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**APIL'S NEW PRESIDENT CALLS FOR GREATER COLLABORATION TO
PUT CLAIMANTS CENTRE STAGE**

Faster justice, more cross-party collaboration and the preservation of the tort system are top of the agenda of the incoming president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

In his speech to delegates at APIL's annual conference this Thursday (April 28) Allan Gore QC will say that claimants can only benefit from quicker, slicker systems, especially in small claims litigation.

"Now is the time for all sides in the debate to grasp this nettle," he will say. "Negotiations led by the Department for Work and Pensions came very close to agreeing a model which would make lower value workplace claims more efficient, and it is to be hoped that we can salvage something from those lengthy negotiations after the general election."

And Mr Gore will pledge closer collaboration, particularly with the insurance industry, to help bring such projects to fruition, although he will caution that a closer working relationship must be reflected in day-to-day negotiations between claimant lawyers and insurers.

Telling delegates that the "vicious cycle" of mistrust must be broken, he will say: "Insurers and their lawyers have got to stop thinking that every claim is a try-on. The overwhelming majority are not, which is why compensation is paid in such a high proportion of cases."

Mr Gore will also call on all stakeholders to work towards the development of a true safety culture.

"Avoiding negligence in the first place has to be the best way forward for claimants and insurers alike and – indeed – insurers are well-placed to help achieve this by educating those they insure about the importance of risk assessments and punishing those who don't get the message by hitting them where it hurts most – in the pocket, through higher premiums," he will say.

He will also call on the Government to take urgent action to make sure injured people receive just and fair compensation by acting on outstanding Law Commission reports relating to personal injury cases.

"Liability for psychiatric injury, limitation, damages for non-pecuniary loss, and claims for wrongful death are just some examples of Law Commission reports

which could have a direct and profound impact on claimants and which have been gathering dust on Government shelves for far too long,” he will say. “During my year as president of APIL, I will do everything I can to make sure these recommendations, which will help claimants, see the light of day.”

And he vowed to champion the role of the tort system as the ultimate protection for injured people. “I will strive to ensure we retain in this country a tort system which provides access to justice for all injured people which is real and not illusory,” he will say. “One which is properly funded and organised to enable injured people to secure the fair and reasonable compensation they are entitled to.”

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Note to editors:

For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Head of Legal & Public Affairs
APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lorraine.gwinnutt@apil.com

or Lisa Wardle
Press & PR Officer
APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lisa.wardle@apil.com