



Membership handbook

A guide to services provided for members of the
Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL)

APIL, 3, Alder Court, Rennie Hogg Road, Nottingham. NG2 1RX
Tel: 0115 943 5400; Email: mail@apil.org.uk

www.apil.org.uk
www.apil.org.uk/members

About this guide

Welcome to our guide to membership services. We hope that this will serve as a useful reminder of all of our services and how to access them. Please do not hesitate to let sharon.smith@apil.org.uk have your comments on this guide, together with any queries you may have.

APIL's mission

APIL is a national association, fighting for the rights of injured people, working to support, inform and educate its membership.

Our internal mission

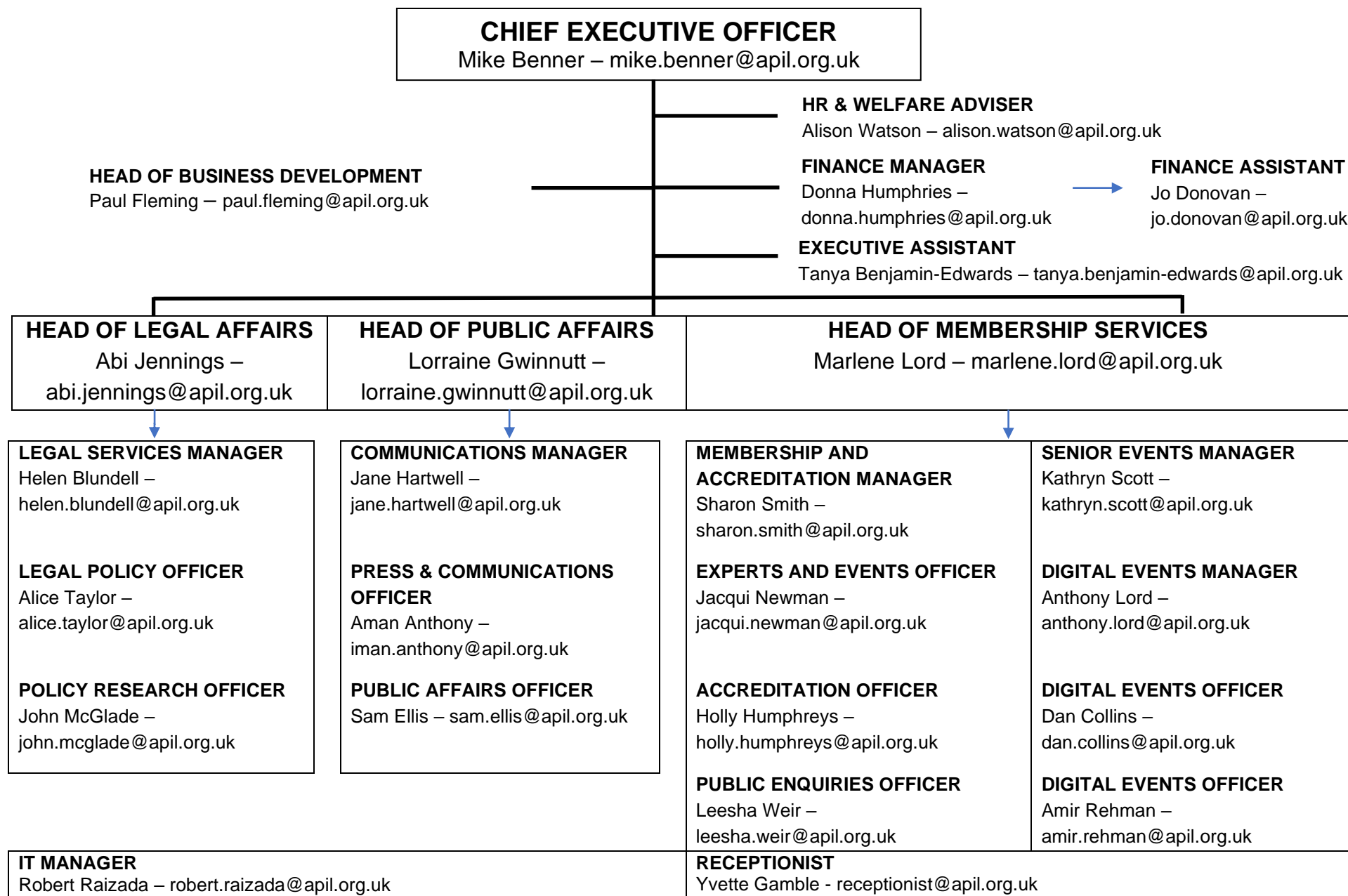
To work together to provide an excellent service to our members and their clients.

Our objectives

- To promote full and just compensation for all types of personal injury
- To promote and develop expertise in the practice of personal injury law
- To promote wider redress for personal injury law in the legal system
- To campaign for improvements in personal injury law
- To promote safety and alert the public to hazards wherever they arise
- To provide a communication network for members

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Governance

The executive committee...

