

Prime Minister gets involved in moving forward agenda for asbestos in schools

On 14 May, the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown met asbestos campaigners, the leaders of the biggest teaching unions and worried MP's to discuss concerns about asbestos related deaths in schools.

He has ordered Education Ministers to find out what Local Authorities are doing to deal with asbestos in schools in a questionnaire. This week, a further meeting will take place with the Schools Minister to try and work out an agenda for tackling the problems of asbestos in schools.

Asbestos is the greatest single cause of work related deaths. More people die of asbestos diseases per annum than in road traffic accidents. The figures for the number of deaths will continue to rise for several years. The diseases lie dormant over decades which means that the people who are suffering and dying today were exposed to asbestos many years ago.

Huge amounts of asbestos were installed in buildings during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's and much of it remains in place today. This firm has represented teachers who have developed asbestos related diseases where their only source of asbestos exposure was from asbestos in the schools where they worked.

Unhappily, there is no cure for asbestos related diseases.

At the All Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Occupational Safety and Health on 14 May, Mary Bousted, General Secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers outlined the campaign. There will be empirical data gathered as to the levels of risk in schools so that the extent of the problem can be scientifically assessed and appropriate action taken.

For earlier articles on school, please [click here](#) (22.04.2009)

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We are a specialist personal injury law firm. We have been handling claims for industrial disease for over 30 years. Most of our work involves acting for asbestos disease victims. We only act for the sufferers of asbestos diseases and never act for the organisations that caused the asbestos exposure or their insurers. We have an ethical approach and pledge to donate 10% of our net profits every year to good causes that help asbestos sufferers. [Click here](#) to find out about our donations to good causes. We have also been involved in most of the landmark judgments that shape this area of law. Find out more [about us](#) or find out about [our reported cases](#). We are on the panels of several asbestos support groups and are ranked highly by legal guides. [Click here](#) to find out more about what others have said about us.

[John Pickering and Partners LLP](#) is a niche legal practice that has represented Claimants in the leading asbestos "test cases" in the last ten years. The firm represented Sylvia Barker in *Barker v Corus (UK) Plc*, a case that highlighted the legal tactics of employers and insurers trying to cut back their compensation liabilities to mesothelioma sufferers, and which prompted the amendment of the Compensation Act 2006 to ensure full compensation for mesothelioma claims. The firm represented two of the three Claimants in the *Fairchild appeal*, in which the insurance industry tried unsuccessfully to block compensation altogether for mesothelioma sufferers unable to identify which of two or more sources of asbestos exposure had caused their illness.

The firm represented Alice Jefferson, a mesothelioma sufferer, whose illness and compensation claim against Cape Asbestos were featured in the important documentary "*Alice: A Fight For Life*." Shown by Yorkshire Television in July 1982, the programme was an important catalyst for legal change and public awareness of the plight of mesothelioma and other asbestos disease sufferers and a prompt for important legal reform.

Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that affects the lining of certain bodily organs. It most commonly affects the lining of the lungs (the pleura) but it can affect other areas including organs in the abdominal cavity (the peritoneum).

According to the [British Lung Foundation](#), more than 2,000 people are diagnosed with mesothelioma every year in the UK and there is one mesothelioma death every five hours. The number of deaths from mesothelioma increased from 153 in 1968 to 1,969 in 2004 and is expected to peak at 2,450 between 2011 and 2015.

The [British Lung Foundation](#), supported by John Pickering and Partners LLP, launched the first Action Mesothelioma Day on 27th February 2006, to raise awareness about mesothelioma, to improve the treatment and care of mesothelioma patients, and to lobby for better funding for research into mesothelioma and for the protection and education of people working with asbestos.

If you need advice about an asbestos related illness, [contact us](#) now for information about making a claim for compensation.