

Lawyers
who Care

From Promise to Progress

Impact Report 2025



Prepared in-house by Selena Teji, Lawyers Who Care

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On behalf of our Advisory Board, I'm delighted to share this Impact Report and celebrate the huge achievements of Lawyers Who Care in our first year. Thank you to all the members of the Advisory Board, Steering Committee and many other volunteers who have contributed to our success.

I'd like particularly to thank our inaugural CEO, Lucy Barnes, for her extraordinary leadership, and the equally extraordinary Gemma Creamer, who I am delighted will be taking over as her successor.

Michael Ward

Chair of the Advisory Board



On behalf of our Care-Experienced Steering Committee, we'd like to extend a huge thank you to Lucy and Gemma, who have led the organisation to achieve so much in its first year.

Annie Bell

Steering Committee Member
Aspiring Solicitor



Reflections from our inaugural CEO

Lawyers Who Care is a calling for me. I left my legal role in October 2023 to build it full-time, volunteering hundreds of hours to do so because I knew first-hand the barriers to a career in law and knew it needed to be led by care-experienced voices.

Within six months, we had seven founding members. Sir Andrew McFarlane agreed to being a Champion within minutes of hearing about our project. I knew we had the profession listening – so I wanted to make sure we were heard.

And we have been. For the first time we are seeing 'care experience' mentioned on legal applications, we are seeing people openly share their care experience in the sector, we are invited into important rooms: **we are a movement.**

It has been an honour to create, lead and grow Lawyers Who Care. I am excited to hand over the reins to the extraordinary Gemma Creamer who I know will lead this organisation to new heights.

I look forward to continuing to support the organisation in my new role as a trustee and ambassador, opening new doors for care-experienced legal talent to thrive.

Lucy Barnes

Inaugural CEO and Co-Founder of Lawyers Who Care
(May 2024-October 2025)
Barrister at East Anglian Chambers

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care-experienced aspiring lawyers
received one-to-one support
through our mentoring programme

11

free webinars for mentees
providing access to specialist
knowledge

17

solicitors' firms and
barristers' chambers joining
our network

110

care-experienced aspiring
lawyers were reached directly
through our outreach and
advocacy

13

care-experienced aspiring
lawyers joined our Steering
Committee

21

speaking engagements
amplified care-experienced voices
in public policy forums

Halfway through our two-year
mentoring programme:

70%

of our mentoring pairs
are meeting at least
once a month

650+

pro bono hours of one-to-one
support was provided through
our mentoring programme

78

legal professionals were trained
in how to be aware and receptive
to care experience and trauma-
informed in their legal practice

84%

of professionals who completed
our training said they felt more
confident in meeting the needs of
the care-experienced community

55%

of Lawyers Who Care
leadership is
care-experienced

Introduction

When Kate and Lucy first brought me on board at the very beginning of Lawyers Who Care (LWC) I could not have imagined the journey we would go on together. In the year and a half since, LWC has been both inspiring and rewarding to me in more ways than I can count. In truth, I feel as though I am now doing the work for others that the younger me would have longed for - opening doors, providing guidance and reminding care-experienced young people that their ambitions are valid and their dreams of a legal career are achievable.

We have come a long way from being told, “*What makes you think care-experienced people want to go into legal careers?*” Today, over 100 aspiring lawyers have signed up to LWC and we continue to grow every month. Each name on that list represents a life touched, a barrier challenged and a step forward in changing the narrative about who belongs in law.

Within our first year, we received applications for mentoring from 110 care-experienced aspiring lawyers, signed on 17 chambers and firms to provide and support mentors, provided our in-house *care aware* and *trauma-informed* training to 78 legal professionals who volunteered to be mentors and received endorsements from both the Bar Council and the Law Society (twice).

I want to personally thank all the mentors who have donated over 650 hours of their time to promoting the next wave of diverse legal talent. Over the course of the two-year programme we estimate over £500,000 worth of volunteer mentorship will have been provided. It's mind-blowing.

This Impact Report captures more than just numbers - it reflects the belief, resilience and potential of our mentees and the dedication of the mentors who walk alongside them. It is a testament to what happens when a community refuses to accept low expectations and instead works together to create opportunities where they are most needed.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue bringing the Lawyers Who Care vision to life: building operational sustainability, using our feedback data to improve our core service provision and diversifying our outreach and network.

And to our care-experienced mentees – current and future – welcome to your new legal home. I cannot wait to see what you will achieve.