Officers

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Neil McKinley, JMP Solicitors | President |
| Brett Dixon, Brett Dixon Training Ltd & Jonathan Scarsbrook, Irwin Mitchell LLP | Vice-Presidents |
| John McQuater, Atherton Godfrey LLP | Secretary |
| Jill Greenfield, Fieldfisher | Treasurer |

Additional officers

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Sam Elsby, Dean Wilson Solicitors LLP | Immediate Past President |
| Gordon Dalyell, Digby Brown LLP | EC member, Scotland |
| Oonagh McClure, Thompsons NI | EC member, Northern Ireland |
| John Michael Imperato, Watkins & Gunn | EC member, Wales |
| Richard Baker, 7 BR | EC member |
| Richard Barr, Scott-Moncrief & Associates Ltd | EC member |
| Guy Forster, Irwin Mitchell LLP | EC member |
| Kim Harrison, Slater & Gordon Lawyers | EC member |
| Pauline Roberts, Hugh James | EC member |
| Suzanne Trask, Bolt Burton Kemp | EC member |
| Suzanne White, Leigh Day | EC member |
| Leticia Williams, Hodge Jones & Allen Solicitors | EC member |

Executive sub committees:

Officers

Training and accreditation committee

Training and accreditation committee:

John Michael Imperato, Watkins & Gunn Chair

Richard Baker, 7BR

Isabel Bathurst, Scott-Moncrieff & Associates

Mike Benner, Chief Executive, APIL

Ian Christian, Irwin Mitchell LLP

Brett Dixon, Brett Dixon Training Ltd

Sam Elsbey, Dean Wilson Solicitors LLP

Nicola Heales, Bevirs Law

Marlene Lord, Head of Membership Services, APIL

John McQuater, Atherton Godfrey LLP

Michael Pace, Chattertons Solicitors

Suzanne White, Leigh Day

Panels:

Accreditation Assessment Panel

Senior Fellows Assessment Panel

Accreditation Appeals Panel

About your membership...

APIL is a not-for-profit organisation, established in 1990 to support injured people by fighting for their rights and campaigning for access to justice.

APIL's membership comprises around 3,100 lawyers. Membership categories include practitioners, barristers, paralegals, academics, students, associates and overseas members.

APIL is governed by an executive committee (EC) of elected officers which meets quarterly to formulate policy, agree actions and oversee the activities of the association.

The membership year

The membership year runs from 1 April through until 31 March. Renewals are sent out in March for the forthcoming year and members may renew their membership at any time. Membership is by individual and is therefore not transferable.

Membership pack

All members are issued with a membership pack upon joining which details the services that are open to members.

Recruitment advertising

For details on advertising on APIL's website, please contact membership services. The "Jobs" page is accessible from the bottom of the APIL homepage at www.apil.org.uk.

Your stationery

The APIL letters and full name may be used to identify individual members within a firm. Members may identify themselves as:

*Mr A N Other, Member, Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, OR
Mr A N Other, Member, APIL*

The APIL logo is a registered trademark and members are therefore not permitted to use the logo unless they are accredited by APIL (see page 6).

Recognizing and building expertise...

The APIL accreditation scheme

APIL's accreditation scheme was established in September 1999 by the College of Personal Injury Law (CPIL). In 2005 the successful activities of the College were integrated into the APIL membership structure in order to provide a clear single identifiable quality mark to members of the public seeking a suitably qualified lawyer to handle their case. The scheme is now in its 21st year and is governed by APIL's Executive Committee, associated assessment panels and the training and accreditation committee.

The accreditation scheme operates in a number of key areas:

- Public information campaign
- Individual accreditation
- Corporate accreditation for solicitors' practices or chambers
- In-house accreditation
- Accreditation of training events
- Monitoring

For further details please visit www.apil.org.uk/accreditation-for-professionals or contact holly.humphreys@apil.org.uk.

Public information campaign

APIL accreditation seeks to provide an assurance of quality for members of the public by ensuring that all lawyers involved in personal injury claims have the relevant expertise to handle cases and that they participate in regular ongoing training to ensure they are up-to-date.

Consumer organisations, public libraries, CABx and the public are being informed through our solicitor-client leaflets that they should seek out only those with such expertise to represent personal injury claimants.

Members of the public are advised to look out for the accredited APIL logos which are available for use by accredited members/offices/chambers only.

There are varying levels of accreditation which are awarded according to an individual's experience and expertise. Accredited members may also go on to specialise in particular areas of personal injury, for example those people who have been injured by an accident or illness abroad, or those who have suffered a catastrophic injury, like a brain or spinal cord injury.

The APIL membership database, available for access by the public online, advises claimants of each member's level of accreditation within the organisation and therefore allows them to search for suitably qualified practitioners to deal with their cases. Our staff are regularly contacted by injured people seeking details of personal injury lawyers who can advise them on their case. Our helpline and search facilities at www.apil.org.uk are used to guide the public to APIL members in their area who may be able to help them.

