



**November 2012**

### **Legal loopholes put workers at risk of injury**

Injuries inflicted with needles and other sharp instruments in the healthcare sector could be avoided if regulatory loopholes were closed, campaigners said today.

In response to a consultation, the not-for-profit Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) has called on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) not to water down but to implement in full a European Directive to prevent so-called 'sharp injuries'.

"A medical worker who is pricked by a needle, for instance, can suffer life-changing consequences if he becomes infected with Hepatitis B or HIV," said APIL president Karl Tonks.

"So it's imperative that proper measures are taken which help ensure that everything possible is done to prevent such incidents occurring."

In its response, APIL stated that the draft regulations were ambiguous and contained loopholes which may leave some workers unprotected.

"If, as proposed, the regulations only apply to an employer whose 'main activity' is healthcare, then an organisation which provides healthcare services as well as services in other sectors, like aviation for instance, may be exempt from the regulations altogether," Karl went on. "Surely this would undermine the entire point of having regulations in the first place, as they are meant to ensure people's safety across the board."



“It’s a huge disappointment that the draft regulations fall so short of the European Directive. But this is the latest example of the Government’s attitude towards health and safety which is more about cutting what is perceived to be red tape than ensuring people’s safety.”

-Ends-

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
- 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)