



CARE-RELATED ABSENCE IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

WHITEPAPER

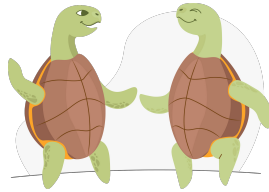


Yurtle



Published February 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This whitepaper explores the challenges faced by parents and carers in the legal sector and the effect that caregiver absence has on a firm's bottom line.

44% of UK employees have caring responsibilities¹, and the legal sector is disproportionately affected: legal professionals are 47% more likely than the average employee to be balancing both childcare and eldercare². With an ageing population, two million people taking on caring responsibilities each year³, and a continuing concern for employee mental health; it's clear that this is a growing problem.

Key insights from this whitepaper include:

- **Unplanned absences are rising:** The UK average for sickness absence is now 7.8 days per employee per year, with childcare-related absences rising by 183% in 2023.
- **Financial impact:** A 250-person law firm could lose nearly £700,000 annually in billable hours due to absence, with the largest firms seeing potential losses exceeding £1.6 million per year. With staff replacement costs averaging £40,000, caregiver-related attrition represents a significant financial and operational risk.
- **ESG and workforce sustainability:** As regulatory reporting expands, firms must consider the impact of caregiving responsibilities on gender balance, DEI initiatives, and employee engagement.
- **The shift in employer support:** Many employers - including those in the legal sector - are moving ahead of legislation. 51% now offer carer's leave policies, and 44% provide paid carer's leave. Millennials taking an average of six sick days.

With 75% of firms struggling to recruit staff in the past 12 months, and work/life balance cited as a key factor in retention, ranking as important as salary for 61% of lawyers⁴; firms that proactively support caregivers stand to strengthen their competitive edge. In the process, they can also reduce absenteeism and employee turnover, improve employee wellbeing, enhance ESG and DEI credentials, and protect their bottom line.

¹ Workplace Divide For Child-carers and Adult-carers in UK - HR News

² Modern Families Index Legal Sector Report 2024. Bright Horizons

³ shocking stats about caregivers in the workplace that could be hurting your business | Reward and Employee Benefits Association (REBA)

⁴ Most law firms and in-house teams struggling to recruit - Legal Futures