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URGENT ACTION NEEDED FOR INJURED WORKERS

A new system for providing compensation for sick and dying workers must be a top priority for the next Government, says the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

In its response to the Government's Accessing Compensation consultation, which closes tomorrow (May 5) APIL urges the Government to set up both a fund of last resort for employers' liability (EL) claims, and a compulsory database of insurance information.

The response stresses that such a system must be overseen by the Government, to provide the longevity and certainty needed to resolve this problem. "Only an independent approach will guarantee injured people a system which will avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and will stand the test of time. This is crucial for victims and their families," said APIL president Muiris Lyons.

"All employees have the right to go to work and come home unharmed," he said. "But, when they are injured or made ill by their employers, they must be able to claim fair compensation for their injuries.

"To do this, they need to be able to trace the insurers of their employers, but in too many cases, particularly when the employer has gone out of business, this cannot be done, either because policy information has not been properly preserved or because the current tracing system, administered by the ABI just does not work."

APIL has long argued for a fund of last resort to act as a safety net for people who cannot claim compensation for workplace injury and disease, backed by a compulsory database of employers' liability insurance policies. "We have a similar system in place for the millions of drivers on our roads," said Lyons. "There is no excuse for failing to treat workers in the same way."

"It is also crucial that both a fund and a database are introduced at the same time to provide proper protection for vulnerable people," he said.



“Many of the worst-affected people have asbestos-related diseases and die without receiving the compensation which could provide some comfort in their last months of life. Employers’ liability insurance is, after all, a compulsory insurance designed to provide for such an eventuality, yet too many workers are dying without receiving proper redress.”

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Note to editors:

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