

# JUSTICE PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

## Professional values need more protection

Professional values of independence and the obligation to act in the best interest of a client need more protection that is offered in the draft Legal Services Bill, JUSTICE argued today.

The Bill lists a number of 'regulatory objectives' of which the maintenance of 'professional principles' is only one out seven. These will guide the intervention of the Legal Services Board in potentially overriding rules drawn up by professional bodies like the General Council of the Bar and the Law Society. JUSTICE argues that can be no qualification of the duty on a lawyer to act with integrity and in the best interests of a client, however much the form of delivery of such professional services is opened to competition.

JUSTICE's submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee considering the Bill deals only with the issue of the protection of legal professional principles. It takes no view on other matters relating to the detail of regulation. The submission is attached.

Roger Smith, JUSTICE's director, said:

'The Draft Legal Services Bill sets out a "pick'n mix" set of objectives for the new super-regulator. Professional principles are apparently ranked as important as the promotion of competition or public legal education. This is both daft and dangerous.'

For further information: ring Roger Smith (wk 020 7762 6412 or mobile 07785 781 030). JUSTICE is an all-party organisation dedicated to advancing access to justice, human rights and the rule of law. It includes both barristers and solicitors among its members and council.

*Chairman of Council* **Lord Steyn**

*Director* **Roger Smith**

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