

# Costs Lawyers: Caring responsibilities

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Costs Lawyer Standards Board

CLSB  
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# In this report

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>About the data.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Declarations.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Next steps.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Key messages.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The results.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Costs Lawyers’ role as carers.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Type of caring responsibilities.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. Relationship to the person/people being cared for.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4. What concerns Costs Lawyers who are carers.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5. Impact on carers’ working life.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6. Discussions with work partners and/or employers.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>7. Support provided by work partners and/or employers.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>8. Understanding how to support colleagues who are carers.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>9. Support for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>10. Awareness of LawCare.....</b>	<b>20</b>

## Introduction

The Costs Lawyer Standards Board (CLSB) is the regulator of Costs Lawyers in England and Wales. We exist to serve the public interest by setting and maintaining the standards of professional conduct by which Costs Lawyers must abide.

As a regulator, we have a statutory objective to “encourage an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession” under the Legal Services Act 2007. We do this in various ways, including by monitoring the diversity of the profession in order to identify areas of under-representation and consider action that could be taken to address these.

Our 2025 survey focused on caring responsibilities. The CLSB’s 2025 research on [Pathways into the Profession](#) showed that almost 50% of Costs Lawyers have caring responsibilities for an adult, children or both. We wanted to hear from Costs Lawyers about whether caring responsibilities affect their work, to what extent, and what further support they would like to see for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities. We were keen to hear from all Costs Lawyers on this important topic, even if they didn’t currently have caring responsibilities themselves.

### About the data

The data on Costs Lawyers in this report was collected in a survey carried out in November to December 2025 alongside the annual practising certificate renewal process. We collect diversity data from practitioners on a voluntary basis; completing the diversity survey was not mandatory.

A total of 746 practitioners were contacted, of whom 169 responded, representing 22.6% of the profession. Because the sample size is therefore small, it has not been possible to break down the data to enable further comparisons (for example, to identify if age, gender or other characteristics affect caring responsibilities in any way).

As the data in this report does not reflect the entire regulated Costs Lawyer profession, caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from the data and/or making comparisons with other data sets.

### Declarations

The contents of this report are based on data that is explicitly and voluntarily declared by respondents.

All questions on the survey contained an option of ‘prefer not to say’ and not all respondents chose to provide their diversity information.

In instances where a data set is too small to be meaningfully representative (i.e. fewer than five respondents) or there is the risk that an individual might be identifiable from the data, it has been excluded from the report.

### **Next steps**

We will continue our work on improving our data collection, with a particular focus on improving the response rate to enable us to analyse data in a more granular way.

We will work with the Association of Costs Lawyers, LawCare and others to identify practical steps that can be taken to support Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities.

The CLSB published its last full diversity report in 2023. The next full diversity survey will take place in 2026. We have published focused data on social mobility, pay and earnings, and career pathways in the profession. We will continue to collect, analyse and publish data on discrete aspects of diversity, in line with our mid-term strategy and business plan. Previous diversity reports can be found on the CLSB [website](#).

## Key messages

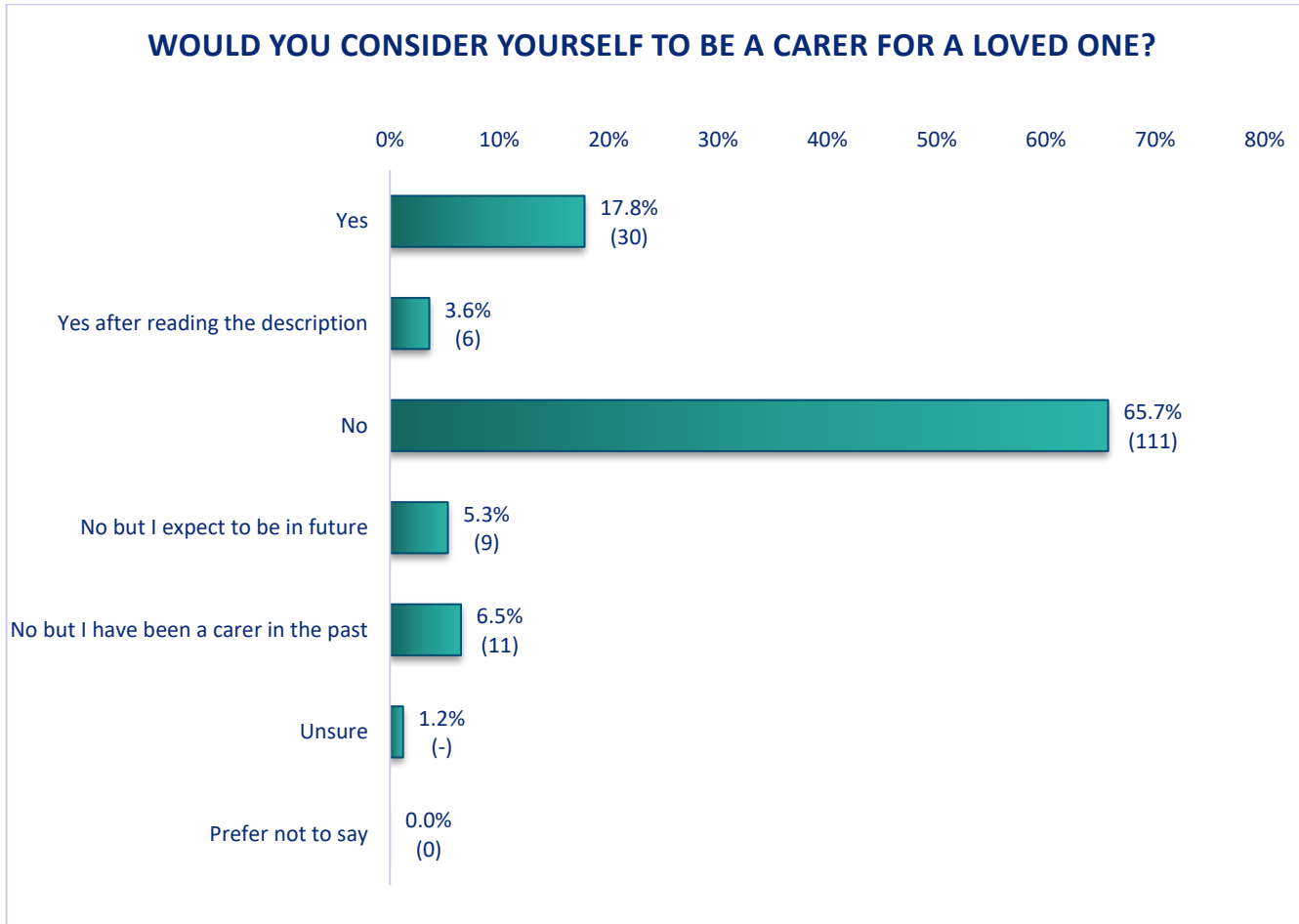
- This year's survey provided important insights into how caring responsibilities affect Costs Lawyers, and what further support the profession would like to see in this area.
- The majority of Costs Lawyers who responded to this year's survey did not have caring responsibilities. Of the Costs Lawyers who did have caring responsibilities, just under half were caring for an adult/adults, and just under half were caring for a child/children (chart 2).
- Balancing work and their role as a carer was a key concern for the majority of respondents that already had caring responsibilities (82.5%, 33 individuals). The second biggest concern was the health and wellbeing of the person being cared for (70% of respondents, 28 individuals), followed by the carer's own physical and/or mental health (45%, 18 individuals) (chart 4).
- Over half of respondents said that their caring responsibilities had led to them feeling distracted while at work (51.3%, 20 individuals). The majority of respondents had altered their working hours or used annual leave to accommodate caring responsibilities (69.2%, 27 individuals) (chart 5).
- The majority of respondents with caring responsibilities had spoken with their work partners or employer about them, and felt supported by their employer and partners. Respondents were asked to say how their employer had supported them in their role as a carer, the majority of which referred to employers allowing them to work flexibly in some way to accommodate their caring responsibilities (charts 6 and 7).
- Over a third of respondents who were not currently carers were unsure about whether they would know how to support a colleague who is a carer for a loved one (33.3%, 49 individuals), which suggests that further guidance and resources for the profession on this point would be helpful (chart 8).
- Over 60% of respondents wanted to see more guidance for managers about how to support Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities (62.0%, 103 individuals), and more guidance for the profession about balancing caring responsibilities with professional life (62.6%, 104 individuals). Respondents also felt that more flexibility in, or changes to, CPD requirements for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities would be helpful (59.6%, 99 individuals). Chart 9 provides more details.

