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Legal professionals are becoming more innovative in running their businesses but more is needed, a new report indicates

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Findings from the largest ever study of innovation in the legal sector, commissioned by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and the Legal Services Board (LSB), suggest that legal professionals, including solicitors and barristers, are becoming more innovative in the organisation and management of their business.

The study was undertaken on behalf of the SRA and LSB by the Enterprise Research Centre at Warwick Business School. It reviews the findings of a series of qualitative case studies, and a quantitative survey of 1,500 organisations delivering legal services in England and Wales.

In a summary report published today (7 July), the SRA and LSB indicate that the study found:

- alternative business structures (ABS) are 13-15% more likely to introduce new legal services than other types of regulated solicitor firms;
- over a quarter of all providers have introduced a new service in the last three years;
- 80% of legal organisations feel that they have a culture and leadership which is open to new ideas;

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40% of organisations have put in place organisational procedures to support innovation and the development of new ideas;
innovation extends service range, improves quality and attracts new clients; and
a majority of providers see regulation as broadly neutral to positive for innovation but there are some key areas where providers believe regulation has a negative impact on innovation such as client accounts and client complaints.

A market which is welcoming of innovation is attractive to investors and potential new entrants, and encourages existing businesses to differentiate and to compete. This report suggests that legal professionals are innovative but it also indicates that more can be done to meet the significant unmet legal needs that continues to exist.

Paul Philip, Chief Executive, Solicitors Regulation Authority, said: "Innovation drives growth in the legal sector as in any other. Our research shows that law firms and solicitors are capitalising on how the market is opening up by developing new ways to do business and offer more services. A wider range of services in a competitive market can only be good news for the public."

Richard Moriarty, Chief Executive, Legal Services Board, said: "I welcome the finding that legal service providers are becoming more innovative—this is key to growing the market and providing services that consumers and businesses want. The results, however, suggest that there is room for further improvement. Innovation and striving to improve services should not be viewed as a choice for providers—rather they should be viewed as a requirement to meet the public's expectations for legal services.

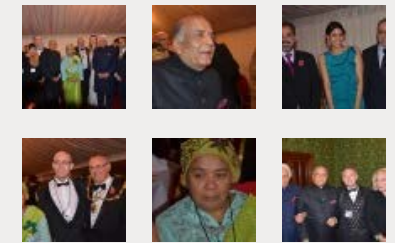
"I am also encouraged by the finding that ABS providers are more innovative than others. ABS were intended (amongst other things) to promote innovation and diversity in the provision of legal services. This research suggests that this ambition is in the process of being realised."

[Read an executive summary and download the report](#)

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