Gemma Creamer

CEO (From October 2025)
Former Deputy CEO

Our Vision

To create a diverse and inclusive legal profession for care-experienced people which appreciates and values the experience and skills we bring to the table.



East Anglian
Chambers



Blackstone
CHAMBERS

Of
Oliver
Fisher
Solicitors



Three
Verulam
Buildings
Barristers



Spire Barristers

FAMILY & PUBLIC LAW SPECIALISTS

Dawson
Cornwell | shaping
family law

Lawyers Who Care is the first-ever mentoring organisation that focuses on providing a pathway into legal careers for care-experienced people.

We launched in May 2024, with founding support from five prestigious barristers' chambers and two solicitors' firms.

It's easy to back a movement driven by resilience, compassion, and a desire to create positive change for those in need of legal advocacy and support. The Bar Council is pleased to continue to support Lawyers Who Care.

Barbara Mills KC
Chair of the Bar Council of England & Wales

We were fortunate to have four champions who generously used their own voices to amplify ours : **Sir Andrew McFarlane, Kama Melly KC, barrister Amanda Meusz and solicitor Oliver Conway.**

With such robust support from industry leaders, we secured a voluntary staff

team of care-experienced aspiring lawyers who drive the development of the mentoring programme we have today.

Since launch, we've onboarded two part-time paid employees to ensure operational consistency. Both the **Segelman Trust** and the **Iris and David Freeman Trust** have generously donated to support the scaling up of our operations.

We've also recruited thirteen more barristers' chambers and solicitors' firms to join as members, predominantly in the London Area.

We hope to build more national coverage and ensure we have a balance of legal representation, including commercial practitioners and in-house counsel.

This initiative gives care-experienced individuals the opportunities and support they need to access and thrive in the legal profession. We are pleased to see solicitor firms taking the initiative to sign up to Lawyers who Care.

Richard Atkinson
President of The Law Society



As President, I am particularly aware of the difficulties that young care leavers experience, I am therefore particularly keen to encourage those who wish to practise law by supporting LWC in its work.

Sir Andrew McFarlane
President of the Family Division
Lawyers Who Care Champion

Our theory of change is simple: nurture care-experienced legal talent to create a more representative legal workforce.

Within our first year we recruited 78 legal professionals from 10 renowned firms and chambers to support our network of care-experienced aspiring lawyers.

Legal Field	Percentage
Solicitor	48%
Barrister	52%

These dedicated mentors represent a range of legal fields – split between solicitors and barristers – with a concentration in family law (29% of mentors) and corporate and commercial practice (14%).

In the coming years we will work to expand our offering, so that our mentor pool is more reflective of a diverse range of practice and career pathways.

As mentees complete our mentorship programme and enter the legal profession, we anticipate that some will want to remain part of the Lawyers Who Care network. They will become mentors themselves, thus sustaining our mentor pool and building a robust community.



I am very grateful for the programme and the contacts I have met through it. It is an amazing initiative and I look forward to contributing to it myself in the future.

LWC Mentee

Groundbreaking Training

We train our mentors to be "Care Aware" and "Trauma Informed" in their mentoring approach and ultimately in their own legal practice.

This training fills a critical gap in the legal industry, with most barristers and solicitors having never attended any formal training on trauma informed practice.ⁱ

Our training programmes were developed in-house, led by our care-experienced team who are themselves aspiring lawyers.

Our workshops allow an opportunity for mentors to meet each other, ask questions and build their confidence with leading experts to guide them.

Mentors report feeling significantly more competent and confident in meeting their mentees' needs after the training.



I thought the panel session was truly inspiring. It was really touching to hear individuals' personal stories to help us understand their experiences, and also, importantly, their views on how we as mentors can help them the most and what we can do to support them.

LWC Mentor

Empowering our mentors to understand the impact of care experience and trauma means they can better support their mentees, provide more attuned legal practices for their clients and build a resilient working culture for themselves and their colleagues.

Please rate your confidence in your ability to meet your mentee's needs in a care aware and trauma informed way:*

BEFORE TRAINING



90%

NOT CONFIDENT

AFTER TRAINING



84%

CONFIDENT

*Aggregated from feedback asking respondents to rate their confidence on a Likert scale for a range of training objectives.



Long-Term Mentoring

Following training, our mentoring programme began in earnest, with mentoring matches based on career pathway and legal field of interest. Within our first year, 77 matches were made.

