

**29 May 2012**

### **Government attacked for rushing compensation reforms**

Lawyers have criticised the Government for rushing reforms of the compensation system and say the “aggressive timetable” may compromise access to justice for injured people.

In its response to a call for evidence on proposals to extend the streamlined process for lower value road traffic accident (RTA) claims, not-for-profit campaigners the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) warned that unless proper time is taken to prepare the foundations for an extension: “we fear the measures will fail”.

“The Government is determined to extend the current streamlined process by April 2013, but none of the groundwork has been done properly and we are seriously concerned that most of the decisions appear to have been taken before the consultation has ended,” said APIL president Karl Tonks.

In particular, APIL criticised the Government for:

- Allowing insufficient time to procure, build and test the necessary computer systems
- Drafting protocols and rules for a committee to examine at a meeting scheduled to take place before the consultation period had closed
- Repeatedly failing to publish an independent report which assessed the success of the existing streamlined scheme and its impact on access to justice

“We know from experience that agreeing a process and developing a suitable IT system takes around 18 months,” he went on.

“Rushing changes through for implementation in April next year is unrealistic and risks undermining the justice system for thousands of very deserving people.



“The truth is there is no evidence that the costs are too high. They are only being reviewed by the Government at the request of insurers who stand to gain from reduced costs. Yet costs were slashed only two years ago, and did that affect the premiums of ordinary people? Of course not.

“One of the key responsibilities a Government has is to listen. Not just to the insurance industry, but to all the parties involved. If we truly are ‘all in this together’ then the needs of genuine victims of injury need to be listened to and heard.”

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Notes to editors:

- APIL’s comments were submitted in its response to the Ministry of Justice’s (MoJ) call for evidence ‘Extension of the Road Traffic Accident scheme to include employers’ and public liability claims up to the value of £25,000’, which closed on Friday 25 May.
- 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](http://www.apil.org.uk).
- Follow us on Twitter: @APIL.