- Just under half of respondents were aware of LawCare (47.3%, 80 individuals), but just under half of respondents were not aware of LawCare (45.0%, 76 individuals).
- The CLSB will work with the Association of Costs Lawyers, LawCare and others to identify practical steps that can be taken to support Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities.

# The results

## 1. Costs Lawyers' role as carers

Chart 1



The survey included the following definition of a carer, and asked respondents whether they would consider themselves to be a carer for a loved one:

“A carer is anyone who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The support provided can range from help with shopping, meal preparation, and domestics tasks to personal care such as dressing and bathing.”

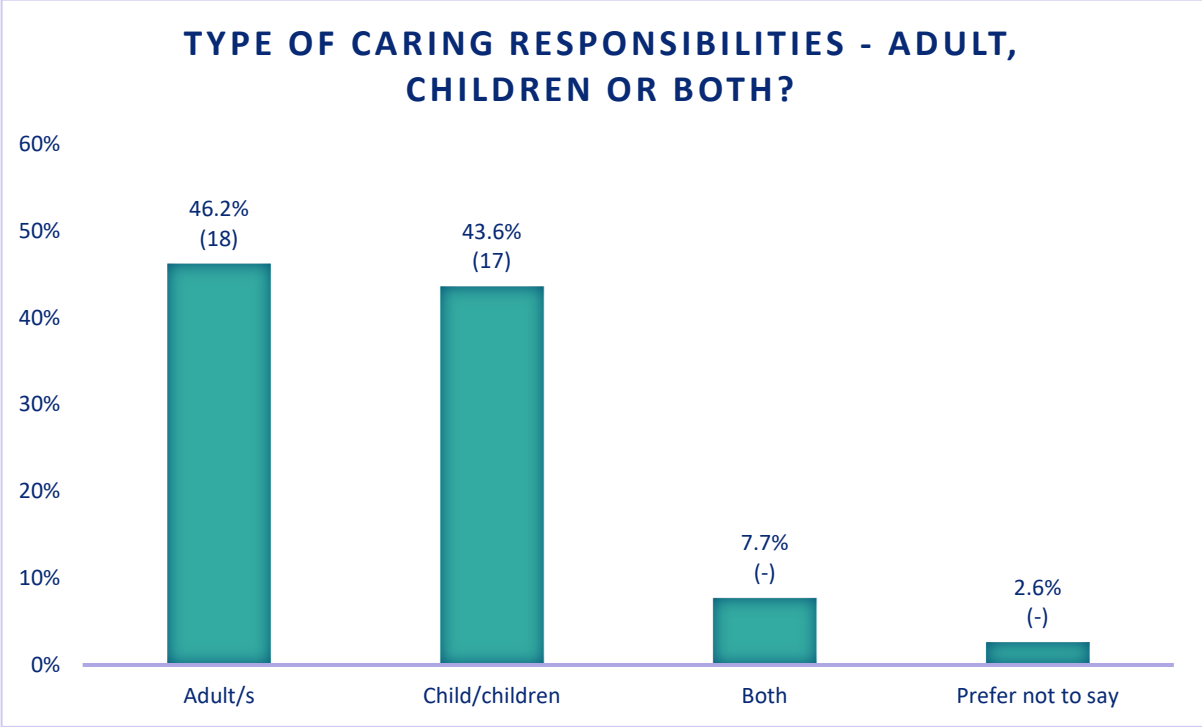
In 2025, the majority of respondents did not consider themselves to be a carer (65.7%, 111 individuals). However, 5.3% of respondents expected to become a carer in the future and 6.5%

were not currently a carer but had been in the past (9 individuals and 11 individuals respectively).