Over the course of two years, mentoring pairs are required to meet for a minimum of one hour per month. Our early feedback suggests that 70% of our matches are meeting that threshold; which adds up to more than 650 hours of mentoring during the past year.

Over the course of the two-year programme, that's about £500,000 worth of volunteered time.ⁱⁱ

While each mentor provides unique support to their mentees, common themes are CV review and interview preparation. Several mentors have offered opportunities for their mentee to shadow them at work.

Some mentoring pairs have experienced setbacks, with scheduling conflicts being

the most cited cause and mentee disengagement also mentioned. In response, we have established a volunteer support team to troubleshoot these issues as they arise.

We will be reviewing our service provision to make improvements using the early feedback we've received, to be rolled out in 2026.



I have been mentoring for over 20 years with many different organisations that all have a lot of resources, and the Lawyers Who Care mentoring programme is the best organised programme I have ever joined, with every attention to detail covered. And you have no full-time staff! INCREDIBLE.

Joanna Hughes
Joanna Hughes Solicitor Apprenticeships



What our mentors are saying...



It is an honour to be a Champion for this fabulous organisation and to now advocate for the inclusion of those who have experienced the care system into the profession. Our legal system will be immeasurably improved by harnessing the lived experience and wisdom of more care-experienced individuals. I hope to nurture and support any care experienced young person who wants to become a lawyer, and to walk alongside them in their journey.

Amanda Meusz
Garden Court Chambers



Many of us don't fully understand the profound impact the care system can have on a person. The 'power of one' should never be underestimated. With the right encouragement, support, understanding, and advocacy, an individual can become unstoppable. It takes just a one-hour commitment a month for two years to make a far-reaching impact, and I invite all my connections in law to consider joining Lawyers Who Care. I promise you that you can't not be inspired. This is only the beginning...

Aysel Akhundova
Dawson Cornwell Solicitors



Without family and connections it is very difficult for people to gain entry to the legal world, this must change if we are to have the best people working in the Law.

I hope in 10 years time we have a new generation of care-experienced lawyers and I cannot wait to see what brilliance LWC will help those lawyers achieve!"

Oliver Conway
Oliver Fisher Solicitors



As a mentor, I hope to support care-experienced individuals in navigating the complexities of the legal profession, a journey that should never be limited by background or circumstance.

Maha Sardar
Garden Court Chambers

Community Building

Supported by an Advisory Board with decades of experience in prestigious firms and chambers, Lawyers Who Care has been able to leverage vast legal networks and opportunities for our mentees to thrive.

Freshfields has provided meeting space and catering for Lawyers Who Care events, as have Burges Salmon LLP who kindly hosted our end of year party in December, providing a rare opportunity for our mentees to meet and celebrate their achievements together.

Blackstone Chambers hosted *Unseated*, a photo exhibition at their Summer Party that featured the stories of six care-experienced aspiring lawyers.

Garden Court Chambers have offered extensive support on webinars and other educational resources for our mentees. We offered 11 webinars over the course of the year, covering a broad range of issues, from *How to Have Difficult Conversations* to *Safeguarding and Local Authority Duties*

Towards Care Experienced People. Wilson Solicitors, Three Verulam Buildings (3VB), Matrix Chambers, and Blackstone Chambers have all provided their expertise as presenters.

All our webinars are free to our mentees, a small gesture that reduces the financial barrier many face when trying to gain specialist knowledge.



Finding out about Lawyers Who Care has felt like finding a little 'home' within the legal community. I never imagined such a thing would exist or that the fact of having been in care wouldn't be something I'd have to hide.

LWC Community Member



What our mentees are saying...



The ethos and culture fostered by the entire LwC team is truly inspiring, working tirelessly to support everyone involved, from staff to mentees and mentors. To be surrounded by a team of care-experienced individuals who I can look up to and learn from has been fantastic for my personal growth and has given me hope that I, too, can achieve whatever I set my mind to.

LWC Mentee



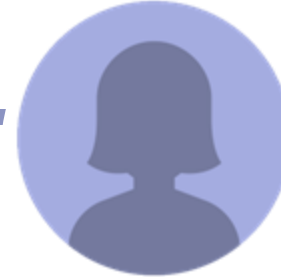
When I visited Lawyers Who Care in central London last week, I have to say, I was stunned and felt very welcomed in the sense that I'm not the only one who has had a really challenging period of time in care and is facing Christmas alone this year.

LWC Mentee



I think this is an amazing opportunity, and I have benefited immensely from the mentoring and work experience opportunities, as well as having a support system and sense of community. I am deeply appreciative and fortunate to be given it.

