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Burness Paull

# Health and Safety Lawyers Association Conference 2026:

## *Mental Health in Health & Safety Law*

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**Practice, pressure and protection**

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## Common Mental Health Challenges Reported by Lawyers

- Chronic stress and burnout
- Anxiety and hyper-vigilance
- Secondary trauma
- Perfectionism and self-criticism
- Reluctance to talk or ask for help

## WHY THIS CONVERSATION MATTERS

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- Mental health is a growing issue across the legal profession
- Health & safety work carries unique emotional and ethical pressures, and triggers
- Talking openly is part of professional responsibility
- Discussions help normalise these experiences and share positive solutions and strategies
- The HSLA conference is the ideal medium to bring this important conversation to the table

## SESSION PURPOSE

- Explore mental health challenges in health & safety legal practice
- Share professional, institutional and support perspectives
- Encourage open, stigma-free discussion
- Highlight support and available resources

## INTRODUCTIONS: YOUR PANEL

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- **Nicky Lloyd**
  - *COO, Streathers Solicitors*
  - *Law Society Advisory Committee on Leadership and Management*
- **Emma Williams**
  - *Chair, LawCare*

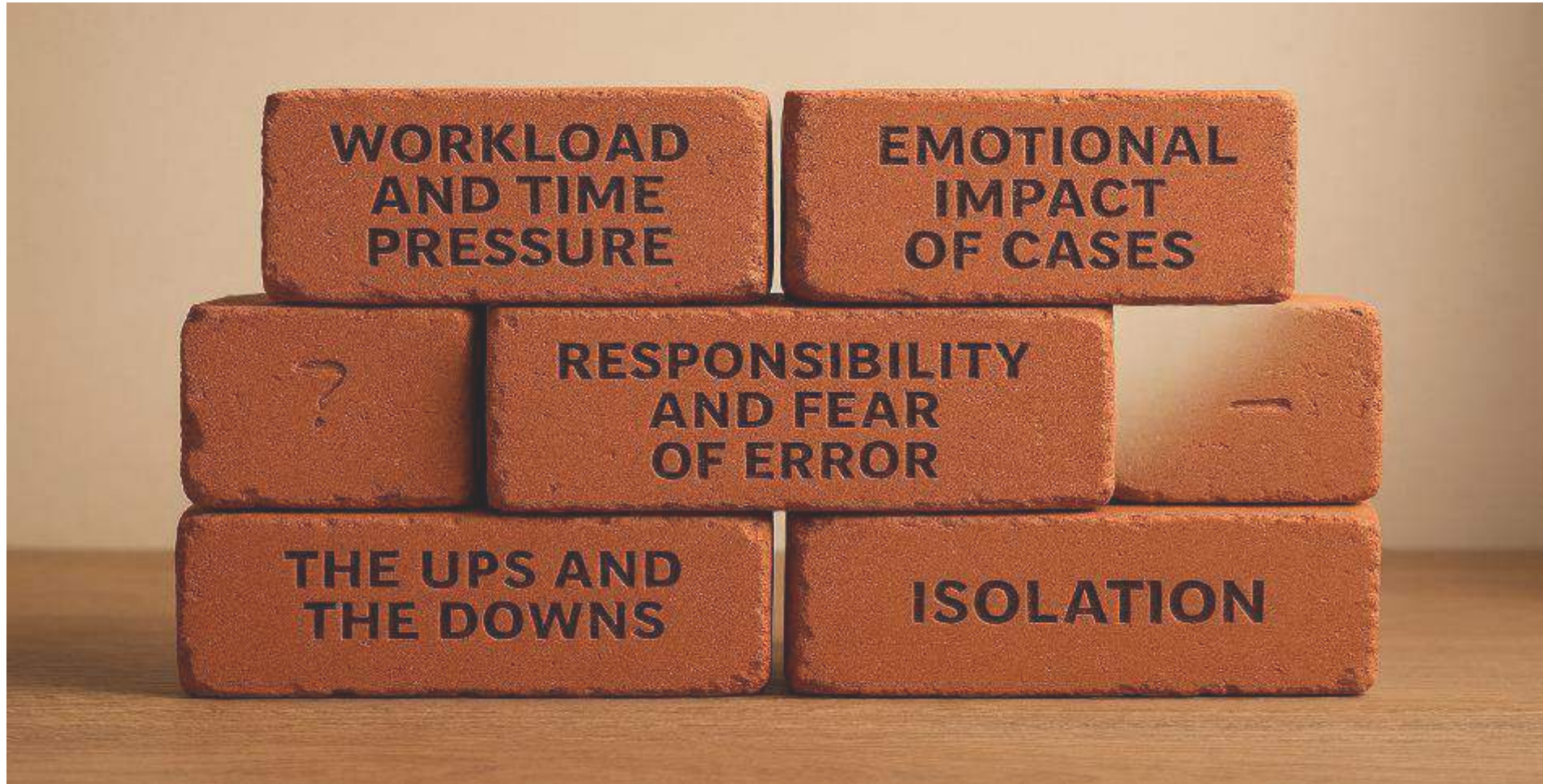
## Today's voices represent:

- Front-line health & safety legal practice
- Professional leadership and standards
- Independent support and insight

But we also want to hear from you...

## WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING IN YOUR ROLE?

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**Panel Perspective: Mental Health  
Challenges for H&S Practitioners**

## A Health and Safety Practice

- Crisis driven/ intensity
- Trauma exposure to serious injury, fatalities and harrowing events
- High-stakes advice and regulatory scrutiny
- Public and media attention following incidents
- Emotional burden alongside technical legal work
- Pressure to be “calm, competent and resilient” always

## The Law Society Perspective

Mental health as a professional and cultural issue

- Managing workloads
- Managing stress
- Importance of wellbeing

## The LawCare Perspective

- What lawyers seek help for most often
- Importance of wellbeing
- Importance of intelligent responses from law firms
- Barriers to accessing support

# Structural Pressures in Law

## Beyond the Individual: Systems and Culture

- Workplace expectations and the billable hour
- Organisation size and ability to educate, supervise and provide peer support
- Dealing with and responding to mistakes and adverse outcomes
- Designing a sustainable legal practice (when everyone is not in the same place)

# Protection in Practice

## What Actually Helps: Early Support and Protective Factors

- Recognising early warning signs
- Creating space for wellbeing conversations (EAPs/ networks/ psychological safety)
- Healthy boundaries and recovery time
- Knowing when and where to seek help

*(NOTE: NOT clinical advice – it is professional awareness)*

# Are Health and Safety Lawyers Falling Short?



**Questions, experiences or  
observations for the panel?**

## SUPPORT & RESOURCES

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- [LawCare](#)
- [Law Society Stress and Mental Health Support](#)
- [Lawscot Wellbeing](#)
- [Trauma informed training | Law Society of Scotland](#)
- Internal workplace support / EAPs
- [Contact Us | Samaritans](#)



This material does not constitute legal advice, it is intended for general information only. For specific advice on the topics covered and how they apply to your business or your circumstances, please get in touch with your usual Burness Paull contact.