

MARKET TRENDS IN LEGAL SERVICES

The Legal Services Board - the independent body overseeing the regulation of lawyers in England and Wales – is today releasing its [Interim Baseline Report](#) on the Market Impact of the Legal Services Act 2007.

The report – the first in what will be an annual publication – brings together data from a wide range of sources to look at how the legal services market in England and Wales has changed over the past five years since the implementation of the Legal Services Act 2007. The statute paved the way for wide-ranging reforms to the legal services market. These are now being realised with the arrival of new forms of legal services provider, independent regulation and a new system for redress – all designed to ensure that this important market works more effectively in the interests of consumers and the public at large.

Today's report prepares the ground for future evaluation of the impacts of these reforms. It is the first time such a comprehensive set of available data has been developed. The report comes as the LSB publishes a new [Strategic and Business Plan](#), which sets out the work the Board will do over the coming year and beyond. Core to this will be assuring and improving the performance of the legal sector's regulators and embedding better regulation.

The Business Plan sets out how the first stages of this work will be implemented over the next financial year 2012/13.

Chairman of the Legal Services Board, David Edmonds said:

The completion of our first three-year cycle sees the beginning of a more diverse provider market, characterised by new forms of legal services businesses, which are overseen by independent regulators. For those occasions where the service falls short, there is an enhanced system for dealing with complaints.

Since our creation, we have emphasised the importance of evidence-based regulation. We are now at the right point to publish in a collected form data about the marketplace that will allow us to monitor change over the years ahead. It is the first time that such a range of data has been pulled together.

For further information, please contact **Craig Jones, Media and Public Affairs Manager** on craig.jones@legalservicesboard.org.uk or by calling 020 7271 0068 or 07702 428210.

Notes for editors

1. The Interim Baseline Report on the Market Impact of the Legal Services Act 2007 can be found at http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/what_we_do/Research/Publications/publications.htm
2. The LSB Strategic and Business Plan can also be found at http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/news_publications/publications/index.htm
3. The Legal Services Act ("The Act") created the Legal Services Board as a new regulator with responsibility for overseeing the regulation of legal services in England and Wales. The new regulatory regime became active on 1 January 2010.
4. Section 1 of the Act defines eight Regulatory Objectives shared by the LSB and the Approved Regulators. The sixth of these directly concerns education and training of the legal workforce. The full range of Regulatory Objectives is:
 - Protecting and promoting the public interest
 - Supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law
 - Improving access to justice
 - Protecting and promoting the interests of consumers of legal services
 - Promoting competition in the delivery of legal services
 - Encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession
 - Increasing public understanding of the citizens' legal rights and duties
 - Promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles
5. The LSB oversees eight Approved Regulators, which in turn regulate individual lawyers. The Approved Regulators, designated under Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the 2007 Act, are the Law Society, the Bar Council, the Master of the Faculties, the Institute of Legal Executives, the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys, the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys and the Association of Costs Lawyers.
6. In addition, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants are listed as Approved Regulators in relation only to reserved probate activities.

7. The legal profession currently consists of 15,309 barristers, 119,641 solicitors and 12,145 individuals operating in other aspects of the legal profession such as conveyancing. The sector is currently valued at £25.49 billion per annum (total turnover in 2010).