

## MAJOR SHAKE UP GIVES CORONERS CLOUT

27 March 2008

New measures announced by the Government today (27 March) to update the creaking coroners' system will have a major impact on preventing needless deaths.

Coroners will now have strengthened powers to force those who cause deaths to explain themselves – and spell out what they are going to do to prevent the same thing happening again. Lawyers dealing with bereaved families have welcomed the announcement, saying people will finally have to sit up and take notice of what a coroner says following a death.

“These measures will help give the coroners system the shake up it so badly needs,” said Martin Bare, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL). “There is absolutely no point in coroners making recommendations if they are not going to be followed up. What we need is for those who cause deaths – negligent employers, for example – to make it clear what measures they have taken to avoid the same thing happening again. There will now be a greater obligation on those who cause a death to act upon what the coroner says,” said Martin.

APIL is calling for all coroners' reports, and the responses provided by the guilty party, to be published in full, so that it is clear what recommendations have been made, and what action has been taken following a death. “Bereaved families, and the general public, have a right to know what an organisation has done to prevent the same thing happening again,” said Martin.

“Today's announcement is obviously welcomed, but what we need now is for the Coroners Bill to be brought before Parliament as soon as possible.”

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Note to editors:

- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) was established in 1990 by a group of lawyers working on behalf of personal injury victims and now has more than 5,000 members. APIL campaigns for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.

APIL's announcement is based upon a government news release, which can be found here:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/newsrelease270308a.htm>

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Further information can also be found at the organisation's website- [www.apil.org.uk](http://www.apil.org.uk)