Details on the accreditation scheme can be found in the enclosed brochure or at www.apil.org.uk/accreditation-for-lawyers. Copies of criteria and application forms are available via the above link and from holly.humphreys@apil.org.uk.

APIL training – national and in-house

Our team of experts and course organisers offer a comprehensive annual programme of webinars, seminars and training courses, designed specifically for those working in or interested in personal injury law. APIL uses its wealth of experience to develop the most practical up-to-date CPD accredited courses, delivered by leading practitioners and specialist expert speakers, either publicly or in-house.

APIL's training division now runs around 80 day-long personal injury training events nationally each year. Topics cover a wide range of subjects and are geared towards providing personal injury lawyers with a thorough grounding in the core areas of personal injury law, as well as updating in all subjects and delivering courses for specialists. Training is offered in-house for all topics, either "off-the-shelf" or as a tailor-made package.

All events are provided at extremely competitive rates for APIL members and at further discounted rates for all staff at corporately accredited firms/chambers. APIL also accredits courses run by other suitable training bodies to enable APIL members to have a wider choice in the courses they attend and how they accrue their CPD hours.

Webinars

Webinars are one of the most cost effective and efficient methods of topping up your CPD hours. With an array of popular speakers, APIL webinars are delivered straight to your computer, so you need not leave the comfort of your own desk!

Each webinar is accredited with 1 CPD hour and includes a Q&A session, should you need the speaker to clarify any issues. Each registration includes on-demand access to the recording, accessible for up to six months after the webinar, so you are able to listen to or watch the presentation at any time, at your own leisure.

APIL delivers a full programme of webinars each year. Webinars are included in the programme as soon as a leading judgment has been made, where there is a change in legislation, and also as refreshers in particular subject areas.

Special events and residential conferences

Major national conferences are held each year, focussing on current PI issues, attracting highly eminent speakers from legal and other associated organisations.

Conferences are supported by exhibitions, displaying services and other products of interest for APIL members.

APIL also works in partnership with other organisations to develop specialised events, allowing the association and its members to broaden our outlook and network with other bodies.

The current schedule of training courses and conferences can be found at www.apil.org.uk/training, and details of forthcoming events are advised through the Weekly News emails. For further information regarding any of our courses or conferences, please contact the APIL Training team at contact training@apil.org.uk or on 0115 943 5400.

Keeping abreast of PI law...

PI Focus

- **Keeping you up to date** – APIL's PI Focus is published and hard copy sent to members ten times a year, offering an extensive range of news, views and articles. Its purpose is to keep you fully up-to-date with both the activities of the association and developments in PI law. It is also accessible and searchable electronically through the members' area of the website - www.apil.org.uk/pi-focus.
- **Regular features** – include the president's opinion page, the chief executive's 'last word' and articles on legal, technical and medico-legal topics.
- **Case notes** – this section contains reports on members' cases of particular interest, on quantum, procedure and liability issues.
- **APIL assistance** – provides the opportunity to share information on a particular case with other members, read regular briefing notes, and locate missing employers' liability and public liability insurers.
- **Monitoring your views** – we also use PI Focus to survey your views on key issues to inform its responses to government consultations and the association's policy development.

PI Focus is a highly respected publication attracting contributions from eminent members of the personal injury world. If you would like to submit an article or advertise in an issue of the publication, please email sharon.smith@apil.org.uk.

Weekly News electronic update

The Weekly News is an information update mailing that is sent out by email to the membership on Thursday afternoon of each week. Bringing you the very latest news to ensure you keep up to date with what's going on between publication of our monthly PI Focus, the Weekly News gives details on campaign news, press items, product recalls, meeting and event details. The email is automatically sent to all members who have provided us with an email address. Please therefore inform the membership department of your email address if you have not done so already.

Our current and past weekly alert emails can be viewed/downloaded from 'APIL Publications' section on the members' website; just click on APIL weekly alert and choose the email you wish to view.

Journal of Personal Injury Law (JPIL)

APIL also publishes a quarterly journal in association with Sweet and Maxwell. JPIL contains articles, editorials and a case digest. It is an invaluable mix of

authoritative analysis and opinion which APIL members can receive at a discounted rate. If you would like more information regarding JPIL please contact Thomson Reuters, Customer Services, on tel: 0345 600 9355.

Expert and rehabilitation services directory

Experts and rehabilitation services provider's publication

APIL's expert and rehabilitation services directory, published in June each year, is a useful reference tool providing full contact details on a wide range of experts and rehabilitation service providers. There is also a useful information section containing details of various support organisations. It lists areas of expertise, then by category and subcategory of expertise and alphabetically for each expert. There is also an advertiser's section at the front and an alphabetical listing of rehabilitation services providers at the back. If you would like to advertise or have any questions regarding the directory, please contact sharon.smith@apil.org.uk.