A total of 21.4% of respondents (36 individuals) considered themselves to be carers. Of those, 17.8% (30 individuals) considered themselves to be carers already and 3.6% (6 individuals) considered themselves to be carers after reading the description. Fewer than 5 respondents were unsure about whether they were carers (1.2%) and 0 respondents preferred not to say.

## 2. Type of caring responsibilities

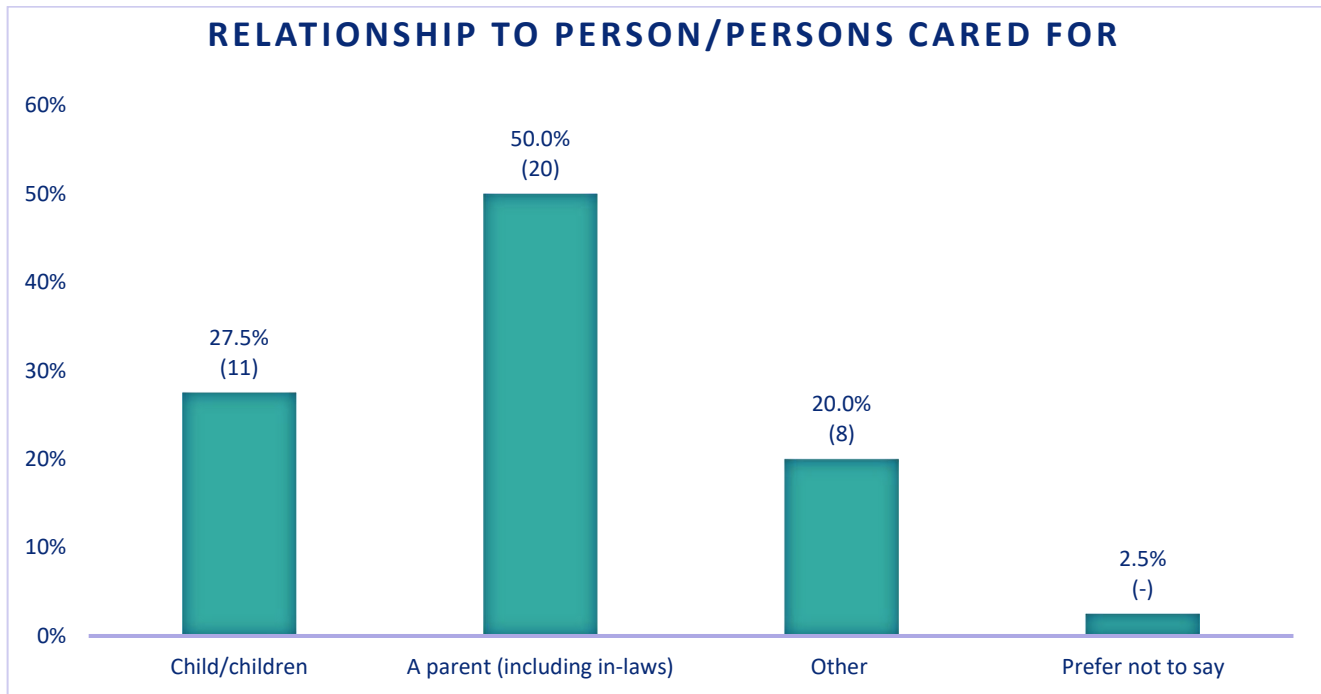
Chart 2



In 2025, 46.2% of respondents were caring for one or more adults (18 individuals). 43.6% of respondents were caring for one or more children (17 individuals) and 7.7% of respondents (fewer than five individuals) were caring for both adults and children. Fewer than 5 respondents preferred not to state the type of caring responsibilities they had.

