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Clarion

## **Two of the Clarion team become mental health first aiders as firms are urged to tackle stress in the workplace**

Clare King, legal director in Clarion's private client practice, and her colleague Nicola Moyes, HR assistant, have completed their training as mental health first aiders in the workplace. The need for law firms to appoint more wellbeing champions and mentors to ensure employees are not suffering from stress at work was highlighted in guidance published last week by the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD).

Clare and Nicola undertook a two-day course, delivered by an instructor from Mental Health First Aid England, which examined different types of mental ill health through information, role play activities and films of people with real life experience of mental ill health. They were then equipped with the skills to feel confident in approaching people who may be in crisis, or who may simply be struggling with their mental health.

According to research undertaken by the JLD last year, more than 90% of respondents said they had experienced stress in their role.

"It's interesting that the JLD is now encouraging legal firms to combat stress and mental ill health in the profession as we had already identified the issue and feel that it is important to be able to provide trained mental health first aiders in the work place to promote the wellbeing of the team," explains Clare. "Also, as I work every day with clients some of whom have mental health issues, mental capacity issues and people who have been bereaved, it was a valuable opportunity for me to improve my skills in communicating with such clients and understanding their issues."

Clare continues: "While we are not therapists or counsellors, Nicola and I now feel better prepared to be able to reach out to someone who may need assistance and to help signpost them to suitable sources of help. We believe that maintaining a happy and healthy work force is vital, and we hope that if a colleague is ever in need of support, or has a family member in need of support, they will feel able to contact Nicola or I completely confidentially for help.

"The training was extremely useful and I now feel much more confident that if I see somebody in crisis in a public place, which I have done more than once before, then I will know how to approach them and assist if possible."

This was part of a bigger commitment to the employee well-being in terms of also teaming up with MIND for resilience training and 'managing stress in the workplace' sessions for managers.