Membership directory

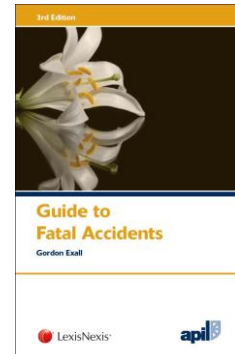
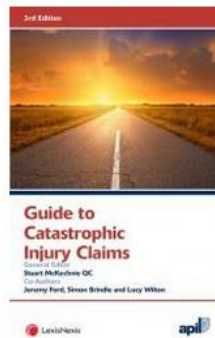
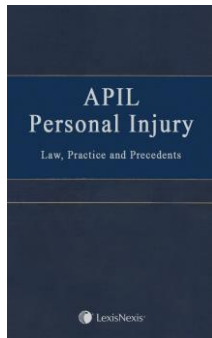
APIL's full directory of members is produced online and is accessible for members only.

Members of the public can search for accredited members through the public search facility on the APIL homepage, and members can search the full membership database once they have logged in.

You can update your details at any time, [log-in](#) to the members' areas and click on 'My details' in the top right corner to view and update various areas of your personal profile. Alternatively, please inform sharon.smith@apil.org.uk of any changes in your circumstances so that we can ensure your details are recorded correctly on our database at all times.

APIL guides

The series of 'How to guides' provides the personal injury lawyer with essential information on a large number of areas including conditional fee agreements, damages, evidence, accidents at work, personal injury claims procedure and occupational illness claims to name just a few. Further information and how to purchase these guides can be found on the members' area of the website under the 'APIL publications' link or telephone LexisNexis on tel: 0330 161 1234, www.apil.org.uk/how-to-guides.



Finding and exchanging information...

Go to www.apil.org.uk and click on the 'For professionals' tab. Choose from the options for where you would like to go.

Expert database

Our expert database service is designed to speed up the litigation process by providing you with the experts for your case and linking you up with the right people within the association. Our computerised records hold details of a vast range of experienced experts in the field of personal injury including experts' CVs, notes on their expertise, and links to their websites or email addresses. Experts are listed in three tiers: by membership recommendation, by professional body, or other sources.

You can gain access to our expert database which holds the details of over 500 expert witnesses, including those with medical, scientific or technical expertise, mediators and overseas lawyers by visiting www.apil.org.uk/find-an-expert or for APIL's personal bespoke services call expert services on tel: 0115 943 5437 or email jacqui.newman@apil.org.uk.

Other databases/search facilities

Membership database – www.apil.org.uk/members-search

Insurers' database – www.apil.org.uk/insurers-search

APIL assistance – www.apil.org.uk/requests-for-assistance

JPIL archive –

www.apil.org.uk/legal-information-search?search-type=jpil-archive and

www.apil.org.uk/jpil-archive

APIL legal document search, case reports – www.apil.org.uk/legal-information-search?search-type=case-reports

APIL practice, practice documents –

www.apil.org.uk/legal-information-search?search-type=practice-documents

Rehab services database – www.apil.org.uk/rehabilitation-providers

PLUS helpdesk – www.apil.org.uk/help-desk

Getting online and using IT...

The members' area at www.apil.org.uk gives full access to our services, including:

Latest news and what's new

- press releases/press room
- blog
- responses to consultation papers
- PI Focus: current and past issues
- APIL weekly news: current and past editions

APIL training

- forthcoming courses sorted by location, title and date
- webinars
- online registration

Forums - APIL members' discussion forums for legal discussion and general chat

- preferential rates

Databases:

- Experts
- Members
- Insurers
- APIL assistance
- JPIL archive
- Legal documents and case reports
- Practice documents – current and archived briefing notes
- Rehabilitation services providers
- Support organisations
- Links – useful links to other websites
- Helpdesk - if you still can't find what you are looking for, use this link to APIL's Legal Services Manager

APIL accreditation

- How to apply
- Individual membership
- Corporate membership
- Accredited training – my CPD log
- in-house accreditation
- external accreditation

Groups – minutes, papers and notification of forthcoming meetings

- special interest groups
- regional groups
- membership groups

Site search

- search the APIL website to find what you are looking for

Rehabilitation

- useful documents, links and rehabilitation forum

Jobs

- search for a vacancy, advertise a vacancy

Executive Committee

- read all about APIL's elected officers

Create a login

From www.apil.org.uk, choose the 'Login' option in the top right corner on the home page. Follow this by clicking the 'create login account' under the login box.

Follow the steps by entering your name and email address, exactly as confirmed to you in your new members' letter, and click the 'create login account' button this will enable you to enter a username and password that is personal to you. If you forget your login details, choose the 'Forgotten login details' which appears at the bottom of the login box. If you have any difficulty, please contact sharon.smith@apil.org.uk, Membership & Accreditations Manager, who will either guide you through or create the login for you.

Use the navigation links at the top of the page to move to the relevant area.