### 3. Relationship to the person/people being cared for

Chart 3



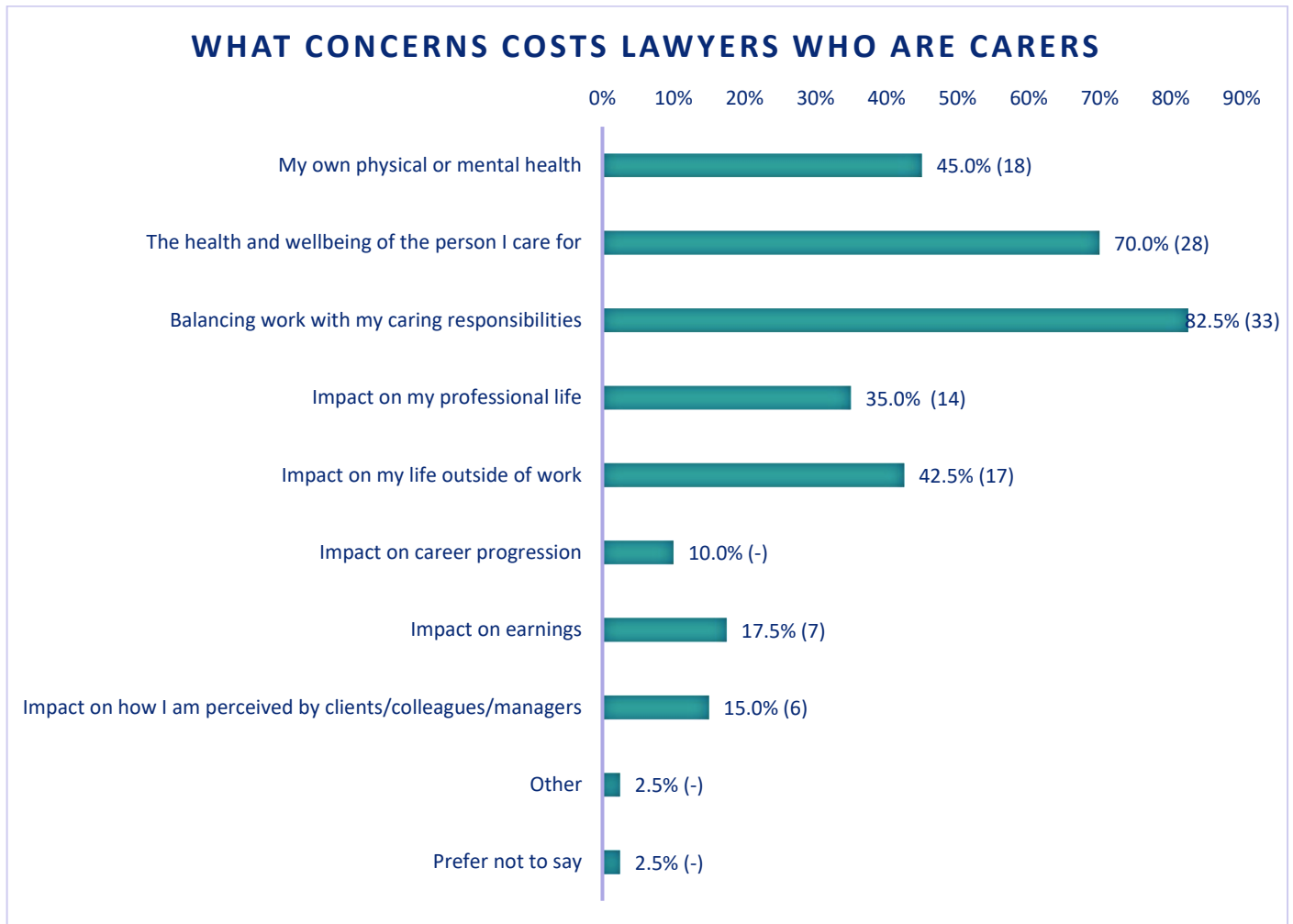
In 2025, the majority of respondents with caring responsibilities were caring for a parent (including parents who were in-laws) (50.0%, 20 individuals). 27.5% of respondents had caring responsibilities for a child or children (27.5%, 11 individuals).

20% of respondents (8 individuals) with caring responsibilities had a different type of relationship to the person they cared for. These types of relationships included grandparents, partners or spouses, other family members, friends and neighbours.

Fewer than 5 respondents (2.5%) preferred not to say the nature of their relationship with the person they care for.

#### 4. What concerns Costs Lawyers who are carers

Chart 4



Respondents with caring responsibilities were asked what concerned them as carers. They were able to select all concerns that applied.

Balancing work and caring responsibilities was a key concern for the majority of respondents (82.5%, 33 individuals). The second biggest concern was the health and wellbeing of the person being cared for (70% of respondents, 28 individuals), followed by the carer's own physical and/or mental health (45%, 18 individuals).

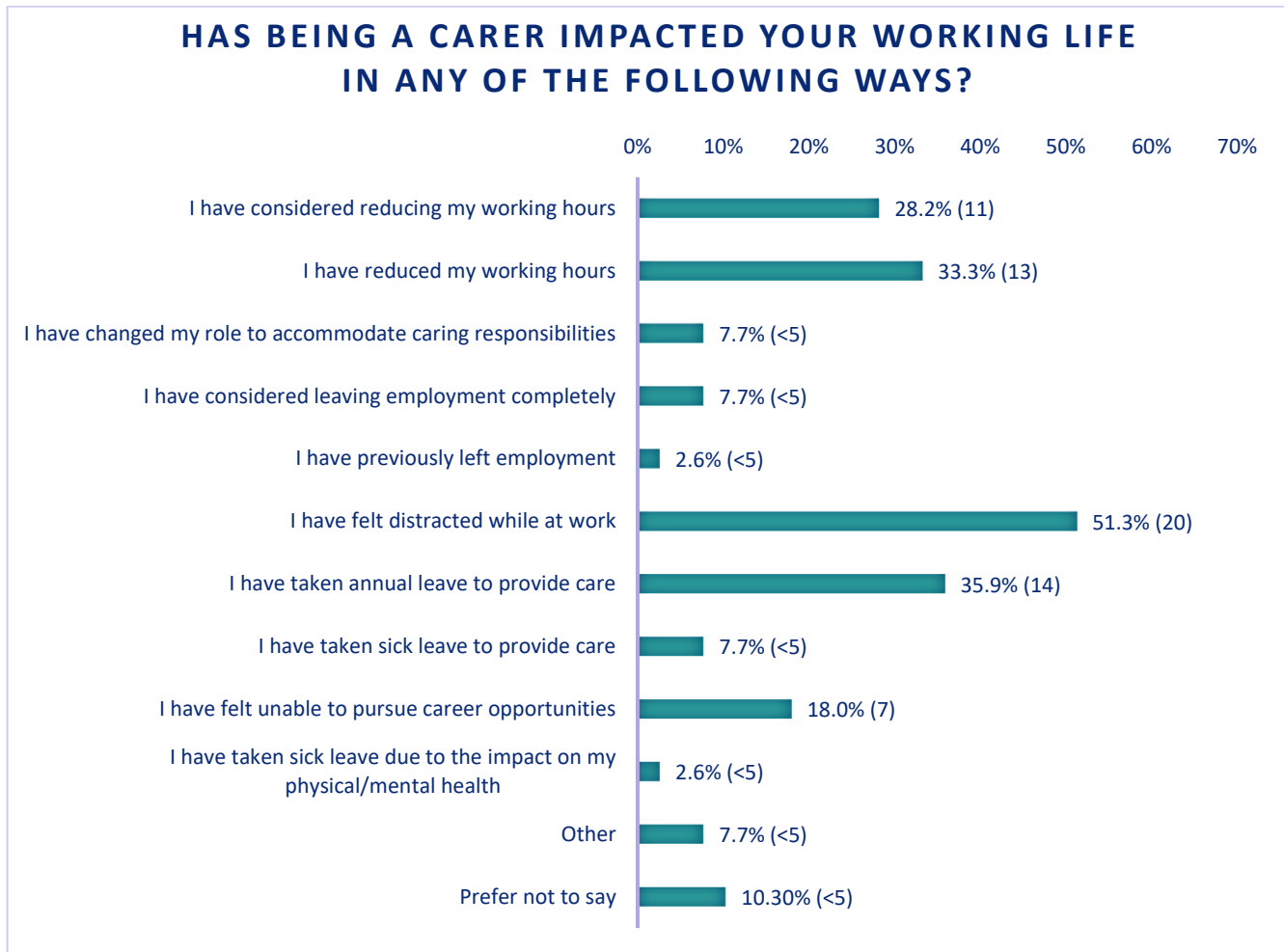
Concerns about the wider impact of caring responsibilities on the carer's professional and personal lives were also reported. 42.5% of respondents (17 individuals) were concerned about the impact of their caring responsibilities on their life outside of work, and 35% of respondents

