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LAWYERS URGED TO PREPARE FOR BATTLE

Personal injury lawyers will be called to arms and urged to use every weapon in the armoury on behalf of injured people, at the annual conference of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers on Friday (May 10).

In a speech to delegates at the conference, incoming president Patrick Allen will outline a formidable agenda of issues for the forthcoming year and urge members to respond robustly to ill-informed attacks and misconceptions about claimant lawyers.

“An attack on lawyers always raises an easy laugh, but those laughing will stop on the day that they need to instruct a good lawyer to represent them,” he will say.

Securing justice for victims of asbestos-related diseases and patients injured in hospital blunders; pushing for a new corporate manslaughter Bill; steering a course through the funding minefield to ensure access to justice is not diminished by the arguments of insurers; development of a new disaster bureau and ideas for a radical new coronial system are just some of the issues Allen plans to grapple with during his presidency.

“We must never lose sight of the fact that we are working for justice for accident victims which we will achieve by efficient and workable court procedures, damages which properly compensate, modern safety procedures to prevent accidents and effective funding arrangements, providing experienced representation and access to the courts,” he will tell delegates.

He will attack the “ruthless way that insurers approach their business” and pledge to do everything possible to help asbestos victims receive full compensation for their injuries. Practical suggestions to reduce the cost of compensation claims against the NHS will be proposed, and the “critical” issues of funding outlined to delegates.

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And he will call on individuals to “go active” on the campaign trail. “You are the lawyers at the coalface who can see where the system is failing,” he will say. “You have ideas to make it better. Come forward and help us change the law for the better. That way we will really make a difference to the lives of victims of accidents and their families.”

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