

**SUPPORT GROWS FOR RETENTION OF SMALL CLAIMS LIMIT FOR INJURY
VICTIMS**

Arguments against increasing the small claims court limit for personal injury victims gained momentum today, as the Law Society publishes new research into clients' attitudes about bringing claims without the benefit of legal advice.

More than three quarters of consumers who responded to the survey* said they were 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident' at the thought of bringing the case themselves. More than 40 per cent had chosen to use a solicitor to handle their claims because they believed they would be treated more fairly by other parties than if they were to bring the case unrepresented.

"These findings echo a MORI poll, commissioned last year by the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) which found that 64 per cent of people, out of over 2,000 surveyed, would be unlikely to pursue their case without an independent solicitor," said APIL president, Richard Langton.

"Eighty per cent of people believed that, without an independent solicitor to help them they would not receive the right amount of compensation from an insurer."

In the small claims court, a claimant either has to pay for legal representation out of his own pocket, which many people can ill-afford, or stand up in court against the defendant without the benefit of a lawyer's representation.

In a separate development, a second early day motion (EDM)* on the issue has

been tabled by Austin Mitchell, MP, which opposes any increase in the small claims limit for personal injury cases, and is supported by a petition from 25,000 injured road accident victims delivered to Downing Street last month.

This follows an earlier EDM*, tabled in July, also opposing any moves to increase the limit, which was signed by 47 MPs.

“Clearly there is a growing public concern that the small claims court limit for personal injury cases should remain at £1,000,” said Langton. “APIL’s own research has found that if the limit were to increase, more than two thirds of personal injury claims would be forced in the small claims court which would not only deprive people of their rights, but would fly in the face of what people are quite clearly saying they want.

- ends -

Note to editors:

* Law Society Strategic Research Unit: Injury victims experiences of bringing a lower value personal injury claim with the benefit of legal advice and representation. Launched today, Monday 11 December 2006.

* EDM 407 ‘Injury victims of road accidents’, 5 December 2006.

* EDM 2542 ‘Small claims limit’, 11 July 2006.

For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Head of Legal & Public Affairs
APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW
Tel: 0115 958 0585

or

Lisa Wardle
Press & PR Officer
APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lisa@apil.com

Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lorraine@apil.com