

NEW APIL PRESIDENT TAKES A STAND AGAINST CLAIMS CRITICS

New APIL president John McQuater will this week reinforce the organisation's "zero tolerance" policy against those who imply it is wrong for injured people to take action.

Taking a stand at APIL's annual conference, John, a high street lawyer from Doncaster, will remind members that their skill and tenacity has given injured people equal access to the law, along with Government and big business, despite ten years of change and challenge which could have "seriously diminished" this right.

John will remind those who levy criticisms at claimants and their lawyers of the fundamental right to claim compensation, and will tell delegates: "Our job is not just about a process but about people...It may be that those driven purely by commercial instincts simply fail to understand there may be those who try to put people first."

Addressing the so-called costs war, John will say: "It is ironic to be faced with technical challenge after technical challenge, so that great care is necessary in order to recover costs and maintain a viable business, and then have the accusation levelled that all claimant lawyers are concerned about is our own costs..."

"I really do not think those insurance lawyers fighting the costs war in the comfort zone of risk free retainers are in any position to pass judgment on the value of work we do."

Outlining his priorities for his forthcoming year as president, John will warn the Government that APIL will not leave the issue of damages alone, saying he would like to know why, two years after a major Ministry of Justice consultation, there has still been no response from the Government. He will also continue with the fight to secure justice for those injured workers unable to claim compensation because they cannot trace their former employer's insurer.

APIL's conference will take place on Thursday 23 and Friday 24 April, at The Celtic Manor Resort in Newport.

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For more information, please contact Lisa Wardle, Press & PR Officer, APIL, telephone: 0115 9388715, or email lisa.wardle@apil.org.uk