Law Commission
Reforming the law

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REFORMING THE LAW – 40 YEARS ON

> "English Law should be capable of being recast in a form which is accessible, intelligible and in accordance with modern needs"

This statement from the 1965 White Paper, which proposed the establishment of the Law Commission, is as true today as when it was written. The Commission's principal objective remains to make the law accessible, fair and relevant to those who are affected by it.

The great challenge the Commission faces is to find a way to secure Parliamentary time for considering its recommendations. In recent Parliaments, under Governments of either party, the deluge of legislation has both increased the complexity of the law and made it more difficult to obtain Parliamentary time for tackling the problems of over complicated and out-of-date law.

In its Annual Report, published today, the Law Commission notes that there are currently 26 reports awaiting implementation. Fourteen of them, dating back to 1991, have been accepted by the Government often to be implemented "when Parliamentary time becomes available".

During the course of the 40th year there have been a wide variety of high profile events, most notably the inaugural Scarman Lecture held in February in honour of the first Chairman. We also held a three-month exhibition in the Royal Courts of Justice, which covered the History of Law Reform, and encouraged people to get involved in changing the law.

The Commission has also led the debate on how to reform the law of Homicide, launching a full consultation in January. The report to Government is due later this year.

Notes for Editors

1. The Law Commission is a non-political independent body, set up by Parliament in 1965 to keep all the law of England and Wales under review, and to recommend reform where it is needed.
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