were recognised by many, particular the Millennial focus group participants, as a way of helping junior lawyers to feel as though they have someone 'in their corner,' as was having scheduled catch-up sessions on a very regular basis with a supervisor. Participants reflected upon the sense of value they gained from having someone who was invested in their career progression. **Mentoring**, in particular, strikes us as a relatively 'easy win' for the profession to consider. While the Leeds Law Society has taken some steps in this regard, we would encourage firms across the city to demonstrate further leadership, in particular in identifying mentors/mentees and potentially engaging with other professional groups in the region. Younger women, in particular spoke of the potential value of such a resource.

7.3. Unspoken work cultures

Notwithstanding the importance of 'learning by doing', and through the benefits in developing professional practice through the observation and replication of the behaviour of an experienced professional, there did appear to be a number of concerns arising from a lack of clarity about a number of areas of work expectations, culture and practice.

Thus, we would recommend that firms (and the wider profession) **explore ways of establishing clarity in a number of areas.** This does not necessarily mean the generation of detailed policies (that may go unread), but a) a clear understanding of what a firm's expectations are at a senior leadership level; b) clear processes in terms of how and when those expectations are communicated; and c) reviews as to whether the shared understandings are still in place.

In particular, we suggest particular attention is directed towards:

- **Email and general use of tech outside of normal working hours:** What is reasonable, how is it promoted, to what extent should this be a matter of personal choice and flexibility? Are the Senior team effectively modelling behaviour?
- **Basis and process by which promotions take place:** Are the criteria for promotion publicly available? Do employees at every level understand what is required of them? Does this form the basis of an appraisal conversation?
- **What the work would be like prior to entry into the profession:** There are roles for a number of stakeholders, including universities, the Junior Lawyers Division, and

through schemes such as Pathways to Law. However, there are processes of induction that are specific to each firm, that should also be reviewed to ensure that clear clarity of expectations are built in.

More generally, we recommend that firms engage in a **fundamental conversation about what work-life balance** means in a particular firm. This is not simply a Millennial lawyer issue. There also needs to be a recognition that many of the responses to work-life balance (flexible working etc), do not address the fundamental causes of the problems. Clearly there are structural constraints as to how much can actually change – but part of the process that we recommend firms consider undertaking is an analysis of what can and what cannot change. **Are there ways of doing things differently?**

The final point that we recommend that the profession addresses with respect to the workplace cultures relates to the position of **women within the legal profession**. The wider societal conversation initiated by the Weinstein revelations gives the profession an opportunity to broaden the conversation beyond the under-representation of women at partnership level (although this remains important), to address a wider set of behaviours and assumptions. There is a need to recognise that the problems that women experience within the legal profession continue and this appears to be a timely moment to have this important and necessary conversation.

7.4 Workplace stress

Stress and anxiety were seen as part of the DNA of the profession and this has been recognised as a growing problem. We suggest that, although the Millennial lawyers do not represent a distinctive challenge to firms by virtue of their generational membership, there is a generational context to these issues.

Junior lawyers are entering the profession in a different context, and with differing pressures on them once they are in practice. Good management practices which could mitigate stress by creating a sense of community include e.g. **recognising the value of group activities**. In particular, we recommend that close attention is paid to the **precarious position that paralegals** find themselves in. Firms could do more in this regard, and we suggest owe a particular responsibility to those at the lowest level of the legal hierarchy.

In February 2018, the Junior Lawyer Division issued a best practice report which addressed how firms should discuss stress and wellbeing within the workplace.²⁰ The report advocated a focus upon **culture** (ensuring mental health can be openly discussed within the workplace); **support** (e.g. ensuring the role of HR and Occupational Health are fully understood; having mental health first aiders; and undertaking stress risk assessments); and **education and training** (including ensuring line managers are aware of how to manage the wellbeing of those for whom they have responsibility; and having stress wellbeing strategies and policies).

We would endorse these recommendations and further suggest that these responses might usefully be co-ordinated not only within firms, but also by the **Leeds Law Society**, through the organisation, support and delivery of events. We are very aware of the fragmentation of the legal services market, and the differential resources of firms, but through the leadership of the local professional association a clear message that this is a key concern of the profession as a whole, and particularly within the city, could be signalled.

²⁰ <http://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/Uploads/d/d/n/Supporting-resilience-and-wellbeing-in-the-workplace.PDF>

7.5 Concluding remarks

Despite possible concerns about the resistance to innovation with the legal sector, there is evidence that law firms do adapt. The extent to which the Millennial lawyers', in particular, reflections upon the culture of their firms (both current and previous) differed, demonstrated that 'it doesn't have to be this way.' Individual firms can determine their own cultures and, in doing so, can potentially influence the culture of the wider industry. Looking at the sector as a whole, partners thought that the culture of the profession had changed with the recruitment of more women into it (although, as discussed within Section Six, Millennials were more circumspect about whether women experienced the profession as positively as more senior lawyers, and HR representatives, thought lawyers now did), and considered that the style of leadership had changed in certain sectors. As far as future possible change was concerned, several partners were of the view that the junior lawyers, and their increased recognition of the benefits of a more balanced life, within which work and clients were not continuously the primary concern, offered an opportunity for the profession's culture to become more focused upon achieving a better work-life balance. It is important to remember that the expectations of the workplace expressed by the Millennial groups were not necessarily far removed from those expressed within the HR or partner groups. There was, for example, no resistance to working long hours during the week, or to having to work weekends: the question was how regularly this would occur, and how explicit the communication regarding expectations of such working practices were.

We have suggested that Millennial Lawyers are not so different from lawyers of other generations. However, close attention on this particular generation enables us to look closely at the context within which all lawyers practice, and there clearly specific challenges facing this group. We hope that this Report and its Recommendations can support the profession in embarking on these conversations for the benefit of lawyers of all generations, and indeed the future health of the profession as a whole.

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We would be delighted to speak to any firm about the issues raised in this Report:

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