

An insight into APIL parliamentary lobbying

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Key points

- Why do we lobby?
- Who do we lobby?
- How do we lobby?
- How can you help?

Why do we lobby?

- Influence the debate
 - » Impossible for MPs and peers to be experts on every single subject.
 - » The vast majority will not be solicitors, or have much legal knowledge
 - » MPs and peers often rely on briefings from expert organisations
- Raise our profile
 - » The more APIL becomes known in Parliament, the higher the profile, the greater its clout
 - » Increased profile helps to build relationships both inside and outside Parliament
- What we have to say is worth listening to

Who do we lobby?

- Shadow ministers
- Select committee members
- Members of all party groups (APPGs)
- Government ministers
- Other target MPs and peers

How do we identify new target MPs?

- Early Day Motions (EDMs)
- Parliamentary questions
- Intelligence from members

How do we lobby?

- Written briefings
 - » Written briefings from APIL have been used and quoted by MPs and peers in Parliament
- Meetings
 - » Getting in front of an MP and peer grabs their attention
 - » Important relationships have been formed from these meetings
- Events in Parliament
 - » APIL holds events in Parliament for MPs and peers on a particular topic. These events help APIL meet with new MPs and peers, as well as a way to maintain relationships with existing political contacts

How do we lobby?

- Giving evidence to parliamentary select committees
 - APIL often provides written evidence to select committee inquiries, as well as being invited to provide oral evidence



Are we listened to?

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers has stated that the clause will favour negligent employers over those who take health and safety considerations seriously and who treat people with the care that they are due.



Chuka Ummna MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills, during a debate on the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

Are we listened to?

Mesothelioma victims have few champions.
They have the Asbestos Victims Support Group's forum and the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers.



The Rt Hon the Lord Howarth of Newport CBE during a debate on the Mesothelioma Bill.

Public support from MPs

MP supports 'safety net' call for asbestos victims

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MERSEYSIDE MP Steve Rotheram has backed a call for a compensation "safety net" to be set up for people who were exposed to asbestos at work.

It followed new statistics showing Liverpool's death rate for an asbestos-related cancer is above the national average.

From 2006 to the end of 2010 mesothelioma, a terminal cancer of the lung wall, was recorded as the underlying cause of 89 deaths in the area – the equivalent of three in every 100,000 people.

The national average during the same period was 2.5 people.

Workers who develop mesothelioma are sometimes unable to pursue a claim for damages because they can no longer trace the employer who exposed them to asbestos or the employer's insurance company.

The onset of symptoms often comes decades after a worker has inhaled asbestos fibres, during which time employers can go out of business and insurance records can be lost or destroyed.

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), a not-for-profit campaign group, said the figures highlighted the need for a compensation fund of last resort for sufferers.

The call was backed by Walton MP Mr Rotheram, who said:

"Without the safety net of a fund of last resort, sufferers can be left with no other way of obtaining the compensation which should at least give them some comfort in the last days of their life."



MP Steve Rotheram

MP says new proposal for courts is unfair

BOLTON North East MP David Crausby has slammed proposals which could see people involved in road accident claims having to represent themselves in court.

The government wants to increase the number of road accident cases heard in small claims courts, which are designed for people to represent themselves, rather than be represented by a lawyer.

Opponents say the move means someone injured in a car crash that was not their fault would have to argue in court against the person they are making a claim against, who will often be represented by an insurance company lawyer.

Mr Crausby said: "This change would affect people from all walks of life, who could be effectively sidelined from the legal process.

"It seems inconceivable that a civilised society would condone such a measure but that would be a natural consequence of this proposal.

"No-one asks to be injured, so when they are it's vital that they receive fair and equal treatment."

The proposals were



'NOT FAIR' David Crausby

introduced as part of a Ministry of Justice consultation aimed at tackling fraudulent and exaggerated whiplash claims.

But Matthew Stockwell, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), said: "This will create a completely one-sided and unfair system in which genuine victims of injury have very little chance of overcoming the odds.

"People injured through no fault of their own would face a real struggle to get a fair outcome."

What can you do?

- Provide case studies
 - MPs, and the press, like to hear facts and evidence. A case study makes our argument much more credible and persuasive
- Lobby your MP
 - From time to time, we will ask members to lobby their constituency MP on a particular campaign

How do you lobby your MP?

- Write to your MP at-
 - House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
- Email your MP at first name.last name.mp@parliament.uk
- Meet with your MP at a local surgery. You can find these dates, and book an appointment by calling your MP's office at the House of Commons on 020 7219 3000

Challenges

- Shadow justice minister Andy Slaughter MP in the August 2012 edition of Claims Magazine, when discussing the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill lobbying campaign by the claimant community as a whole, said-
 - “It has been quite an effective lobbying organisation but the problem is the Government is simply not listening and I believe had largely made its mind up beforehand”

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