

LAWYERS CALL FOR URGENT REFORM TO CRIMINAL INJURIES SCHEME

Lawyers will be seeking a meeting with the Government to call for a complete overhaul of the scheme which pays compensation to crime victims.

Allan Gore QC, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said the time is ripe for the Government to address the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme's (CICS) inadequacies and give crime victims the level of compensation they deserve.

"We are obviously pleased that the Government has acknowledged the need to compensate victims of the London bombings so quickly," he said. "But, this still leaves thousands of other crime victims who been waiting for years to receive their compensation – these people must not be pushed into a corner."

The scheme, which was introduced in 1996, is inflexible and unfair, says Gore, and completely out of line with compensation awarded through the civil courts.

"Before the scheme was set up, someone who suffered a brain injury because of a violent crime could expect to receive around £2 million in compensation," he said. "Yet today, someone who suffers exactly the same injury, in exactly the same circumstances, will be awarded only a quarter of that amount through the criminal injuries scheme.

"This money is awarded to restore some quality of life to someone injured through no fault of their own; to pay for any care they may need on a day to day basis; to help them try to regain some sort of normality. Yet the scheme leaves many, many people under-compensated with little chance of getting their lives back."

APIL believes the scheme's tariff bands should at least be assessed annually so that awards are kept in line with inflation, and also wants to see the £500,000 'maximum cap' on payments abolished.

-ends-

Note to editors:

For more information contact:

Lisa Wardle
Press & PR Officer, APIL
Telephone: 0115 9388715