(14 individuals) were concerned about the impact on their professional life. 17.5% of respondents (7 individuals) were concerned about the impact of caring responsibilities on their earnings and 15.0% (6 individuals) about the impact on how they might be perceived by their clients, colleagues or managers. 10% of respondents (fewer than 5 individuals) were concerned about the impact on their career progression.

Fewer than 5 respondents answered 'other' (2.5%) and fewer than 5 respondents preferred not to say (2.5%).

## 5. Impact on carers' working life

Chart 5



Respondents with caring responsibilities were asked how being a carer has impacted their working life. They were able to select all options that applied.

51.3% of respondents (20 individuals) said that their caring responsibilities had led to them feeling distracted while at work.

The majority of respondents had altered their working hours or used annual leave to accommodate caring responsibilities (69.2%, 27 individuals). 35.9% of respondents (14 individuals) had taken annual leave in order to provide care. 33.3% of respondents (13 individuals) had actually reduced their working hours to accommodate caring responsibilities,

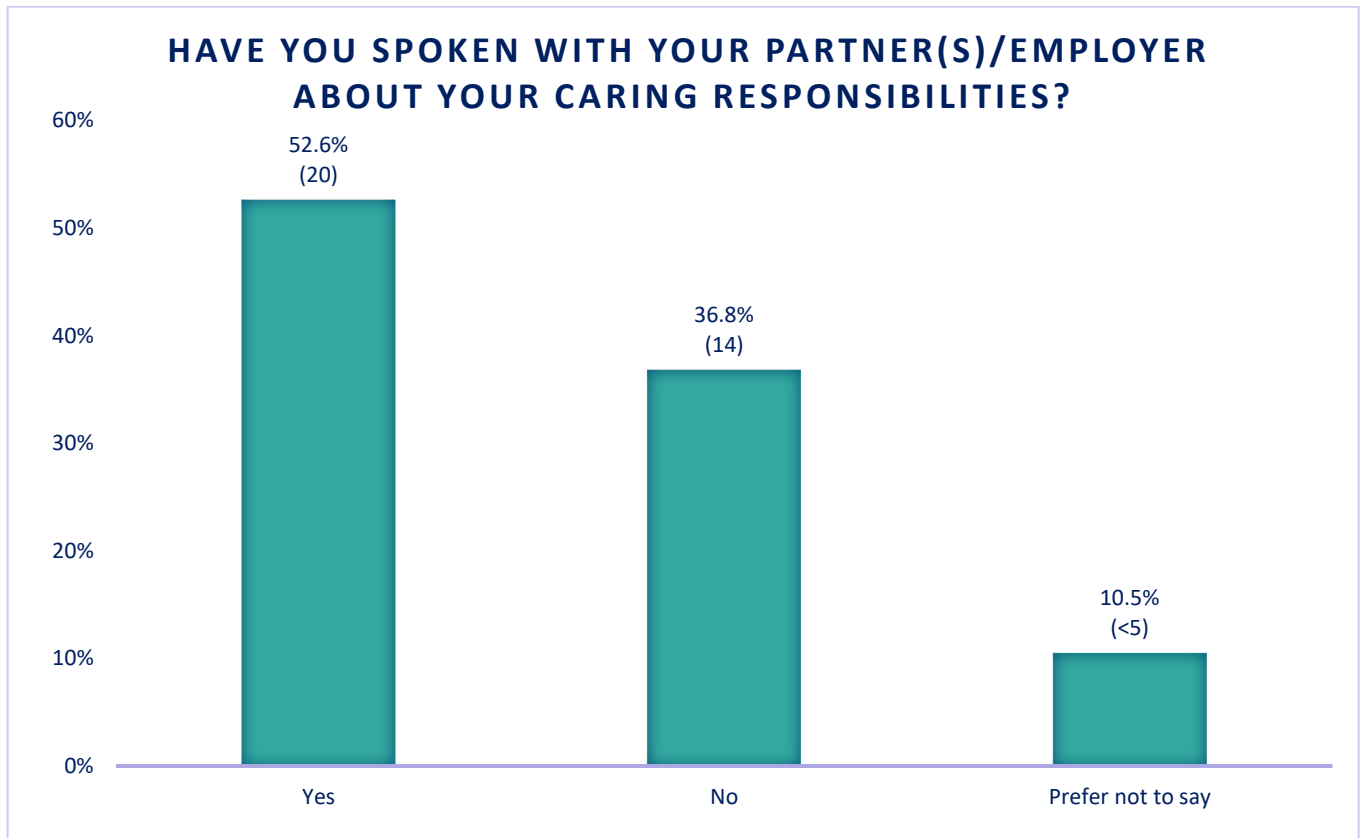
while 28% (11 individuals) had considered doing so. 7.7% of respondents (fewer than five individuals) had taken sick leave to provide care for a loved one.

