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Crime victims denied access to justice by compensation cuts

Government proposals to stop compensation payments to some injured crime victims have been branded 'arbitrary and unfair' by a not-for-profit campaign group.

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) has urged the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to ditch its proposals to end compensation payments for claims below £2,500 and to significantly reduce payments for claims below £11,000.

"Claims below £2,500 can involve people suffering permanent injuries, such as scarring, which often have a damaging impact on their lives," said Karl Tonks, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL). "It is only right that these people are allowed to bring valid claims for redress.

"Equally, a victim with a claim below £11,000 may have been caused a serious injury, such as a broken arm or a leg, and may need to take several months off work in order to recover from it.

"The origins of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme lay in the need for the state to recognise its failure to protect citizens effectively," he went on. "Not only do these people need proper financial redress to help them meet their daily living expenses while they are recovering, but they need to know that the injustice which has been done to them is properly recognised."

In its response to the MoJ's consultation 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses', APIL also highlighted that the maximum award for injured victims of crime has not been increased for the past 16 years.



“Crime victims with the most severe injuries may require care for the rest of their lives,” said Karl. “The cap of £500,000 is nowhere near enough, in many cases, to meet the cost of their on-going medical and care needs.

“Even if the Government had only increased the cap in line with inflation the limit would now be more than £786,000, which is significantly more than the current cap.

“The Government, in its reforms of civil justice, must stop to consider the needs of innocent victims and recognise that they need and deserve full and proper compensation. But by cutting crime victims’ compensation, the MoJ is cutting their access to justice.”

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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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