

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **BSB's regulatory assessment: the challenge of change**

The Legal Services Board publishes today its assessment of the **Bar Standards Board (BSB) performance in the legal services sector**. This performance review of the BSB's regulatory functions represents a baseline on which future regulatory performance can be judged. It also reinforces the continuing importance the LSB attaches to improving regulatory performance.

The BSB regulates just over 15,500 barristers in England and Wales. Its vision is that by the end of 2013 the BSB and the term "BSB-regulated" will be an assurance of good, honest, independent advocacy and expert legal advice.

The LSB has concluded that the BSB has produced a realistic but very ambitious self assessment. Such ambition is welcome and some of the actions already underway shows that it is serious about delivering risk-based regulation. It has:

- already acted in the area of appointments of staff, and begun a programme of staff training and development
- rolled out new regulatory policies and procedures, and
- made significant inroads into reducing bureaucracy in its professional conduct department.

However, the LSB believes that meeting its ambitions will not be possible without overcoming some significant challenges. In particular:

- the lack of evidence about those that use the services of those it regulates and about how they deliver those services;
- the reactive nature of its supervisory activity, and
- the need for significant cultural change to deliver on these ambitions.

**Chairman of the Legal Services Board, David Edmonds**, said:

*"The BSB work programme outlined in this self assessment is amongst the most challenging I've seen. It is a work programme characterised by a welcome frankness and a high, but necessary, level of ambition.*

*We are pleased that the BSB is seizing the opportunities offered by the Legal Services Act: It intends to free barristers to offer their services, and new services, to consumers in new ways. However, with change comes risk and challenge. The BSB must do more to embed the*

*regulatory standards and an outcomes focused regulatory approach into its day-to-day operations.*

*The proposed timescale for these changes is tight. Much of what is planned is dependent on significant leadership being shown by the Board of the BSB coupled with strong management by the executive.*

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

**Notes for editors:**

1. The BSB's regulatory standards report can be found [here](#).
2. The SRA's regulatory assessment can be found [here](#). The regulatory assessments of the other five regulators can be found [here](#). Background information can be found [here](#).
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. 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 Chartered 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.
5. 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.
6. The legal profession currently consists of 119,641 solicitors, 15,309 barristers, 7,947 chartered legal executives and 4,198 other individuals operating in other areas of the legal profession such as conveyancing. The sector is currently valued at £25.49 billion per annum (total turnover in 2010).