Some respondents had changed role, considered leaving their role, or left employment completely to accommodate caring responsibilities (7.7%, 7.7% and 2.6% respectively, and fewer than five individuals in each case).

Fewer than five respondents preferred not to say how their caring responsibilities had impacted their working life (10.3%).

## 6. Discussions with work partners and/or employers

Chart 6

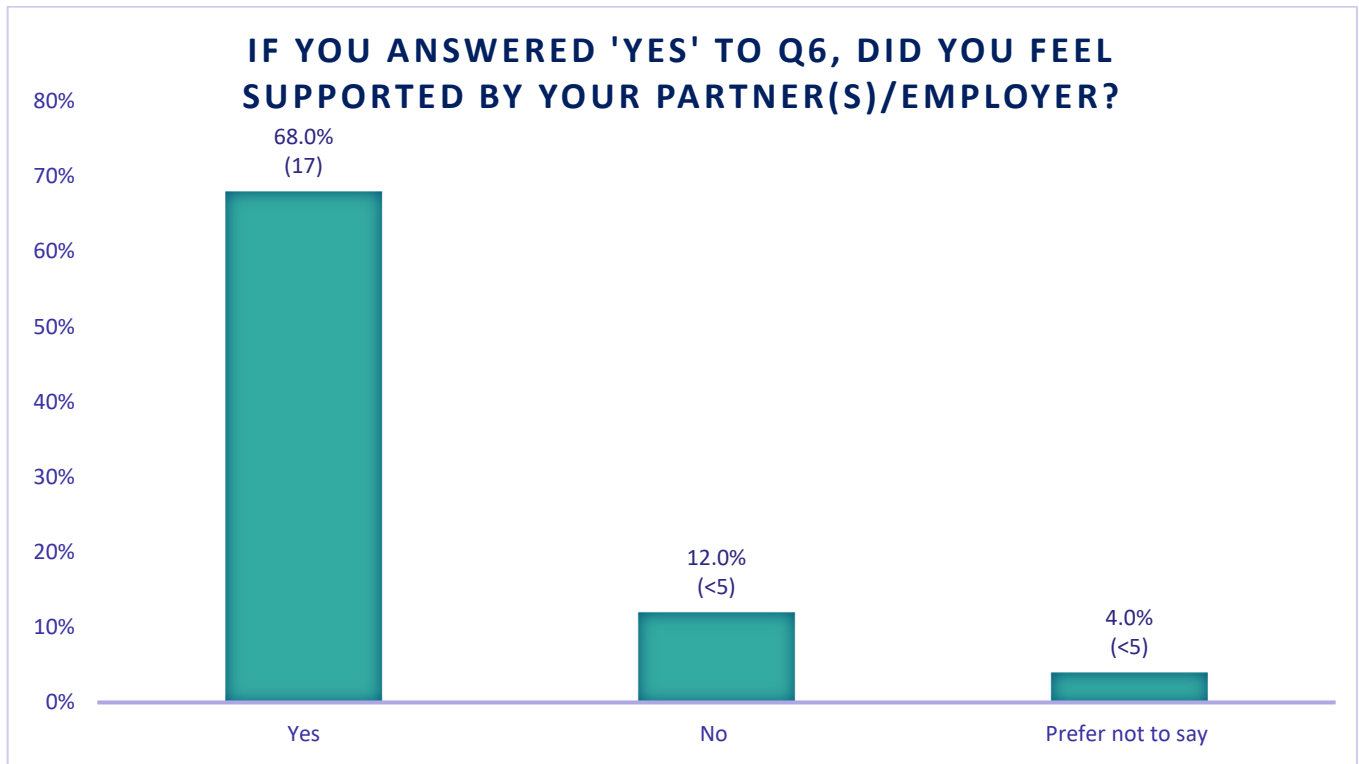


Respondents were asked whether they had discussed their caring responsibilities with their work partner(s) or employer, for example with their manager, or their firm’s HR team.

The majority of respondents with caring responsibilities had spoken with their work partners or employers about them (52.6%, 20 individuals). Over a third of respondents with caring responsibilities had **not** discussed their caring role with their work partners or employer (36.8%, 14 individuals). Fewer than 5 respondents preferred not to answer this question (10.5%).

## 7. Support provided by work partners and/or employers

Chart 7



Respondents were asked whether they felt supported when they had discussed their caring responsibilities with their employer or their partners at work.