LWC Mentee



LWC is one of the few support offerings that understands the barriers that being care experienced bring don't magically disappear once you reach a certain age, so it's accessible for older career changers like me and those who've taken a while to believe they might have a place in the legal profession.

LWC Mentee

Lawyers Who Care is more than mentorship - it's a movement.

Changing hearts and minds is a cornerstone of Lawyers Who Care's strategy to reduce stigma and open historically closed doors to care-experienced people. This year our care-experienced executive team amplified the voices of care experience through three keynote speeches, attending six invite-only private functions for barristers and sitting at the table for the development of the Bar Standards Board's new rules on equality, diversity & inclusion.

Our care-experienced leadership team also focused on getting our message out to potential mentees at eight conferences, four open days and university fairs and through nine media articles and podcasts.

I didn't think law was possible for me until LWC.

An LWC event attendee

We were honoured to be shortlisted for **Non-Profit Organisation of the Year** at the Women and Diversity in Law Awards 2025 and declared one of the

Big Issue100 Changemakers of 2025, a testament to the dedication and strength of our care-experienced leadership team.

Building on our momentum in legal forums, we were also excited to leverage opportunities to link with non-legal organisations including: Comfort Cases UK, Madlug, Taking the Pixels, Ric Flo, The Care Leaders, The Black Care Experience, The Big Issue, ULaw, Become, Coram, Raising the Bar, Triangle Intermediary Services, North Yorkshire Council and so many more.

I honestly still can't quite believe that LWC exists, it gives me so much hope and I'm sure it will do the same to countless other care leavers who have felt the same way.

LWC Mentee

Celebrating Success

Lucy Barnes

Lawyers Who Care Co-founder
DE&I Champion of the Year Award
Women and Diversity in Law 2025



38%

non-white

52%

have a disability
under the Equality
Act 2010

62%

located outside of
London

67%

the first generation
of their family to
attend university

86%

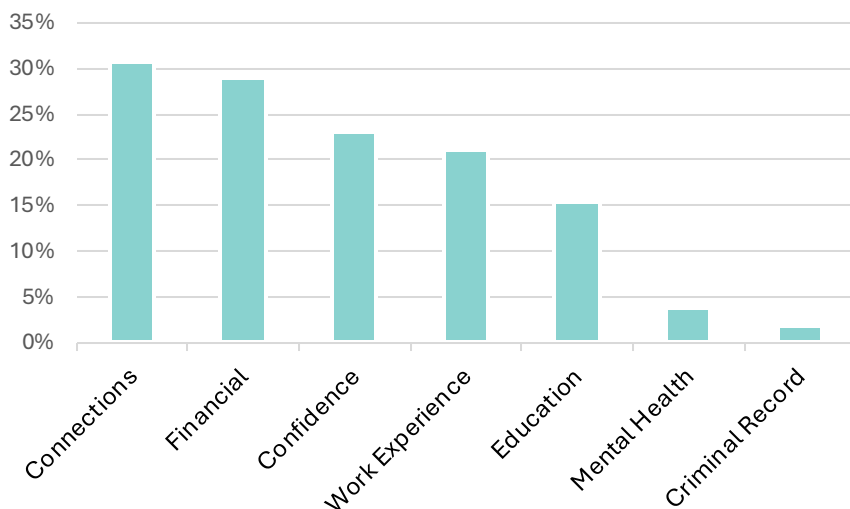
women

88%

experienced 4+
forms of childhood
adversity

Meet Our Mentees

What is your biggest barrier to entry
into the legal profession?



What does mentoring mean to you?

*“Support, networking,
building a relationship,
knowledge and
experience.”*

*“More confidence to
put myself out there
and feel like I belong
in the field.”*

*“Self-confidence and to
feel that someone in the
legal profession believes
in my ability.”*

*“Guidance on work
experience, getting
training contracts,
passing exams.”*

*“A community, a
better understanding
of legal careers, and
confidence that I have
the right to try.”*

[‡]Data from our 2025 Equality & Diversity Monitoring Survey.



No financial safety net

Alex* could not rely on family or local authority support during their legal education so they had to self-fund their mini-pupillages and work experience, working overtime at their two part-time jobs while they studied.

“We often have to work harder to meet our basic needs. Many of us are juggling jobs, childcare, medical, and housing issues.

Where other students may ask their parents for support in these circumstances, we have to trawl through hundreds of pages of local authority documents to discover the support available, and then advocate for ourselves to obtain it.

