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REGULATE CLAIMS FARMERS, APIL TELLS CLEMENTI

Claims management companies must be included in future regulation of the legal profession, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) has told the 'Clementi' review.

Commenting on the association's response paper, APIL president Colin Ettinger said the 5,000-strong group had called for a 'B+Plus' regulatory model – citing transparency, scrutiny and protection of consumers as the key to its success.

"Clementi's B+ model would see retention by the professions of the current regulatory structures, but with separation of regulatory and representative functions, and with a Legal Services Board overseeing regulation," said Ettinger. "We want to build on this model so that, crucially, all legal service providers are included, in particular, claims management companies."

"It is essential that consumers are protected," he went on. "APIL's B+Plus model will ensure all legal service providers will be subject to the same standards of scrutiny and transparency - something which is long overdue."

According to Ettinger, the association's model will effectively reduce any potential for conflict of interest between regulatory and representative roles, and will ensure the continued independence of the legal professions.

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APIL also believes that setting and enforcing a quality standard, which reaches across the profession, will protect consumers further still.

“Consumer protection must be at the forefront of the new regime,” he said. “APIL’s training arm, the College of Personal Injury Law (CPIL), is in itself a quality kitemark, and could provide an ideal template for the development of these standards which, once in place, should be policed by the regulator.”

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