Small Business Legal Needs Survey 2026 wave: Key Findings

36% experience at least one legal issue per year

16m legal issues per year

A greater volume of legal issues +1m annually

2.8 issues per business (42% experience multiple legal issues

Only a minority go to independent professional advice

External business friends 28%

Family & friends 10%

AI 8%

Independent advisor 23%

A reliance on trusted advisors as main help

Only 9% used a Solictor -7%p

Tax Advisor 16% +11%p

Accountant 19%

Negative impacts are common

Loss of Income 22%

Can't take on work 10%

Loss of a Customer 8%

Wider economic loss

Can't invest or innovate 22%

Supply chain issues 14%

Incur costs getting late payment 35%

High unmet needs in those with legal needs

Have a Legal Need: **11.2%**

Resulted in a Unmet Need: **9.4%**

There are notable positive devlopments

Increase in shopping around

Now - 48% **+(20%p)**

More small business have high legal confidence & access to Justice +7%p & 8%p

The LSB Recomends:

1. Tackle issues that most limit economic growth
2. Make legal capability part of business capability
3. Make support easier to use and access

Legal Services Board, legalservicesboard.org.uk

Based on responses from 10,352 small businesses