Often it isn’t available at all, or the time burden to access it is too high.”

Alex's mentor helped them to apply for a scholarship, which has allowed them to quit one of their part-time jobs and complete a pupillage instead.

*This is a composite story that uses a pseudonym. It conveys common themes our mentees report to us. This is to protect the anonymity of our mentees, given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed.



Missing connections

Blake* knew securing pupillage would be competitive and felt at a disadvantage because they had no insight or access to the legal field they hoped to one day work in.

“As a care leaver, I’ve often found it much harder to figure out what opportunities are out there and how to access them. I don’t seem to have as many connections as others do when it comes to securing roles.

I don’t know people in the legal profession to rely on for things such as work experience and mock interviews. I could benefit from someone reviewing my applications/CV.”

Blake's mentor was able to offer an opportunity to shadow them in court and is currently reviewing their pupillage applications and helping them with interview preparation.

*This is a composite story that uses a pseudonym. It conveys common themes our mentees report to us. This is to protect the anonymity of our mentees, given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed.



Imposter syndrome

Chris* has struggled with confidence and feeling like an imposter in the legal space. They found the legal community daunting and didn't feel comfortable disclosing their care experience because they felt they may be scorned or pitied.

“I feel like I can come across as care-experienced. I know it shouldn't be a barrier, but I find it can be off putting to barristers.

I feel like when they know you're care-experienced they have a perspective of you that you can't be trusted or that you will mess things up.

At one point, I experienced homelessness and had to carry my life in bin bags. That reality shaped me, but it also fuels why support for care leavers matters so much.”

Chris' mentor worked with them to build their confidence in their one-to-one sessions and at networking events. Chris also participated in LWC's webinar on how to own your care experience story in the legal field.

*This is a composite story that uses a pseudonym. It conveys common themes our mentees report to us. This is to protect the anonymity of our mentees, given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed.



Competitive edge

Danny* struggled to find any work experience while studying and working full-time and worried that getting a job after graduation would be difficult.

“I’ve struggled to build extra curriculars and advocacy/ voluntary experience as I’ve have had to survive. But this is poorly understood by the profession who expect you to have done everything as a minimum entry standard.

Once I graduate from University it will be difficult to gain a training contract, especially with no legal experience.”

Danny's mentor was able to offer them a full week of work experience in their law office and continues to help them job search in their local area.

*This is a composite story that uses a pseudonym. It conveys common themes our mentees report to us. This is to protect the anonymity of our mentees, given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed.

2025-26

1

**Cohort 1 to graduate
from our two-
year mentoring
programme in October
2026**

2

**Roll out a 6-month
induction programme
to improve support for
mentoring pairs**

3

**Launch our
Ambassadors
Programme across
England & Wales**

4

**Provide 50+ pro bono hours
of specialist legal support to
our mentees**

5

**Complete registration
as a Charity**

What's Next?

Lawyers who Care has only just begun to unlock the potential to empower the next generation of care-experienced lawyers.

Drawing on valuable feedback from both mentees and mentors we intend to refine our training and mentoring model year-on-year to provide the best path for successful entry into the legal profession.

Our goal is to support an additional cohort of care-experienced individuals to launch their careers by the end of our second year, whilst continuing to nurture our current mentees as they thrive as legal professionals.

An important part of our ambitious strategy is to encourage law firms and chambers to reform their recruitment practices to become Care Aware and Trauma-Informed. We need our allies to provide paid work experience, scholarships and other forms of tangible support to ensure our mentees flourish in an area where competition is so tough.

We understand that our success depends on the commitment of dedicated legal and other professionals who volunteer their time to mentor and uplift care-experienced aspiring lawyers. We are very grateful for their skills, dedication and kindness. But we will always want more!

Will you join us?



www.lawyerswhocare.org

Care-Experienced Steering Committee

(Of those comfortable to be named)

Annie Bell, Aspiring Public Children Law Solicitor

Chloe Pomfret, Human Sciences Student at Oxford University, Aspiring Barrister

Gemma Creamer, Lawyers Who Care CEO, Aspiring Barrister

Louisa Foyle, LLB Undergraduate, Musician (Lounah/LouLou DeRose)

Lucy Barnes (Chair), Lawyers Who Care Co-Founder, Barrister at East Anglian Chambers

