



**Law
Commission**
Reforming the law

Business Plan

2026 to 2027



Chair's Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce the Law Commission's Business Plan for 2026 to 2027. This plan clearly sets out how the Law Commission will continue to fulfil its statutory function of making sure that the law is fair, modern, simple and cost effective, as well as ensure that the organisation itself continues to develop and prosper.

The four priorities for the coming year are:

1. Delivering law reform for the whole of society.
2. Promoting independent law reform and the rule of law domestically and internationally.
3. Ensuring our governance foundations are fit for the future.
4. Equipping our people to deliver expert and independent law reform.

The organisation continually aims to be more effective, efficient and at the cutting-edge of law reform. Our reputation as world-leaders in law reform is well-deserved and, in order to maintain this, we must ensure that we are ambitious in what we aim to achieve as an organisation but also reflect on both the successes and challenges of the past year. I am delighted to say that we have included in this year's annual report a review of the Business Plan for 2025 to 2026.

I am grateful to the Commissioners and staff at the Law Commission for their continued dedication to the important work that we do.

Sir Peter Fraser
Chair





Chief Executives' Foreword

We are pleased to present the Law Commission's Business Plan for 2026 to 2027, setting out the organisation's priorities and objectives for the year ahead. This plan comes at a time of continued high demand for independent, thoughtful and expert law reform. We have an ambitious programme of work underway across a diverse range of law reform areas, affecting many aspects of our society. This business plan provides a clear framework for how we will continue to meet our statutory duty while strengthening the foundations of the organisation for the future.

The four priorities for the coming year reflect both the enduring purpose of the Law Commission, its high reputation internationally, and the practical challenges of operating in a complex and evolving legal system. They are designed to ensure that we continue to deliver high quality, rigorous and accessible law reform for the benefit of the whole of society; to promote the value of independent law reform and the rule of law in England and Wales and internationally; to safeguard our governance, independence and credibility; and to equip our people with the skills, tools and support they need to do their work to the highest standard.

The Law Commission is widely recognised for the quality, independence and impact of its work. Our recommendations generate significant social and economic value, from improving access to justice and legal clarity to supporting innovation, growth and public confidence in the law. We can only sustain this impact through the expertise, commitment and professionalism of our Commissioners and staff. Over the coming year, we will continue to invest in our people, our ways of working and our organisational resilience, while maintaining a clear focus on delivering outstanding law reform.

Alongside the Chair, we look forward to reporting on our progress against this Business Plan in the year ahead.

Joanna Otterburn and Stephanie Hack
Joint Chief Executives





Introduction

The Law Commission of England and Wales is an independent statutory body established to review the law and recommend reforms that keep it fair, modern and accessible.

Recognised internationally as a leading authority on law reform, the Law Commission is known for its rigorous analysis, wide consultation and high-quality recommendations.

Through this work, the Law Commission strengthens the rule of law by improving legal clarity, transparency and public confidence in the justice system.

Its reforms help maintain England and Wales' position as a premier legal jurisdiction, one that attracts investment, supports the UK legal sector and enhances the UK's global reputation.

This Business Plan provides:

- an overview of our current programme of projects;
- a summary of progress against last year's priorities; and
- our aims and planned activity for April 2026 to March 2027.

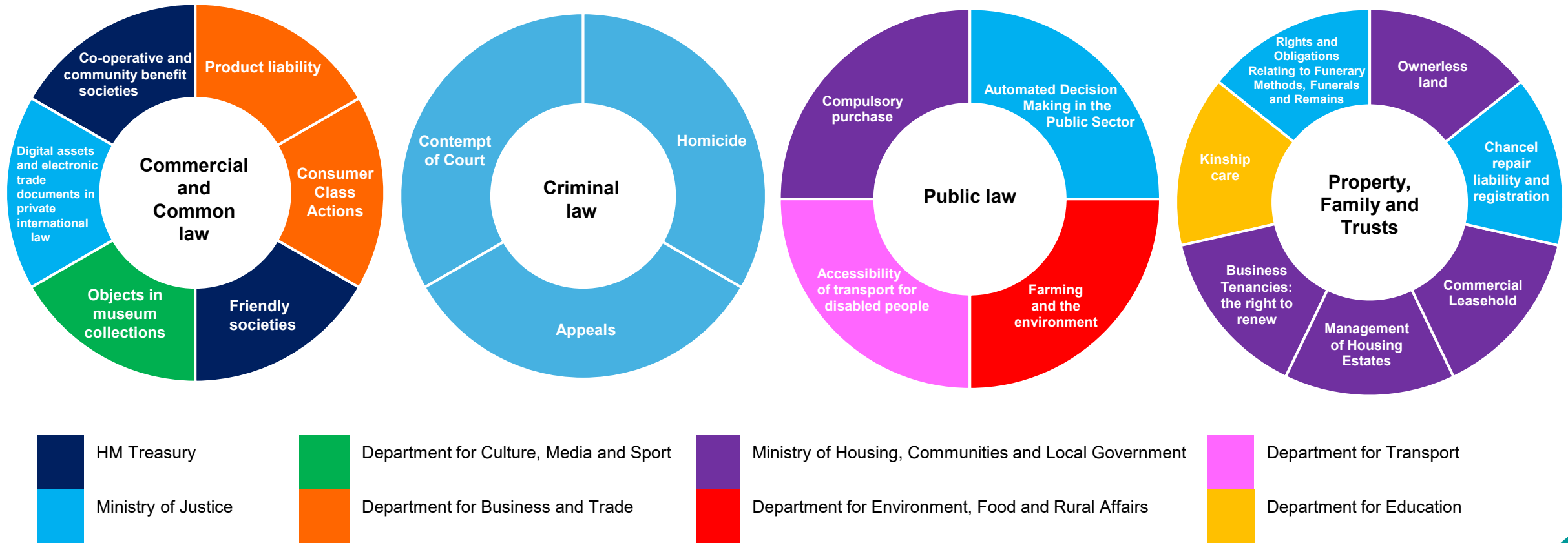
It reflects our ongoing commitments and the steps we will take in the year ahead to continue delivering high-quality, independent law reform.





