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Teenaged crime victim backs campaign against compensation cuts

A teenaged girl, who had to wear a neck brace for up to eight weeks following an attack in Fife, has backed a not-for-profit group's campaign against Government proposals to cut compensation payments for victims of crime.

Caitlin Moore, 16, says it is "unfair" that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is proposing to end payments for claims below £2,500, and significantly reduce payments for claims below £11,000.

"I don't think it's fair at all," said Caitlin, who was left with two black eyes and a neck injury after being beaten up at random by a gang of seven girls in Lochore Meadows Country Park.

"I was in a lot of pain. It really affected me. But the compensation made me feel like I was getting something back."

Caitlin, who was walking in the park with a friend in January last year when the attack happened, was also left with a split lip, internal bruising, and a stiff back.

"I really don't know what happened," said Caitlin, who recently moved to Benson in Oxfordshire with her mother and stepfather from their home in Glenrothes.

"I didn't know the girls. As we walked passed them, I just remember one of them punching me in the face and then the others joined in. I had a lot of injuries. My eyes were so swollen I couldn't even open them. I had counselling because I didn't want to go out and about by myself."



Caitlin brought a claim for £2,800 against the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. Under Government's proposals to reduce compensation payments for criminal injuries, she would receive less than half that amount.

Caitlin's mother, Victoria Littlejohn, 39, said: "It affected the whole family. Caitlin was in a lot of pain and felt nervous leaving the house for a long time afterwards. The compensation is in recognition of what she has been through. I think it's terrible that they're looking to cut it for people who have been genuinely hurt."

Karl Tonks, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said: "It is only right that injured victims of crime are allowed to bring valid claims for proper redress. But by cutting crime victims' compensation, the Government 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.
- To interview Caitlin Moore, Victoria Littlejohn or Karl Tonks, or for more information, contact Chris Birkle, press and communications officer, t: 0115 943 5409, e: chris.birkle@apil.org.uk, or Jane Hartwell, press and communications officer, t: 0115 943 5416, e: jane.hartwell@apil.org.uk.
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