Roheema Yasmin, Pupil Barrister at 4 Brick Court Chambers

Shamal Mohammed, LLM Masters Student

Alumni & Contributors

Maleekah Burden-Kaizra, Founding Steering Committee Member, LLB Graduate & Aspiring Barrister

Shimron Walters, Founding Steering Committee Member, AI Entrepreneur, Bitesized Genius

Amber Knowles, Personal Advisor, Training Social Worker

Leah Jayne, Psychology Masters Graduate, Teacher, Visual Designer

Lisa-Maria Elliot, Global Law Student at Queen Mary University of London

Advisory Board

Fraser Campbell KC, Barrister at Blackstone Chambers

Jonny Hoyle, Group Manager for Leaving Care at North Yorkshire Council

Kate Aubrey-Johnson, Barrister & Mediator at Garden Court Chambers

Lucy Barnes, Barrister at East Anglian Chambers

Meeta Rughani, In-House Counsel at Barclays

Michael Ward (Chair), Partner at Burges Salmon LLP

Ms Justice Henke DBE, High Court Judge

Selena Teji, U.S. Lawyer & Youth Justice Policy Specialist

Ann Metherall, Mentorship Programme Committee Chair

Paul McNeil, Finance & Governance Committee Chair

Staff

Gemma Creamer, CEO (from Oct 2025), Former Deputy CEO

Anna Knollys, Operations Lead

A Note From Our Founders

Before Lawyers Who Care is brought to new heights by our incredible incoming CEO Gemma Creamer, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on its beginning in May 2024.

Just months after I publicly shared my care experience for the first time – a Twitter post that reached nearly a million views – I came across Kate’s launch of the groundbreaking *Dare to Care* guide,ⁱⁱⁱ supporting care-experienced people in the criminal justice system. My immediate thought? “I need to know this woman.”

A week later, we arranged a call. There was an instant meeting of minds and in that call Lawyers Who Care was born. Our shared passion fused into our shared vision: **no person should face barriers to pursuing a legal career because of their care experience.**

One year on, we’re proud to share the incredible progress in our first Impact Report. When we started, we were told “not many care leavers aspire to law.” We’re delighted to have proven them wrong, as this report evidences.

Lucy Barnes
CEO (May 2024-October 2025)
Co-Founder

Working with Lucy to build Lawyers Who Care has been a privilege. I am so proud of what the organisation has accomplished in its first year and I am confident that it will continue to thrive under Gemma’s leadership.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Lucy for her unwavering commitment and determination to make our vision a reality. And to the many people who have supported us behind-the-scenes, thank you.

Kate Aubrey-Johnson
Co-Founder





A Special Thank You To Our Mentorship Organisations

1 Crown Office Row

3 Verulam Buildings

Blackstone Chambers

Burges Salmon LLP

Dawson Cornwell LLP

East Anglian Chambers

Garden Court Chambers

GT Stewart Solicitors

Ison Harrison Solicitors

Jefferies Essex LLP

Joanna Hughes Solicitor Apprenticeships

Matrix Chambers

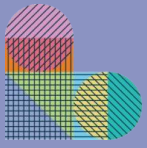
Mayer Brown

Mishcon de Reya LLP

Oliver Fisher Solicitors

Spire Barristers

Wilsons Solicitors



**Lawyers
who Care**

**Segelman
Trust**

**The Iris and David
Freeman Charitable Trust**

Thank you for your continued support.

Endnotes

- i. Catherine O'Neill (2023) *People, not just books: an investigation into the knowledge and understanding of trauma informed practice in the justice system*. PhD Thesis Canterbury Christ Church University School of Law, Policing and Social Sciences, available at <https://repository.canterbury.ac.uk/download/70c160b66c51dce7474232238aca41f612d1341fcc1ada35a9854aa79b7ff4e3/8322506/xxsNov%2024%20%20final%20submission.pdf>.
- ii. Based on an hourly rate of £350. See HM Courts & Tribunals Service (last updated January 1, 2025) *Solicitors' guideline hourly rates* available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/solicitors-guideline-hourly-rates>; and Institute for Employment Studies (2023) *Barristers' Working Lives 2023 survey of the Bar* available at <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/static/1d1fe11c-d6c3-4db3-af3f5b25e0ece36d/Bar-Council-Barristers-Working-Lives-report-2023.pdf>.
- iii. Kate Aubrey-Johnson & Dr Laura Janes (2023) *Dare to Care: Representing care experienced young people*, YJLC Legal Guides available at <https://yjlc.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/2024-02/YJLC-Guide-DARE2CARE-14-D.pdf>.

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