



COURTS SHAKE UP MUST PUT INJURED FIRST

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A robust court structure which puts injured people first must lie at the heart of the Civil Courts Review, according to lawyers.

Root and branch reform of the civil justice system is unnecessary when the tools for reform are already at hand, said the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), at the end of the review's formal three month consultation period.

"While we'd like to see a system in which people who are needlessly injured can receive proper compensation without litigation, such a world is a long way off," said APIL's co-ordinator in Scotland, Ronnie Conway.

"For those people who are forced to take their claims to the courts, we need an extension of the Court of Session's 'Coultsfield' rules into the sheriff courts, so we have a unified approach throughout the system which uses a tried and tested - and very successful and efficient - formula.

"But there is also much we can do to encourage early resolution of personal injury cases to the benefit of the injured person," he went on.

The association has recommended injured people should have access to rehabilitation to minimise the effects of any injuries.

“Rehabilitation is extremely important,” said Ronnie. “What we want is for people to regain, as far as possible, the quality of life they had before they were injured.

“We also want independent legal advice to be available for everyone, and for documents and information about the case to be made available so that early decisions can be made about a possible solution,” he said.

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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 on the consultation: “Scottish Civil Courts Review”, published by the Court of Session, which can be found here:

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/civilcourtsreview/SCCCompleteR.pdf>

APIL’s full response to the consultation can be found here:

<http://files.apil.org.uk/pdf/ConsultationDocuments/988.pdf>

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Further information can also be found at the organisation’s website- www.apil.org.uk

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