

New law will allow lawyers more scope in business

Reform of the legal services marketplace, which has now cleared the final stage of the Scottish parliamentary process, will allow solicitors to explore new business opportunities, according to the Law Society of Scotland.

The Legal Services (Scotland) Bill received royal assent on Monday 9 November. The Act will, for the first time, allow non-solicitors to set up in partnership with solicitors to provide legal services in Scotland.

Society President Jamie Millar said: "Now the Bill has been enacted, solicitors around the country can better explore the new opportunities that are available.

"It will take some time to judge the full effects of the reforms but the Society is working hard to ensure a rigorous regulatory regime is established and the principles and core values that underpin the Scottish solicitors' profession are maintained and promoted.

"The intention of these changes is to broaden access to legal services and allow the profession to remain competitive in an international marketplace during challenging economic circumstances.

"The Society will work with the Scottish Government and others to ensure the changes enhance the provision of legal services and access to justice for people in Scotland."

The Act will mean solicitors and other regulated professionals must still have a majority share of at least 51% in any new form of legal business permitted by the Act, with the remaining 49% open to other external investors.