If you have any I.T. problems please contact robert.raizada@apil.org.uk.

Communications

Campaigning

APIL is committed to fighting for fairness for people who have been injured and bereaved, as a result of negligence. We work to make their voices heard consistently in the press and in government across all UK jurisdictions. Campaign activity includes correcting common myths about personal injury law, holding briefing meetings with MPs, civil servants and ministers, preparation of written briefing materials and the development of responses to government consultations. The emphasis in all our work is on ensuring injured people are treated fairly and compensated according to their needs.

Rebuilding Shattered Lives - <https://rebuilding-shattered-lives.org.uk/>
Bereavement damages - <https://www.apil.org.uk/bereavement-damages>

Preventing Needless Injury

We also work to prevent needless injury wherever possible. Injury Prevention Week is the third week in August and focusses on key safety themes and messages each year. This special calendar day is now very well supported by our members, charities and other interested organisations.

Getting involved

The involvement of our members in APIL's day to day work is crucial to the development of the organisation, and a growing number of members are now taking up the baton. Many members have contributed directly to our campaign work by writing to their local MPs and asking them to raise issues of key concern to injured people with ministers and in Parliament. And crucially, more APIL members have helped to give our campaigns and messages the credibility they need to be heard, by providing us with evidence to endorse our arguments. If you would like to become more involved with the organisation's work please contact jane.hartwell@apil.org.uk.

Raising APIL's profile

APIL's press office regularly handles enquiries from all sectors of the media. Proactive work through press releases, social media, statements and interviews with journalists help to raise the association's public profile while maintaining a reputation for professionalism and credibility. Guidance on press relations is offered by the APIL press team to all members, on request. Work also includes rebuttal of misleading information, regular training of designated media spokesmen, and organising press and broadcast interviews. Please contact jane.hartwell@apil.org.uk.

A network of lawyers nationwide...

APIL members are also encouraged to get involved through taking on a role as either a coordinator or secretary for one of APIL's many groups. With 15 regional groups, 15 special interest groups and 2 membership groups, each group is run by a biennially elected coordinator and secretary who organize speakers and chair meetings to facilitate conversation and networking. The secretary also prepares minutes for uploading to the members' area of the website. In addition, each group has its own discussion forum.

APIL's group meetings are organized free of charge for APIL members. Buffets may be laid on at cost to provide an opportunity for networking with members, sharing ideas and problems over a drink and a sandwich.

Details of forthcoming group meetings can be found at www.apil.org.uk/groups, these are also listed within the Weekly news email sent to members on Thursday afternoon. If you have any questions, please contact anthony.lord@apil.org.uk or dan.collins@apil.org.uk.

Group meetings usually qualify for 2 CPD hours, reference 2027/APIL

Regional groups (REGs)

APIL's regional structure comprises 15 groups, including APIL Wales, APIL Scotland and APIL Northern Ireland, meeting regularly throughout the year. A list of all current regional coordinators and secretaries and their contact details is included in this welcome pack, and we will write to you shortly to advise which regional group you have been allocated, along with details of any forthcoming meetings.

Guest speakers are usually invited to meetings to cover issues of particular interest in each region. The meetings also provide a forum for members to discuss current issues relating to personal injury law and practice and provide an ideal opportunity for members to network and exchange information and expertise. There is no charge to attend these meetings but we do ask for a contribution towards the buffet, if one is provided.

Although you will be assigned to one particular group, any APIL member can attend any regional meeting. You may change your group, for example if you live closer to another group's regular meeting locations. Details of forthcoming meetings can be found by going to www.apil.org.uk/groups or see Thursday's Weekly News email alerts.

Membership groups (MEGs)

An opportunity to meet up with like-minded lawyers through APIL's two special groups for "Junior Litigators" and "Barristers":

Barristers' group

The group was set up in 2007, to bring barrister members together to listen to relevant speakers, and share current ideas, experiences and problems as well as to support, inform and train.

Junior Litigators

The Junior Litigators group (formerly New to PI) was also established in 2007 and is intended for members who are new to the area of personal injury law. The purpose is to get together and hear from relevant speakers, share experiences and discuss current issues.

Special interest groups (SIGs)

APIL recognises that the work of personal injury lawyers is often specialised and has therefore established a total of 15 special interest groups. Each group meets regularly to exchange and develop information in their particular field of activity and to provide a platform for campaigning and lobbying on vital issues. Meetings are usually addressed by guest speakers.

You may join any number of our 15 SIGs, ranging from brain injury to transport and multi-party actions. To actively enjoy and to be able to participate in the activities, members are advised to restrict this number to two or three. Details of forthcoming meetings can be found by clicking on the 'Lawyers' heading and choosing 'Groups'. If you are not presently a member of a SIG but would like more information on joining, please contact membership services on 0115 943 5427 or email sharon.smith@apil.org.uk.

The following section gives details of the current activities for each SIG:

Brain injury

The Brain Injury SIG currently has around 1330 members, and meets regularly in different parts of the country.

