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AP 253

CLAIMS FARMERS MUST BE REGULATED, WARNS LAWYERS GROUP

Unregulated claims farmers who canvas people in the street for personal injury claims, must face regulation, a leading lawyers group has warned.

Responding to a Government review about the regulation of the legal services industry, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said it is time that claims management companies are subjected to the same rules and regulations as qualified personal injury lawyers.

“People do not realise that there is a world of difference between a claims farmer and a qualified solicitor,” said APIL president, Colin Ettinger. “We are as concerned as everyone else about those who approach people in the street or on their doorsteps, touting for business – they are not lawyers, they have no legal training and what’s more, there is absolutely no need for an injured person to go through one of these claims farmers to process a claim.”

APIL has long called for proper regulation of the companies which handle these claims, and is hoping the Government will now take action.

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AP253/2

“It is crucial that the activities of these companies are monitored so that injured people are protected from any unscrupulous operators,” said Colin. “The most important thing is that people know where to find proper, qualified advice should they need it. Claims farmers are not qualified to advise on the validity of a claim, and processing a claim in this way may well generate extra, unnecessary costs for the injured person.

“It is high time this industry was brought under control,” he said.

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Note to editors: APIL has launched a Consumer Charter (enc), which acts as an extra guarantee to injured people that their claim will be handled professionally and sympathetically. All APIL members are being asked to pledge their support to the Consumer Charter, and to give a copy to each client. The Charter highlights the differences between a qualified solicitor and a claims farmer.

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