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GOVERNMENT PLANS CRITICISED AS CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION COMES UNDER THREAT

Government plans which could wipe out compensation for thousands of crime victims have met with heavy criticism from the legal profession.

Responding to the Home Office consultation, 'Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime,' the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said all victims of crime should be compensated regardless of the seriousness of their injuries, and said many victims will be disenfranchised if the proposals go ahead.

"It is crucial that anyone who has been the victim of a violent crime retains the right to claim financial compensation," said Richard Langton, APIL's vice-president, "Yet under these proposals, victims with less serious injuries will be completely sidelined.

"The Government believes that by taking compensation away from those with less serious injuries, it will be able to give more to those with severe injuries. In reality, this would mean that anything between 60-90 per cent of claimants would lose their right to compensation.

"It is not enough to offer them support services as an alternative," he said. "We believe victims should benefit from support services as well as, and not instead of, financial compensation."

APIL also criticised the suggestion that employers should take out additional insurance cover in the event of an employee suffering a criminal injury at work.

"It would be wholly unacceptable to force an employer to pay for additional insurance in case one of their staff is criminally injured," said Richard. "Employers would be unfairly penalised for the random acts of people over whom they have no control."

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