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Government must listen to dying workers, say lawyers

A concession in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Bill must amount to more than Government lip-service, lawyers have warned.

With the Bill now due for Royal Assent, the Government has agreed not to introduce changes to 'no-win, no-fee' in respect of victims of the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma, until there has been a review of the potential impact of the changes on these claimants.

"While this concession is welcome, it is critical that this is a genuine review and not simply a delay in implementing the Government's original proposals," said Karl Tonks, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

Tonks called on policymakers to be willing to listen to all those who help to look after mesothelioma victims. "They can start by recognising that it will be impossible to conduct an accurate review of the impact of the proposals without a clear picture of what the Government intends to do about qualified one-way cost shifting," he said.

"Until the Government is clear about that and other issues, such as how the after-the-event insurance market will actually work, and until proper research into the potential impact is undertaken, policymakers will just be stumbling around in the dark."

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Notes to editors:

- 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.
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