



**SIGNS INDICATE UK GOVERNMENT HAS REDUCED THE BURDEN OF NEW LEGISLATION
OVER THE LAST YEAR**

Lowest level of changes since 2002

London, UK, MAY 2012 – Last year saw the burden of new government legislation in the UK fall to its lowest level since 2002 says Sweet & Maxwell, a Thomson Reuters business and leading provider of legal information

According to Sweet & Maxwell the number of changes to existing legislation caused by new laws fell 16percent to 25,708 amendments in 2011, compared to 30,614 amendments in the previous year.

The analysis, using Westlaw UK, Sweet & Maxwell's online service, also showed that the absolute number of new laws* (Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments) fell by 8 percent to 1,727 new laws in 2011, down from 1,872 in 2010 (adjusted to remove minor legislation relating to work on roads and motorways).

Sweet & Maxwell highlights that regardless of whether the measure used to assess new laws, either items of legislation, or the number of changes made to existing legislation, (and therefore the complexity added to the "statute books"), the data indicate a slackening in the pace of new legislative change.

The reduction in legislation is noteworthy as there has been a long term trend to increase legislation to deal with the increasing complexity of the modern world and to respond to calls on the Government to act

While governments might frequently announce an intention to reduce the burden of new legislation, in practice this can be very difficult to achieve. Sweet & Maxwell says that the coalition government in the UK has already committed to initiatives to cut the red-tape burden on businesses – which includes the introduction of a "one in one out" system for any new regulations that impose costs on businesses.

In addition, Sweet & Maxwell says that some of the major pieces of legislation introduced over the last year were connected to the Government's austerity plans with the aim of reducing the deficit. Examples of specific public sector deficit related laws include:

- **Pensions Act**
Sets out changes to the ages when a state pension can be drawn, increasing it to the age of 66 by 2020.
- **Public Bodies Act**
Enables Government ministers to reduce the overall number of public bodies by cutting the number of quangos.
- **The Localism Act**
Parts of the Localism Act set out a new, more restrictive, policy on pay and remuneration for senior local authority executives. Other parts of the legislation give local government more power over housing and planning decisions.

Other significant legislation that was introduced in 2011 includes:

- **The Energy Act**



Sets out provisions for the arrangement and financing of energy efficiency improvements in households, non-domestic properties, the private rental sector and energy companies through the Energy Company obligation

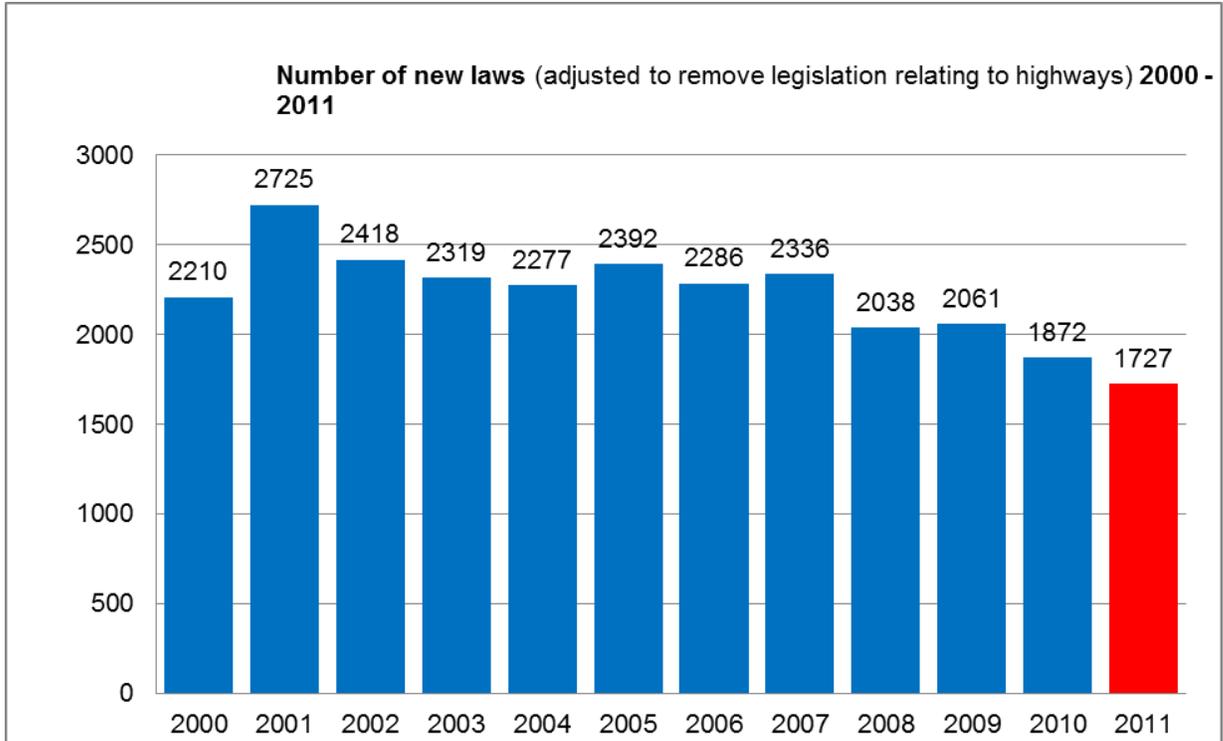
- **European Union Act**

Aims to restrict the influence of EU Law in the UK by proposing that a national referendum is held on any future changes to EU Treaties that moves an area of policy from the UK to the EU.

- **The Charities Act**

Sets out how all charities in England and Wales must be registered and regulated. Requires all fundraising bodies to be licensed.

Year	Amendments applied to existing legislative documents within Westlaw UK
2000	20,183
2001	19,422
2002	23,890
2003	29,108
2004	26,231
2005	34,681
2006	32,690
2007	31,275
2008	27,372
2009	28,372
2010	30,614
2011	25,708



Sweet & Maxwell points out that one way in which legislation can be passed without being subject to full parliamentary scrutiny is to pass the legislation as a “statutory instrument.” Analysis from Sweet & Maxwell’s online Westlaw service shows that in 2011, 99percent of new Laws were passed as statutory instruments.

* Using Westlaw and Lawtel, Sweet & Maxwell has analysed the number of laws that have been introduced by Governments. The numbers included cover:

- **Statutes:** A written law that has been passed by a Parliament or similar legislative body. Statutes are proposed by a member of parliament and are subject to full parliamentary debate.
- **Statutory instruments:** A by-law or order issued by a Government to enact or enforce a specific statute. A statutory instrument can be used to provide the necessary detail to support the implementation of an Act of Parliament but which would be too complex to include in the Act itself. Statutory instruments are also used to amend and update existing Acts and are not usually subject to full parliamentary debate.

Sweet & Maxwell has defined a new law as a statute or statutory instrument that has been introduced within the Houses of Parliament in Westminster and the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. To provide a better reflection of legislative trends, legislation enacted in the Northern Irish assembly has been excluded.



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