

What 'Tesco Law' means for UK legal services

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The first detailed insight into what reform of the UK legal services market will mean in practice came last week with a major report from the Legal Services Board.

A report in *The Times* notes that launching its proposals for consultation, the board declared that it had faith in the market's ability to deliver a robust regulatory structure for non-legal businesses offering legal advice in the newly liberalised market. David Edmonds, the board's chairperson, called the paper on alternative business structures 'a major milestone' in the process of opening up the legal profession, which began with David Clementi's 2003 review and continues through the implementation of the Legal Services Act 2007. The report coincides with another major study released last week commissioned by the Byfield Consultancy and Fox Williams on the likely impact of the shake-up, drawing on views of the profession across all sectors as well as banks and retailers. In it, Edmonds, a former director-general of Ofcom, enthused about the 'incredibly exciting' prospect of transforming the legal services through the roll-out of alternative business structures or what has become known as 'Tesco or Co-op Law'.

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