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## **GRIEVING PEOPLE SIDELINED IN PUBLIC BODY REFORMS**

Bereaved families will continue to be let down by England's archaic and inefficient coroners system, says a national campaign group of lawyers.

Not-for-profit APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) condemned the Government's move to axe the Office of Chief Coroner as part of its cost-cutting cull of public bodies.

"A Chief Coroner would have provided leadership, accountability, and the expertise to impose consistent standards," said APIL president David Bott.

"The duties will now be absorbed by the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice – neither of whom are coroners themselves."

Currently, coroners are largely left to their own devices, and grieving families have no proper appeals system to which to turn. The position of Chief Coroner was created by the previous Government to reform and govern the system, but the plans never came into effect.

"The previous Government recognised that problems were serious enough to create the new role. But some of its duties have now been abandoned and others will be passed to other public bodies, and this is not nearly adequate," said David.

"Common sense suggests that a properly resourced Office of Chief Coroner, able to co-ordinate facilities, structure budgets and cut delays, would be more cost effective than the haphazard, largely unsupervised and fragmented system we currently have.

"And bereaved families and witnesses need the Government to do what is right, and not just what is cheap."



#### Notes for editors

- APIL responded to the consultation on reforms proposed in the Public Bodies Bill, which closed on 11 October 2011. Read the full response here: <http://files.apil.org.uk/pdf/ConsultationDocuments/2260.pdf>
- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation whose members campaign for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.
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