

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cunningham training trial

The Loss Adjusting Services division within Cunningham Lindsey UK is piloting a 12-month development programme, structured to train, coach and support staff so that they can gain the skills and grounding they need to further their career within the loss adjusting profession. The likelihood of a future skills shortage has been mooted in many areas of the industry and 'Prosper', introduced by the company's learning and development team, has been designed to help regenerate the in-house resource of up and coming, specifically trained adjusters for each level within Cunningham Lindsey's business.

Daniel Stewart to advise

AIM-listed claims services company The Claims People has announced the appointment of Daniel Stewart and Company as nominated adviser and broker to the group. This appointment is with immediate effect and follows announcements in early March of a share placement and boardroom reshuffle at the company.

GAB regulation warning

GAB Robins has briefed its clients on the dangers of ignoring the new Construction Design and Management regulations. In a recent presentation to around 50 clients, the loss adjuster also spelt out what effect the regulations will have on claims. GAB's lead CDM co-ordinator, Jim Simmonds outlined what procedural and operational changes need to be made to accommodate these new regulations, which came into force on 6 April, and will lead to insurers coming under closer scrutiny from the Health and Safety Executive.

Promotions at Fletchers

Specialist insurance law firm Fletchers Solicitors has appointed Richard Neve as marketing manager and promoted Dan Taylor to the newly created role of operations manager. Mr Neve's previous career includes positions as marketing consultant with local radio station Dune FM, marketing team manager with

CTC aims for global growth after divisional re-brand

CHARLES Taylor Consulting has re-branded its global loss adjusting business in a bid to grow its £35m revenues.

The group's five loss adjusting divisions, Bateman Chapman, CTC Aviation, CTC Marine, CTC Non-Marine and LCL Loss Adjusting will collectively trade under the

name Charles Taylor Adjusting with a combined office network of 47 offices and 420 staff. Loss adjusting services made up 45% of the group's revenues in 2006.

Joe McMahon, CTC's chief executive, told *Post* the firm had no plans to cut staff but may realise efficiency savings

in finance and administration functions.

He added that the firm's ambition was to grow in key geographical areas, such as the US, Latin America and the Far East. "We have created a platform for expansion with a unified board for the first time. We are looking to take

on new people and a world there are opportunities to acquire business office consolidation necessary where we don't anticipate losing. However we will also open up in new locations as New York."

Insurers close to agreement on crisis claims protocol

BY TANYA POWLEY

THE Property Claims Forum's bid to draw up a protocol for dealing with domestic claims arising from disasters is likely to be finalised in the coming months.

Speaking at the *Post* Property Management Briefing, Royal Bank of Scotland technical controller Doug Shaw said it was hoping to get an agreement on the draft protocol following a PCF meeting this week.

"There have been several problems getting the draft protocol finalised, such as issues with the supply chain and insurers wanting to keep their competitive edge", Mr Shaw said.

"But I think we should just look at the initial stage of the proceedings. Hopefully we will see not just one insurer get all the headlines, but we'll



have a good collective image of the insurance industry."

Mr Shaw stated the Association of British Insurers' property committee was also interested in the protocol. However, Mr Shaw said he could not say when the final

The PCF hopes to finalise new claims protocols to deal with disasters such as Boscastle.

protocol would be ready. He hoped it would be soon.

The PCF represents all of the household insurers and is made up of insurers, adjusters and damage management companies.

Weightmans' profits up as it rings the changes

INSURANCE law firm Weightmans has marked its year end with a hat-trick of announcements — record turnover, conversion to limited liability partnership status, and a new corporate identity.

The company, which has offices in Birmingham,

Leicester, Liverpool, London and Manchester posted turnover of £43.8m for the year ending 30 April 2006, a rise from £37.5m in the previous year.

Patrick Gaul, Weightmans' managing partner, said: "Our key practice areas have all

performed well and we have also been successful in a number of competitive tender processes, which bodes well for the year ahead.

"It's been an excellent twelve months for the firm and we are delighted with the progress we are making."

The firm's new identity has been managed by director of marketing Jane Howitt.

"While the legal structure of the firm has changed our plan is the same — to be the leading national law firm. We concluded senior partner Evans.

Fraud focus: regulating the claims farmers

It is widely accepted that one of the main contributors to the cost of insurance fraud is the ancillary services industry that has built up around insurance claims. Often linked together under the umbrella term of 'accident management' services, this multi-million pound industry has attracted its fair share of unscrupulous traders and was left unregulated for too long. However, as of 23 April the full effect of the claims management regulatory regime has been in force and it is now prohibited to provide 'claims management services' unless either authorised or when an exemption has been granted.

For the purposes of the regulations, claims management services include activities such as providing claims advice, advertising, marketing and providing representation. However, the regulations are designed to capture previously unregulated businesses that operate in this sector, so businesses that provide these services but are already subject to another form of regulation, such as lawyers, charities and trade unions, are exempt from regulation.

products and services. According to a recent report released by the Department for Constitutional Affairs — the body responsible for overseeing regulation — the market in respect of personal injury is worth in the region of £190m a year. The report goes on to set out findings that will be all too familiar to the insurance industry, including the fact that there is substantial scope for malpractice including marketing for injury claims in hospitals and controlling accidents leading to fraudulent claims.

The insurance industry has a major part to play in alerting regulators to unauthorised businesses that are trading illegally. Insurance claims handlers will interface directly with businesses purporting to provide claims management services and it is expected, to a large extent, be the eyes and ears of the regulator. In part be reliant upon external reports. Removing these businesses from the market can only be a positive step and, thankfully, applicable legislation has the teeth to take decisive action.