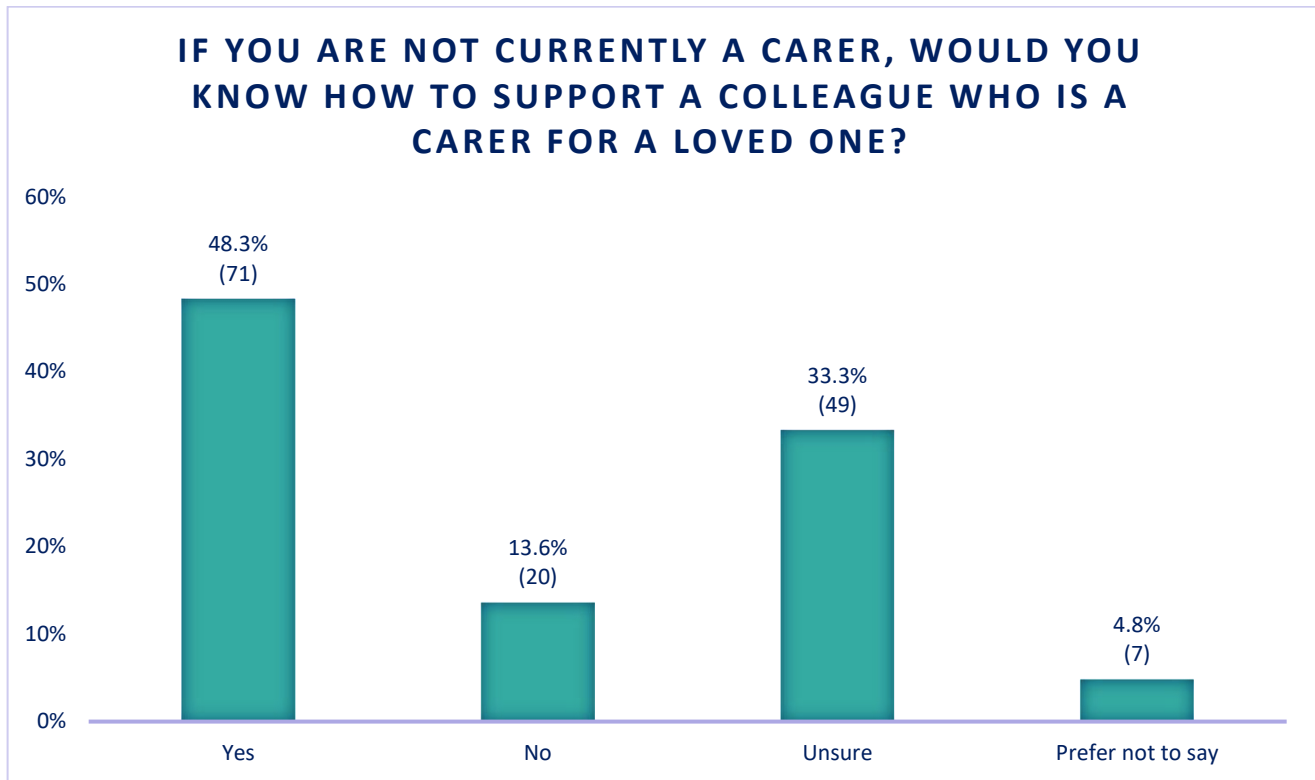
The majority of respondents said they had felt supported by their partners or employer (68.0%, 17 individuals).

12.% of respondents said that they did not feel supported by their partners or employer, and 4.0% preferred not to answer this question (fewer than five individuals in each case).

Respondents were asked to say how their employer had supported them in their role as a carer. Fourteen respondents gave examples, the majority of which referred to employers allowing them to work flexibly in some way to accommodate their caring responsibilities.

## 8. Understanding how to support colleagues who are carers

Chart 8



Respondents who were not currently carers were asked whether they would know how to support a colleague who is a carer for a loved one.

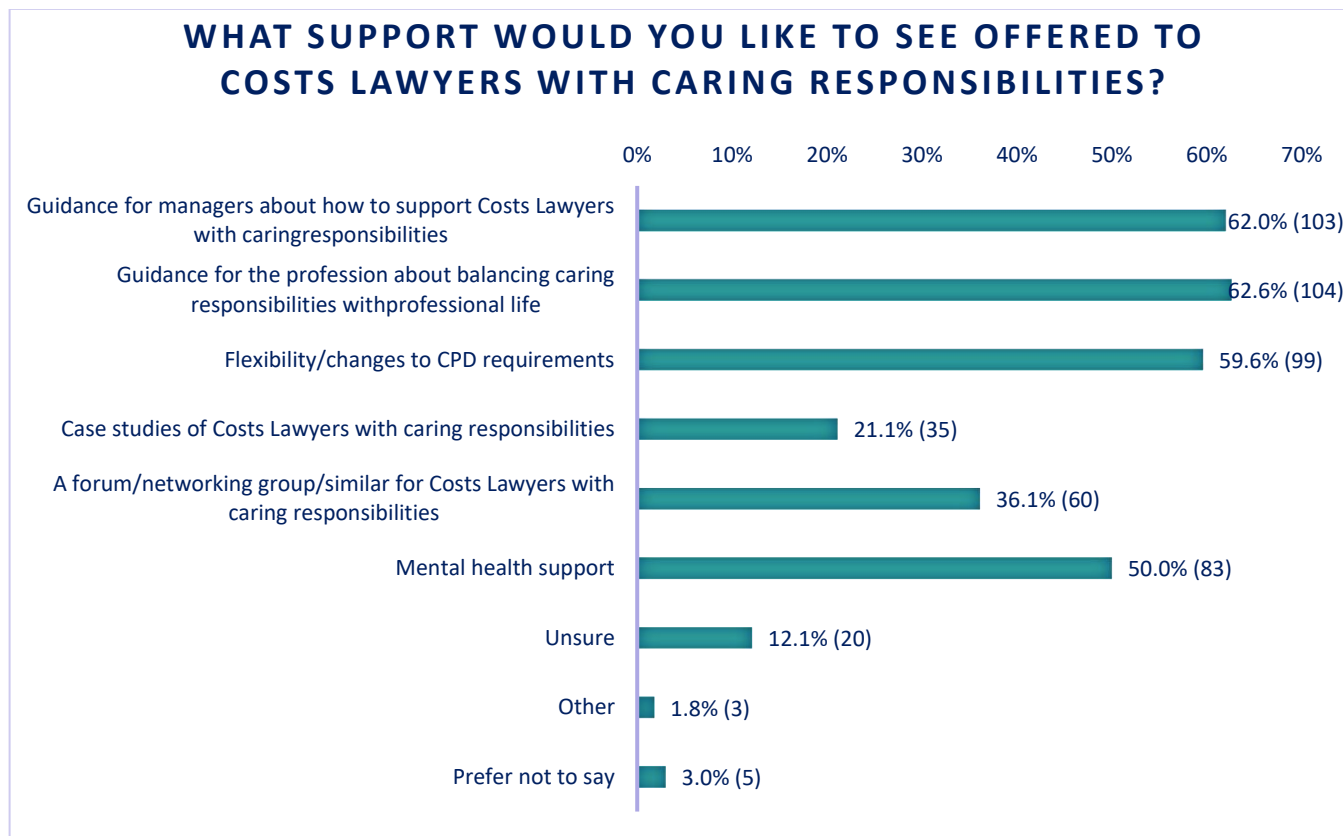
Just under half of respondents answered 'yes' to this question (48.3%, 71 individuals), whilst 13.6% (20 individuals) answered 'no'.