As an example of the quality of our meetings, past speakers have included Professor Michael Barnes, Counsel, Dr Ann Hunter, Brian Walker of Head Protection Evaluations and Simon Michael, Council. Past topics under discussion have included "Life expectancy in catastrophic brain injury cases",

“Head protection: facts vs myths”, and “Contributory negligence in brain injury cases”.

The group also conducted tours of facilities such as Highbank Neuro-Rehabilitation Centre in Bury, Priory Unsted Neuro-Rehabilitation Centre in Godalming, Hunters Moor Regional Neurological Rehabilitation Centre and Head Protection Evaluations, Fareham.

Child abuse

The aim of the SIG is to exchange information and campaign on issues relating to child abuse litigation and create a forum to support and inform those APIL members involved in obtaining compensation for physical, sexual or emotional children, and adults abused in their earlier lives. The SIG currently has approx. 250 members.

Child injury

Members have principally joined this group in the hope of enhancing their expertise in dealing with complexities of acting for children and the families of which they are part. The SIG currently has around 855 members. The format of meetings is usually to hold a short business meeting followed by a speaker from a child charity, a ‘legal’ speaker or a medical speaker.

Charities that have been represented include The Meningitis Trust, Erb’s Cerebral Palsy Group, The Child Head Injury Trust, The Child Poverty Action Group, Young Minds, The Child Accident Prevention Trust, The Children’s Legal Centre at the University of Essex, etc. The purpose of inviting charities to address the group is to bring each other’s knowledge of each other’s work to the fore.

The purpose of inviting members to provide legal talks is to ‘tap into’ the most valuable resource that APIL offers, i.e. its members. In that respect members have spoken about their work in multi-party actions such as the MMR litigation, McDonald’s litigation, cases involving the contraction of E-coli at farms causing brain damage, and claims involving health professionals arising out of the delay in diagnosing meningitis. Medical speakers have addressed the group on common childhood illness, causation in cerebral palsy claims and common psychological problems in children following trauma.

All in all, we try to provide an interesting programme which not only caters for members’ needs in respect of legal and medical issues but also education and human rights issues.

Clinical negligence

This SIG currently has approx. 1190 members. We meet three to four times a year, and when we do so in London, we expect at least 50 to attend.

The first 30 minutes of each meeting are usually devoted to legal practice and procedure and discussion of practical problems. This will be followed by a speaker(s) who will talk and answer questions on a topic which will be relevant to clinical negligence. This will often be on a specialist area of medicine.

Occasionally these meetings are organised jointly with AvMA. An additional role of the SIG is to respond to Government and LSC proposals, often at short notice, and we form sub-groups for this purpose.

Importantly the meetings of this SIG are an opportunity for practitioners to compare notes, discuss problems and keep abreast of developments in ever changing times.

Costs and funding

Attendance at the Costs and funding SIG meetings has increased significantly over the last five year as the huge changes to the way lawyers are paid have been enacted leaving little time for reflection. The SIG currently has around 1050 members.

In the past the group meetings have looked in depth at the effect of CPR and the new style assessments as well as providing a discussion forum for the changes introduced by the Access to Justice Act.

The group continues to exchange information and provide advice to members on all costs and funding issues and are keen to take the meetings around the country, welcoming approaches from the regional groups. Can you afford not to attend?

Damages

The Damages SIG is the largest SIG currently with approx. 1415 members. Topics at past meetings have included: "*Presentation and content of Claimant schedules*", "*Contentious issues in quantifying physiotherapy claims*", "*Your place or mine? - Alternatives to the Roberts -v- Johnstone approach to accommodation and issues surrounding the ongoing discount rate review.*" Past speakers have included Elizabeth Anne Gumbel QC and Henry Witcomb, Counsel.

Environment - *dormant*

As the Environment SIG was one of the smaller groups with only 50 members the EC have taken the decision to close this special interest group for the time being. Members are encouraged to contact the APIL office if they would like to revitalise the group and take on the role of coordinator or secretary.

International

The International SIG currently has around 240 members, usually meeting in London.

Topics discussed at past meetings have included Updates on Cross- Border Legal Aid Directive, European Enforcement Order, Cross Border Taking of Evidence, European Small Claims Procedure, Mediation Directive, Cross-Border Debt-improving Enforcement, Rome I Directive, Rome II Directive, Service of Documents, European Union Developments in Contract Law, European Judicial Network in Civil and Commercial Matters and recent developments in jurisdiction relating to foreign accidents.

Speakers at past meetings have included Julia Bateman of the Joint Brussels Office of the Law Societies and Philip Mead, Counsel.

Military

The Military Special Interest Group is a small but supportive group with approx. 220 members.

The group's aim is to provide guidance to practitioner members in proceedings against the Crown in respect of military personal injury and clinical negligence claims.

