

SURVEY FINDS PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS UNCERTAIN ABOUT FUTURE

A survey has found 70 per cent of lawyers believe they will still be practising in five years time – yet those who believe they will continue to work in the personal injury field has fallen by nine per cent since 2001.

The survey, carried out among members of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) found almost half of respondents (43 per cent) were unsure about their future in personal injury. Reasons for the uncertainty ranged from fears about whether small firms will survive, competition from claims management companies and redundancy fears. Around one fifth of respondents said they were contemplating some form of re-training.

“This is undoubtedly an uncertain time for many personal injury lawyers,” said APIL president Allan Gore QC. “It is clear that many lawyers do not feel secure in the personal injury field – the fact that the number of lawyers who believe they will stay in the industry is falling, is a real concern. It is in the public interest that a large, strong pool of accredited personal injury lawyers is available to advise and represent injured people. Any reduction in the number who can provide this valuable service will restrict access to justice because evidence also shows that injured people are reluctant to claim compensation without legal help.”

APIL members cited funding problems – including a lack of legal aid – as the biggest threat to access to justice, followed by the possible raising of the small claims limit. A further 14 per cent of respondents said lack of insurance for CFAs was a major problem.

The survey found only eight per cent of lawyers actually work their contracted hours – the rest all work more, with partners averaging 46 hours per week. Solicitors in the North West work the longest hours and South West solicitors who, in APIL’s last survey, worked the longest hours, now work fewer hours than their fellow lawyers across the country.

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Note to editors:

- 391 APIL members responded to the survey
- male respondents = 56 per cent
female respondents = 44 per cent

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