



17 April 2012

Lawyers' leader calls on Government for a fair deal for injured people

Insurers and the Government will be challenged to face up to their responsibilities for injured people at a major legal conference this week.

Karl Tonks, incoming president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) will tell delegates at the association's annual conference on Thursday (19 April) that the legal system must deliver fair compensation to those who need it, who deserve it, and who are entitled to it.

"We have a system where insurers can contest claims until the eve of an expensive trial, cause significant costs to be incurred unnecessarily, and make an innocently injured person wait unreasonably long for the compensation he may desperately need," he will say. "Then those same insurers pass those wasted costs on to their customers in the form of higher premiums."

Tonks will describe as a 'terrible dysfunction' the fact that many people suffering from industrial diseases are unable to claim compensation because they cannot trace the insurers of the employers who have injured them. "The path to compensation for many claimants is littered with broken promises," he will say. "It's obvious what needs to be done. We need a fund of last resort. The insurance industry needs to start paying what it should pay."

He will also call for injured people to be treated as individuals instead of statistics, challenging the Government to listen not just to its own supporters, to big business and to the insurance industry, "but also to those who are dying of asbestos related disease; to the



families of those who have died in accidents at work; to those who are catastrophically injured in road traffic collisions.

“If, as we are told, we are all in this together,” he will say, “then they, most of all deserve to be listened to and heard.”

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Notes to editors:

- Full copies of Karl Tonks’ speech will be available from 2pm on Thursday, 19 April.
- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.
- For more information please contact the APIL press office on 0115 943 5409 or 0115 943 5416.
- Visit the association’s website at www.apil.org.uk.