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NEW LAWYERS' LEADER CALLS FOR END TO 'CULTURE OF CONTEMPT'

Power and money do not give big organisations the right to treat injured people with contempt, the new president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) will warn this week.

"The culture of contempt has to be recognised for what it is," Martin Bare will tell delegates at APIL's annual conference on Thursday (April 19) . "What else but a culture of contempt would condemn a citizen for asserting his legal rights?"

"Merely because an organisation, be it a bank or an insurance company, or whatever, is big, rich and powerful does not entitle it to ignore, or treat with contempt the rights of an individual, or someone to whom its customer has done damage.

"There is no better way for an individual to deal with such things than by asserting his legal rights using the total independence of the lawyers and the courts."

Bare will also call for an end to the flouting of health and safety laws in the workplace.

"I cannot understand why others cannot see the consequences of health and safety having been ignored in the past," he will tell delegates. "Widespread recklessness or negligence with asbestos is an example which many years later has now come back to haunt society and cause thousands of deaths year upon year, both now and in the foreseeable future.

"If only there had been cause for stories in the press about silly and restrictive health and safety in the 1950s, 60s or 70s, then many thousands of painful deaths could since have been avoided."

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Note to editors:

Martin Bare's speech will take place at the annual conference of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers in Newport on Thursday, 19 April. Copies of the speech will be available at the conference, or by contacting APIL's press office on tel: 0115 958 0585 or email andrew.brentnall@apil.com

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