

# VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME MAY FACE COMPENSATION BLOW

June 2008

Compensation awarded to Northern Ireland's crime victims could be slashed by thousands of pounds if new Government proposals go ahead.

Plans to reduce the amount of compensation paid by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme have met with fierce opposition from lawyers acting for people injured through violent crimes. Stephen Gray, representative for the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), said the proposed scheme meant victims would receive substantially less compensation than they do at present, making it much more difficult to get their lives back on track

"Compensating our victims of violent crime should not be just a token gesture," said Stephen. "The compensation they receive should help them, as far as money can, to get back to the position they were in before they were injured.

"The Government wants to bring compensation into line with that awarded in Great Britain, but this would mean slicing thousands of pounds off some awards," Stephen said. "Someone who has been blinded, for example, would receive £65,000 less under the new proposals."

With violent crime in Northern Ireland rising by nine per cent over the past ten years, Stephen says the need for adequate levels of compensation has never been greater.

"The awards made to crime victims are already significantly lower than those made in the civil courts, so to cut them even further is unthinkable. What message is this sending to the innocent people whose lives are ruined through violent crimes?," Stephen said.

The Government's consultation on this issue closes today (4 June)

-ends-

Note to editors:

APIL responded to the consultation paper by the Northern Ireland Office: Proposed Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Scheme 2009

For more information, contact Lisa Wardle, t: 0115 9388715, or Lorraine Gwinnutt, t:0115 9388707.

- 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.

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

-