

**7 DECEMBER, 2005**

**STATEMENT FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS (APIL) IN RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION**

Lawyers have today expressed deep reservations about Government plans to abolish compensation payments for low value criminal injury cases.

Commenting on behalf of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), vice-president Richard Langton said:

“We have always said the criminal injuries scheme is inflexible and unfair, and we are pleased that the Government is finally looking to improve the system.

“We are extremely concerned, though, that under these proposals, those with “less serious injuries” (anything between 60-90 per cent of claimants) will lose the right to compensation. While it is right that victims should benefit from good support services, we question whether it is appropriate to offer these services instead of financial recompense, as even small awards can make a huge difference to a victim’s life, particularly to someone on a low income.

“Injuries which may appear “less serious” to the outside world are, to the victim, very serious indeed. Someone who suffers a fractured rib in an attack, for example, would certainly not consider his injury to be minor.

“Denying people the right to make a claim for loss of earnings and care costs will make the scheme even more arbitrary.

“Victims would be better served if the cap were to be removed completely, rather than increased. Either way, lower value claims should not be swept aside in favour of those with a higher profile.

“There is obviously a great deal of detail to be discussed, and we will be responding to the Government in due course.”

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