

## FINAL

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### **Now it's eight new laws every day!**

∞ 14% increase in the amount of legislation introduced in just one year

Research from leading legal information providers Sweet & Maxwell reveals that the UK Government introduced 14% more new laws during 2007 than in 2006. According to figures taken from Sweet & Maxwell's online legal information services, Westlaw UK and Lawtel, it is estimated that 3,071 new laws were introduced in 2007, compared to 2,702 in 2006. That works out at eight new laws every day versus seven during the previous year.

The figures suggest that the Government has lost little of its appetite for introducing new legislation despite a change of leadership midway through 2007 as Gordon Brown took over from Tony Blair as Prime Minister.

According to Sweet & Maxwell over 1,000 of the new laws introduced last year impact on areas of commercial law.<sup>1</sup> Critics have said that the Government's tendency to introduce new legislation has left businesses struggling to stay current with rules and regulation.

Despite repeated promises to cut down on red tape the figures suggest that UK businesses continue to be overwhelmed by new laws.

New legislation relating to criminal law accounted for 14% of all legislation introduced during 2007. Sweet & Maxwell says that relatively high levels of new criminal laws can continue to be expected as opinion polls suggest voters increasingly perceive that the problem of violent crime is worsening.

The Government recently announced plans to force anyone convicted of carrying a knife to attend a weapons awareness course and has raised the legal age for buying a knife to 18 years old. New strategies on under-age drinking, drugs and anti-social behaviour have also been announced, including proposals for a new offence to tackle the problem of young people found repeatedly to be in possession of alcohol.

Under Margaret Thatcher an average of 1,724 new laws were introduced every year of her premiership. Tony Blair introduced an average of 2,663.

87% of legislation introduced during 2007 was introduced as a statutory instrument. Legal commentators claim that governments prefer to use this method to introduce new legislation because statutory instruments often receive less scrutiny than statutes as they tend to receive less parliamentary debating time. However, opposition parties argue that new legislation introduced in this way escapes adequate scrutiny.

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Notes to Editors:

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<sup>1</sup> England & Wales only

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