Much of litigating against the Crown requires knowledge of the plethora of internal regulations, rules, publications and procedures. The group has a number of ex-servicemen both regular and territorial who are happy to guide practitioner members when they are faced with a claim against the Ministry of Defence.

The education policy of Military SIG is to highlight specific areas of practical importance to practitioner members, rather than areas of more academic interest.

Multi party/class actions

We currently have around 350 members in this group. Due to the limited number of multi-party actions, we usually meet only once a year.

Meetings will cover subjects such as “Emerging trends/tactics being used by the MoD”, “Loss of earnings claims after Inglis v MoD” and “Deductions from military damages: AFCS, CRU and pension payments”.

Occupational health

The Occupational health SIG aims to keep members up-to-date with current issues. We meet regularly in different parts of the country, sometimes holding joint meetings with the regional groups, and we currently have around 600 members.

Our meetings focus on educational talks on various areas of occupational health and also include case review from time to time. Previous subjects have included stress, hearing loss, funding with regard to disease claims, limitation, manual handling, vibration white finger, rhinitis, dermatitis, asthma and rehabilitation.

The SIG was responsible for the initiation and creation of the draft disease and ill health protocol and contributed to the response from APIL in the consultation process, and we have also been involved, and will continue to assist, in the process of responding to consultation papers, including asbestos, asthma and directors’ responsibilities.

Procedure

The Procedure SIG has been exceptionally busy in recent years, helping practitioner members prepare for and deal with the introduction of the Civil Procedure Rules. We currently have a membership of approx. 950 and aim to:

- assist members to keep up-to-date with the introduction of new rules and practice directions
- assist members to keep up-to-date with amendments to key rules and practice directions
- provide a discussion forum for members by way of the SIG meetings
- encourage liaison and meetings with other SIGs and REGs, in acknowledgement of the pervasive nature of the procedure brief
- arrange informal discussion meetings with members of the judiciary (from Deputy District Judges to Designated Woolf Judges) on topics of procedural interest.

Product liability

The Product Liability Consumer Affairs SIG has a wide remit and currently has around 440 members. Initially set up to look at cases brought under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 and to increase the awareness of applicability of this Act for liability for defective products, we expanded this remit and it is now broader-based.

In the past few years, we have looked at defective products and the role of the trading standards organisation in gathering evidence which can be of use to us in cases. We have held joint meetings with Transport SIG at the Road Transport Research Laboratory and considered a comparison between UK product liability laws and US product liability suits. Other recent meeting topics have included “sporting injuries”, “dangerous toys” and defective sporting equipment”.

The group will convene as and when a need arises.

Spinal cord injury

The Spinal Cord Injury SIG exists as a forum for those practitioners undertaking these large and often difficult claims. We currently enjoy a membership of approx. 1050. Some tend to specialise exclusively in maximum severity claims whereas others will deal with such cases rarely, if at all. All are welcome.

Regular meetings are held across the country and recent speakers have included leading counsel on maximising heads of claim, and a professor undertaking research in spinal cord injury rehabilitation. We have also had visits to spinal injury treatment centres.

As well as providing the opportunity to informally discuss problems and developments in law, procedure and medicine, we have also run some very successful training courses on spinal injury claims in both London and Manchester.

Transport

The Transport SIG is a lively group which covers all aspects of transportation be it road, air, sea or more typically rail. We currently have a membership of around 290.

We will always try to help with any of those gritty queries that crop up from time to time and welcome any news of emerging trends such as product liability issues involving transportation. The group responds on a regular basis to government consultation papers.

Meetings are held around the country as well as jointly in the regions. Topics covered at the meetings have included European claims, driver fatigue as an occupational issue, low velocity impacts, crash reconstruction and transport disasters.

The group has also visited the Transport and Road Research Laboratory and Air Traffic Control at West Drayton, amongst other locations.

APIL code of conduct

Members of APIL must agree to abide by this code of conduct. All breaches which come to the attention of APIL's secretary will be fully investigated to preserve the integrity of this code. Code revision: May 2019.

Introduction

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) was established in April 1990 by a group of barristers and solicitors working for claimants, dedicated to the improvement of services provided for victims of accidents and disease.

APIL's head office, based in Nottingham, is staffed by dedicated full-time staff under the direction of a chief executive, reporting to APIL's elected officers.

Members of APIL subscribe to a code of conduct and support APIL's main objectives.

Members shall recognise and abide by APIL's Consumer Charter, which is a set of promises to help reassure injured people that their cases will be dealt with sympathetically and professionally.

Membership of APIL is on the basis of a commitment to APIL's objectives and this code. Membership is not a guarantee of excellence or specialisation.

