



**April 2014**

**To regional and local newspapers**

Sir,

This week marks 25 years since the Hillsborough stadium tragedy. Civil cases brought by the victims' relatives who suffered psychiatric damage after the deaths of their loved one enshrined the law on psychiatric harm which is still applied today. Sometimes the death of a loved one can cause trauma which extends beyond grief, and can be as debilitating as any physical injury. Thankfully, events like Hillsborough are few and far between.

But as it stands, vulnerable people with such mental illnesses are subjected to unreasonable demands if they wish to claim recompense. The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) of which I am president, is calling for change to the law which has remained out-of-touch and unfair to victims for too long.

It is time the law recognised the fact that you do not need to have a parental or marital relationship to love someone and suffer real mental harm if they are killed or injured; you do not need to be shocked to suffer psychiatric injury, and you do not need to be standing next to someone when they are killed or injured to be traumatised.

MPs are now beginning to lend their support to a motion for the Government to take action. Let's hope the Government takes notice.

Matthew Stockwell

President of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL)