

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LSB publishes results of investigation into consumers' use of legal services**

The Legal Services Board today publishes the results of two influential research studies:

- a report looking into the experiences of individual consumers with legal needs, and
- a methodology for understanding the legal needs of small businesses

Both of these reports represent important milestones in ongoing efforts to build a comprehensive and quantifiable understanding of the legal services sector.

The **Legal Services Benchmarking** report, prepared for the LSB by BDRG continental, investigates how individual consumers identify and respond to legal problems. Each element of an individual consumer's legal services journey is considered to see what the legal issues are, how choices are made, the level of satisfaction with the process chosen and whether the choices made lead to a resolution of the problem.

4,017 respondents participated in this survey (amounting to over 9,800 individual legal services requirements in total). Key findings of the survey include:

- when confronted with a legal need 44% of consumers took some form of professional advice, 12% sought advice from friends and family, 27% handled the legal need without help and 14% did nothing
- taken as a whole, "reserved legal needs" make up less than 20% of all legal needs
- regulated providers were involved in 47% of legal needs that required advice, and provided the majority of advice in areas such as conveyancing, probate, divorce and will writing
- unregulated providers are more likely to help with money and benefit problems, neighbour and property disputes as well as will-writing
- reasons for not seeking advice included situations where an individual took an active decision to resolve it themselves (eg time concerns, done it before, thought it would be easy to resolve, [and of even most concern] perceived the services available to be too costly)

**Chris Kenny, Chief Executive of the Legal Services Board** said:

*"For the legal services market to function effectively and in consumers' interests, we need to understand how real people make real decisions about the myriad of legal issues they face in life.*

*Today's report provides some fascinating insights into the ways in which people go about solving their problems. And, more troublingly, into why some people seek no help at all.*

*The findings emphasise the potential demand for high quality low cost legal services across a wide range of different problem types to support consumers in responding to everyday legal problems.*

*Individual consumers are by far the largest (in terms of numbers) users of legal services. This report helps fill important gaps in our understanding of our use of legal services. It challenges all of us; suppliers, consumers, existing market players, new entrants, regulators, etc. to think of the legal services market in a different way.*

Also published today is the **Small Business Framework** – a report jointly commissioned with the Legal Services Consumer Panel from researchers from University College London and Kingston University.

The next largest group of consumers of legal services (to the individual) is the normal, everyday small business. As with the individual consumer, there is a lack of reliable data and evidence available on how small businesses identified and responded to legal problems.

The report outlines how such a survey into the legal needs of an important pillar of the economy might be carried out in a robust and reliable way.

For further information, please contact our Communications Manager [Vincent McGovern](#) or by calling 020 7271 0068.

#### **Notes for editors:**

1. The **Legal Services Benchmarking** report can be found [here](#).
2. The survey data from which this report was compiled is available [here](#).
3. The **Small Business Framework** Report can be found [here](#).
4. For more information on *BRDC continental* please see their [website](#).
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The legal profession currently consists of some 15,000 barristers, 119,000 solicitors and 12,000 individuals operating in other aspects of the legal profession such as conveyancing. The sector was valued at £24.74 billion per annum (total turnover) in 2009.