APIL's objectives are:

- To promote full and just compensation for all types of personal injury
- To promote and develop expertise in the practice of personal injury law
- To promote wider redress for personal injury in the legal system
- To campaign for improvement in personal injury law
- To promote safety and alert the public to hazards wherever they arise
- To promote a communication network for members

APIL members recognise the need to:

- Provide a professional service
- Keep themselves informed, educated and up to date with current law and procedure
- Share information with other APIL members
- Maximise the amount of compensation receivable in the hands of the client
- Ensure that the client is fully aware of, and fully and professionally advised, on all costs issues, including public funding, where available
- Ensure that clients have the opportunity to receive advice on the investment and/or use of damages

Code of Conduct

1. APIL members will act in the best interests of the client.
2. APIL members will provide the client with independent advice.
3. APIL members shall at all times behave and act in a manner which will uphold the standing and good reputation of claimant personal injury lawyers and APIL.
4. No APIL member shall pursue a frivolous claim issue or position; but no APIL member should refrain from taking or pursuing any claim issue or position which is believed to have merit.
5. APIL members will proceed expeditiously with all personal injury claims.
6. No APIL member shall make excessive or unnecessary monetary charges to the client.
7. No APIL member shall personally or through an agent make representations of experience or specialist skills which they do not possess.
8. No APIL member shall knowingly make any statement, whether in publicity material to a prospective client, an existing client, or otherwise which may give the client false expectations.
9. No APIL member shall undertake false, deceptive or misleading advertising.
10. APIL's logo shall not be used by any APIL member, either personally or through their firm, for advertising or marketing purposes. Members are able to identify their individual APIL membership without using the APIL logo.
11. No APIL member shall personally, or through a representative, directly contact a potential client (except through permitted advertising), where there has been no request for such contact ('cold calling'). "Permitted advertising" is defined as advertising which complies with the Code of Practice of the Advertising Standards Authority and with the Rules of the member's relevant legal professional regulatory body.
12. APIL members may only pay or receive a fee for the introduction of clients where permitted by the rules of the member's relevant legal professional regulatory body.
13. No APIL member shall knowingly accept a referral from a person, whether an APIL member or not, who obtained the representation by means contrary to this code.

Enforcement of Code of Conduct

1. APIL's secretary shall investigate any alleged breach of the code of conduct as soon as it comes to his attention and if in the opinion of the secretary there has been a breach, commence the enforcement procedure of this code.
2. If the secretary is of the opinion that there appears to be a prima facie breach of the code but that such breach is not grave or persistent, the secretary will communicate with the member or members concerned to attempt to resolve the matter complained of.
3. If the secretary is of the opinion that there appears to be a breach of the conduct rules of the member's legal professional regulatory body, then the secretary may at this time or at any time during the operation of this enforcement procedure, refer the alleged breach of the code of conduct to that regulatory body for investigation. Referral to such a body can be an alternative, or in addition, to this enforcement procedure.
4. If the secretary is of the view that the prima facie breach is grave or persistent, or if a complaint dealt with under paragraph 2 above cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the secretary and three other APIL executive committee (EC) members shall investigate the alleged breach, giving the member proper opportunity to answer the complaint, and ensuring the member is aware of the relevant Articles of Association relating to termination or suspension of membership.
5. The four member EC panel will report to the EC which will decide on the issue(s) and what sanction should be imposed. In the event that pending the opinion of the EC on the issue of breach it forms the view that it is appropriate to do so, the EC may suspend the membership of any member pending such opinion. The decision and reasons for it will be notified in writing.
6. An appeal against the EC's decision must be made to the secretary in writing within 21 days of notification to the member of the EC's decision.
7. An appeal will be dealt with by an appeals panel consisting of an independent legally qualified chair (who shall not be or have been an APIL member), appointed by the EC, and two other panel members who shall be appointed by the chair, one of whom shall be a past officer of APIL, and the other of whom shall be a member of APIL who is not currently, nor ever has been a member of the EC.
8. The decision of the EC, or after appeal, the decision of the appeals panel, will be published in the next available issue of APIL's PI Focus magazine, or its equivalent publication.
9. Sanctions which may be imposed, either singly or in combination, by the EC or appeals panel are:
 - Expulsion from APIL;
 - Suspension;
 - Public rebuke of the member's conduct;
 - Referral to the member's legal professional regulatory body and any relevant professional accreditation body for investigation.

APIL consumer charter

- APIL members will put your best interests first
- APIL members will provide clear, impartial, honest advice about your case
- APIL members will tell you if you will have to pay anything to pursue your case and, if so, how much*
- If you do have to pay to pursue your case, APIL members will charge you a fair price, with no hidden costs
- APIL members will explain your legal position in plain language
- APIL members who feel unable to deal with your case will act only in your best interests in suggesting a referral to another solicitor
- APIL members will keep you updated about all aspects of your case *
- APIL members will consider other appropriate remedies as well as financial ones
- APIL members will not cold call
- APIL members will only publish advertisements which are accurate and truthful
- Your welfare is our concern

* ABOUT APIL *

APIL members include both solicitors and barristers. It is the responsibility of your APIL solicitor to keep you informed about any costs and other developments associated with your case. These duties will not usually be carried out by your barrister.