

### **COSTS SAVINGS WITHIN EVERYONE'S GRASP, SAYS APIL**

Lawyers have said today that significant costs savings within the personal injury claims system are already at everyone's fingertips.

On the day insurers prepare to debate their own proposals for reform\*, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) says the answers to a quicker, more cost effective system are within reach and that the current system should be "actively built upon."

"All stakeholders have, in the past months, been discussing practical options for reform," said APIL chief executive Denise Kitchener. "There is no reason why, if we can continue an open dialogue led by the DCA, we cannot achieve a streamlined process without throwing the baby out with the bathwater."

Kitchener said the current system had provided justice for thousands of injured people and although it wasn't perfect, she said there are ways to improve it without starting all over again.

"One of the biggest costs-drivers is the denial of liability by insurers, for example. In up to two thirds of cases insurers fail to comply with the pre-action protocols and deny liability even when it is admitted in the end, ultimately slowing down the process and adding to costs. We believe admission of liability should be both binding and early," she said.

APIL is also recommending a simple, immediate notification of the claim to insurers, and is calling for clearer time periods for payment of agreed damages and costs.

“We want to see interim payments more readily available without the need for cases to be issued, “ said Kitchener. “And, in the spirit of getting people’s lives back on track as early as possible, and when liability is clearly established, insurers should have a statutory duty to release funds to ensure the claimant receives early, appropriate and independent rehabilitation.”

APIL also believes considerable time and duplication can be eliminated at the medical evidence stage of a claim, as a full examination of records by insurers adds to costs and is unnecessary.

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Note to editors:

- \* *Care and Compensation: Parliamentary roundtable event, to be held on 10 May by the Association of British Insurers and Citizens Advice.*

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