The Law Commission in numbers

As of April 2026, the Law Commission is delivering 20 projects for 8 departments, Arms Length Bodies and Welsh Government.



*The Contempt of Court project is jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General's Office.



The Law Commission's impact on society

In delivering its statutory duty, the Law Commission contributes thought leadership and substantial social and economic value across major areas of public life. In the period 2025 to 2026 the Law Commission has published 10 consultation papers and final reports, including Disabled Children's Access to Social Care, Evidence in Sexual Offence Prosecutions, Modernising Wills Law and Agriculture in Wales. Our independent work continues to contribute to national dialogue on legal reform, influencing policy design and shaping public understanding of key justice issues.

Modernising and simplifying agricultural law in Wales

Our work on agricultural law in Wales aims to transform the existing agricultural legal framework by making it easier to find, navigate and understand. It does this by proposing the creation of a single, accessible and bilingual code of agricultural law for Wales. In doing so, our project marks a significant milestone in the wider legislative commitment to codify the law in Wales as led by the Welsh Government. Our project also identifies opportunities to make technical changes which will serve to modernise and simplify the law in this area. With over 90% of land in Wales used for agriculture, our project has the potential to deliver real benefits to a sector that is central to the economy, culture and environment of Wales.

Harm prevention and well-being

The Disabled Children's Access to Social Care project has the potential to transform support for up to 5 million children over the next decade. For many families, difficulties accessing the right support at the right time creates significant and lasting pressures, often leaving carers to shoulder unsustainable responsibilities that can lead to severe psychological distress. Our reforms aim to change that story by ensuring that children receive the help they need at an early stage, promoting their wellbeing and reducing the risk of their needs escalating. This should promote the upbringing of children within their families.

Rule of law and access to justice

The Evidence in Sexual Offences Prosecutions project has the potential to improve the lives of the 65,000 adults who report being victims of rape each year and to impact around 5,000 serious sexual offences cases per year. Its recommendations strengthen fairness, transparency and confidence in one of the most sensitive areas of the justice system. The recommendations clarify evidential thresholds, promote greater fairness and consistency in judicial and juror decision making, aim to reduce intrusive and unnecessary questioning, and strengthen trial safeguards which are at the heart of the rule of law. Assistance with giving evidence and trauma informed practice further support complainants and defendants, enabling them to navigate the process with dignity and fairness. Together, these reforms help create a system that better protects rights, improves access to justice and strengthens trust in legal processes.

Modernising the legal system and driving technology growth

Through the Modernising Wills Law project, we have made recommendations that help to bring an outdated legal framework in line with modern expectations, with reforms that could benefit the estates of around 3.7 million people over 10 years. One modernisation is to permit electronic wills, to reflect the realities of a more digital society and make will making more accessible. Our reforms will also help to ensure that people's own genuine wishes govern the distribution of their estate, that the law does not revoke a person's will without their knowledge, and that there is more evidence of a person's capacity to make a will after they have died, which will reduce costly challenges over a person's will.



Evaluation of 2025 to 2026 priorities

Our Business Plan 2025 to 2026 set out four key priorities for the period April 2025 to March 2026. These priorities were key to us continuing to provide social and economic value by delivering world-class, high-quality law reform. Below contains a summary of the progress made on our 2025-26 priorities. The full evaluation can be found in the Annual Report 2026 to 2027.

Priority 1: Lay the foundations for a new programme of work

Following a rigorous selection process, our 14th programme of law reform was laid in Parliament by the Lord Chancellor. In addition to our programme of work, we remain alert to pressing issues requiring law reform, and have accepted references on topics such as Civil Liability and AI. The 60th anniversary of the Law Commission presented increased opportunities to raise awareness of our work with partners across the Judiciary, Government and Parliament.

Priority 2: Develop ways to engage with new and existing audiences

Through the implementation of our new communication strategy, we used innovative ways to engage the public with the work of the Law Commission. We reached new and wider audiences through the launch of our Instagram page and the use of animation and audio versions in our report on Disabled Children's Social Care. We strengthened our consultation practice by using demographic and geographical data to determine where specific groups were underrepresented.