Over a third of respondents were unsure about whether they would know how to support a colleague who is a carer for a loved one (33.3%, 49 individuals).

4.8% of respondents (7 individuals) preferred not to answer this question.

## 9. Support for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities

Chart 9



Respondents were asked what support they would like to see offered to Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities.

Over 60% of respondents wanted to see more guidance for managers about how to support Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities (62.0%, 103 individuals), and more guidance for the profession about balancing caring responsibilities with professional life (62.6%, 104 individuals). Respondents also felt that more flexibility in, or changes to, CPD requirements for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities would be helpful (59.6%, 99 individuals).

Half of respondents wanted to see mental health support for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities (50.0%, 83 individuals). Over a third of respondents felt that a forum or networking group for Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities would be beneficial (36.1%, 60 individuals).

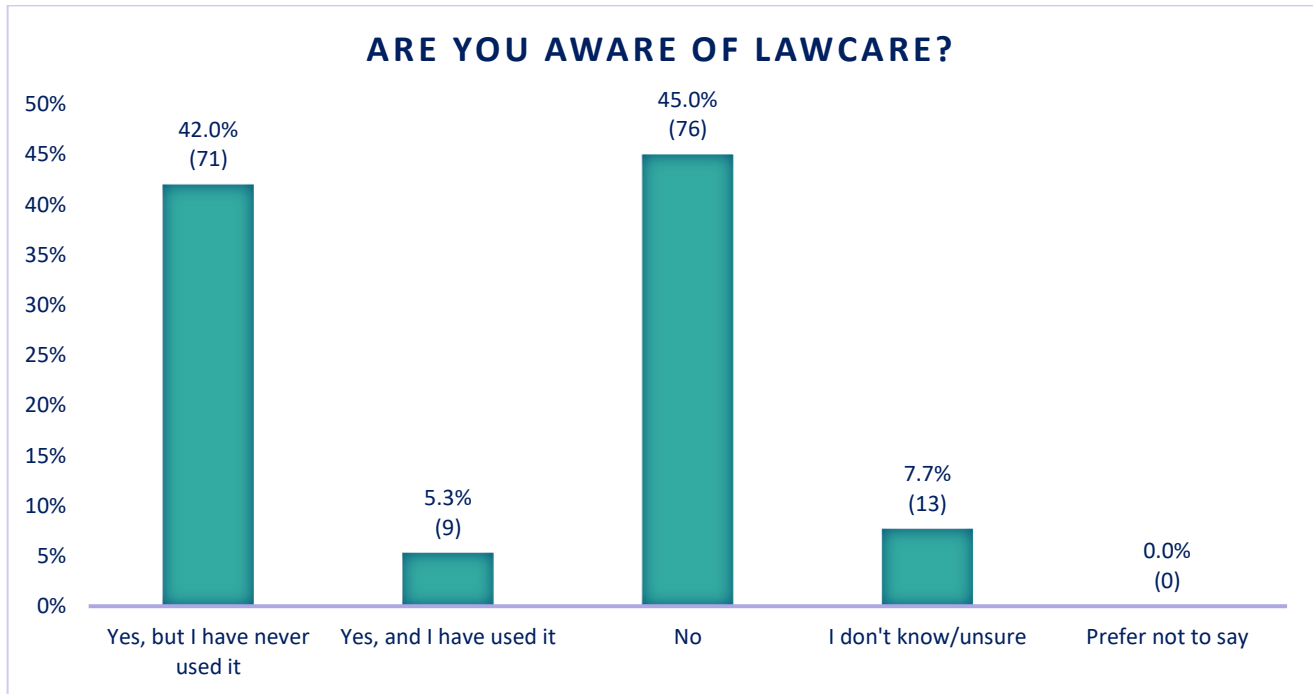
Just over a fifth of respondents thought that case studies of Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities would be a helpful type of support (21.1%, 35 individuals).

Other types of support that respondents suggested included guidance for Costs Lawyers on how to approach their employers and their rights in this area, and that flexible working principles should be applied by the courts in order to assist Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities working in courtroom settings.

12.1% of respondents (20 individuals) were unsure about what support they would like to see offered to Costs Lawyers with caring responsibilities, and 3.0% (5 individuals) preferred not to answer this question.

## 10. Awareness of LawCare

Chart 10



Respondents were asked if they were aware of LawCare. LawCare is the mental health charity for the legal sector that offers free, confidential emotional support, peer support, and information for people working in legal sector in the UK, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man.

Just under half of respondents were aware of LawCare (47.3%, 80 individuals). Of respondents who were aware of LawCare, 5.3% (9 individuals) had used the services provided by the organisation. 42.0% of respondents (71 individuals) had not used LawCare's services even though they were aware of it.

Just under half of respondents were not aware of LawCare (45.0%, 76 individuals). 7.7% of respondents (13 individuals) were unsure or did not know whether they were aware of LawCare. No respondents selected 'prefer not to say' for this question.