Priority 3: Enhance our reputation as a world-leading law reform agency

The launch of our updated international strategy enabled significant continued, and new, international engagement across jurisdictions such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Tanzania, South Korea, and Botswana, and with bodies such as the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies. We supported our international work through a successful application to the Ministry of Justice's rule of law fund and collaboration with ROLE UK.

Priority 4: Improve our ways of working

We sought an expert external review of our operating model which has enabled us to identify opportunities to build greater resilience over the next few years. We introduced our AI Taskforce to pilot AI solutions to improve productivity whilst still living by our newly launched organisational values of independence, integrity and expertise. We also welcomed two new Law Commissioners and a Senior Counsel for Wales, and created the permanent post of Senior Lawyer for each law reform team to increase resilience at senior staff levels.

Delivering law reform for the whole of society

Our core statutory duty is to delivering independent and high-quality recommendations for reform. Over the coming year, we will focus on completing key stages of our existing projects, and ensuring our work is rigorous, accessible and informed by strong evidence. Alongside delivering projects in the 14th Programme of Law Reform, we will continue to respond to emerging legal issues and maintain high standards across all publications and consultations.

Objectives

- Deliver high-quality consultation papers, reports and other publications across our programme of law reform.
- Engage constructively with Government around new ministerial references and emerging law reform issues.

How we will achieve this

- Continue to maintain strong relationships with government departments, the Welsh Government, Parliament and wider stakeholders to ensure projects are well-scoped, properly resourced and relevant.
- Work in accordance with consistent, robust project delivery standards using the Law Reform Manual and other measures.
- Where appropriate, provide support to Government departments on Law Commission legislation going through Parliament, and respond in a timely way to Parliamentary requests.
- Review and deliver an up-to-date DEI strategy.

Promoting independent law reform and the rule of law domestically and internationally

Our work promotes clarity, fairness and accessibility in the law, contributing directly to a stronger rule of law. We will enhance the way we communicate the value of law reform in strengthening the rule of law. By doing so, we will reinforce our role as a leading law reform body with influence both domestically and internationally.

Objectives

- Build understanding and promote the value of law reform domestically.
- Build understanding and promote the value of law reform internationally.
- Build understanding of how law reform contributes to the rule of law.

How we will achieve this

- Promote accessible, clear, fair and effective legal frameworks through our projects.
- Deliver targeted international engagement aligned with our international strategy with other law reform agencies, and support jurisdictions developing their law reform by sharing our insights and best practice.
- Maintaining our active role within the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies to support collaboration and promote rule of law principles across Commonwealth jurisdictions.
- Continue to build on and deliver our communications strategy that amplifies our message on the value of law reform and the impact of our work.
- Maintain contact with others whose aims and deliverables are aligned with ours.

Ensuring Our Governance Foundations are Fit for the Future

Strong governance and institutional independence are essential foundations for our work. We will focus on safeguarding and strengthening our structures, leadership and assurance mechanisms to protect our independence and deliver credible, high-quality law reform.

Objectives

- Safeguard the Law Commission's independence, credibility and long-term effectiveness.
- Protect and reinforce the Law Commission's operational independence through stable funding and transparent sponsorship arrangements.
- Ensure leadership continuity and capability through effective governance of public appointments.
- Strengthen governance and operational standards.

How we will achieve this

- Review the recommendations of the 2025 Board Effectiveness Review.
- Work with the Ministry of Justice to review the funding model and protocol, ensuring funding arrangements do not undermine perceived or actual independence and aligning resources more clearly with statutory purpose and priorities.
- Appoint and support an effective induction and transition for new Board members and the Chair.
- Continue to mature the organisation's corporate functions and governance, ensuring that we meet appropriate public body standards without unnecessary bureaucracy.

Equipping Our People to Deliver Expert and Independent Law Reform

Our success relies on attracting, developing and retaining a skilled and motivated workforce. We will continue to invest in our people and create an environment that supports high-quality work through modern tools, collaborative processes and a working space that enables teams to perform at their best.

Objectives

- Build and maintain a sustainable workforce with the capability needed to deliver high-quality law reform.
- Build capability to use AI and other digital tools to enhance delivery while safeguarding quality and integrity.
- Ensure our physical and virtual working environments support delivery of our statutory purpose.
- Build resilience in our people and our organisational systems, ensuring we can adapt to changed circumstances.

How we will achieve this

- Continue to implement our recruitment strategy and workforce planning to build a diverse and sustainable workforce.
- Continue to develop and use an AI and technology strategy to support, rather than replace, professional judgement, focusing on productivity gains in low-risk, high-burden tasks while building organisational understanding of the opportunities and limits of these tools.
- Enhance organisational resilience by embedding trauma-informed approaches, supported by workshops and training that help staff develop the awareness and skills needed when working with sensitive subject matter and stakeholder groups.
- Identify a new head office space following the planned exit of 102 Petty France.
- Implement recommendations of the external review of our operating model to ensure projects are resourced appropriately.