

Welcome to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter



Previously known as Sheffield and Rotherham Asbestos Group (SARAG). We originally provided

support to people throughout South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire, however we found there was no similar service offering help for people in other parts of the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

We have recently been lucky enough to secure some office space within Leeds which will allow us to provide a vital service to all parts of the county. As such, we have changed our name to better reflect the area that we cover.



We will also continue to support those in need who reside in North Nottinghamshire.

Covid —19

Our staff are now working from home. However, we continue to provide the same service from home as we could working from the office.

Although we are not in the office, we have access to our answer phone so your call will not be missed, please call and leave a message on 01709 360672, or email us at: enquiries@saragasbestosupport.org and we will get back to you.

Living with the legacy of Asbestos

The legacy of working with Asbestos continues to massively impact on individual workers and their families and looks likely to stay with us for many years to come.

The picture above was taken outside of the 1976 TUC Congress at Brighton where

discussions took place about how to make the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act more effective. Outside the Congress Hall, there was a Lobby by 1000 workers from the Isle of Grain Power Station, Kent, who had been sacked by Babcock and Wilcox for refusing to work with asbestos without protective clothing. Following a factory inspection and with the support of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) the dispute ended after 6 months.

23 years later, asbestos was finally banned in the UK, but, sadly the changes to Health and Safety Legislation came too late to prevent those already exposed to asbestos from suffering the devastating consequences. Many buildings constructed before the year 2000 still contain asbestos so many people may still be at risk of inhaling the fibers if the asbestos is disturbed.

As a founding member of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK we continue to work collectively to further the interests of asbestos victims.



Asbestos Lobby, TUC Congress 1976

MEET THE TEAM

Jo Ritson:

Jo has been involved with welfare rights work, with a specialism in disability rights, since the 1980's. Jo has been working with the Yorkshire and Humberside Asbestos Victims Support Group (SARAG) since 2011, when we were formally known as SARAG. She has experience of project development work and fundraising throughout the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, including volunteering as a trustee for a variety of different organisations over the years.

Jo's hobbies include reading birdwatching, the natural world and generally not being indoors. Despite getting on in life, she enjoys clambering up mountains (particularly Scottish ones) and listening to very loud rock music, preferably with a pint of beer.

Karen Hobson:

Karen is a Benefits Advice Worker with SARAG providing help and advice on entitlement to welfare benefits, with an emphasis on the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit Scheme (IIDBS) as it applies to those people with asbestos related diseases. Karen has lots of experience of helping people with work related health conditions having previously worked for the Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service (ROHAS) during which time she came across people who had been exposed to a range of workplace hazards.

Karen also has a background in claims handling having worked for British Coal in its claims handling department, in particular on the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Scheme.

Karen gains a lot of satisfaction from helping people step by step through what can be a difficult route to obtain the benefits and the compensation they deserve.

John Ward:

John Ward is a benefits Advice worker for SARAG. He has worked in the care industry for the last 20 years working for such employers as the NHS, the local authority, Housing associations and various charities. John states that his goal is to navigate his clients through the sea of DWP benefits as it can be very overwhelming, so they maximise their income and don't lose out on benefits they could be claiming. PIP, Pension Credits, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Industrial Injuries disability benefit are just a few of the benefits he can support you with, there are many more!

When John is not at work you can find him at a concert, on a mountain snowboarding or at a car boot rummaging.

Ruth Davies:

Ruth Davies works out of our Leeds office looking after clients who live in North and West Yorkshire. She was a Trustee of the charity Mesothelioma UK for 9 years.

Ruth started working for us in May 2020 having worked for many years on behalf of people and their families who had been affected by asbestos exposure.

Over the last year she has been helping people make Universal Credit claims. Before that she volunteered with Citizens Advice as an Advisor and with Cancer Support Yorkshire as a trainee counsellor.

MEET THE TEAM (CONTINUED)

Andy Turner:

Hi, my name is Andy Turner and I am proud and privileged to be employed by SARAG.

I am the Coordinator/Development Worker at SARAG and have the responsibility of managing the day to day operations and finances of the organisation. I have held this role from April 2019 when Paula Walker retired.

Before taking up this role I was a Trustee of SARAG and up until April 2019 was the Chair of Trustees, a position I had to give up when I became an employee of SARAG.

This is a very exciting time for all of us associated with SARAG. My current focus is to ensure we have the appropriate finance and structures in place to manage the development of the organisation.

The development of the organisation has been very challenging, due to the restrictions Covid-19 has placed on us, but with the support of the Trustees, supporters and the dedication and committed of my work colleagues, it is a challenge I am sure we will overcome. Stay safe and well.

Angie Mulligan:

Angie started working with SARAG at the beginning of April 2020. She works as the Coordinator, based in the Leeds Office, the focus of her role is to establish the organisation's activities throughout North and West Yorkshire and the Humberside region.

Angie has experience of devising and developing projects, including setting up and facilitating support groups and charitable funding. She also has extensive experience of providing information, advice and advocacy, around welfare benefits, housing, the welfare of vulnerable adults and children, disability and immigration.

Outside of work Ange is a qualified yoga teacher, she has a love of music, and animals and is an avid football fan.



SARAG was a founder member of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK. Asbestos victims' support groups in England started to spring up in the early 1990s, when the true scale of human suffering from asbestos-related diseases was at last accepted by the medical profession, industry, government, and health and safety regulators.

Asbestos victims' support groups in the North of England met informally to discuss issues of common concern, and to take collective action to further the interests of asbestos victims. We believed only by acting collectively can we represent asbestos victims effectively. It is for this reason that the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK was set up in 2005.

The Forum is open to all asbestos victims' support groups who work on behalf of asbestos victims. All groups are independent, not-for-profit organisations or registered charities. They must abide by the Forum constitution, and the Forum Principles which set out minimum standards for groups.

SARAG Annual General Meeting

Monday 26 October 2020

Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield

10.30 till 12.30

All welcome

Benefits Advice



Mr Moorhouse was diagnosed as having Asbestosis in 2018, his consultant, at the time, had advised him to get in touch with a solicitor. Unfortunately, the solicitor that he contacted informed him, after 2 years, that he did not have enough asbestos exposure to make a civil claim. The solicitor failed to advise him about his entitlement to Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or a lump sum payment through the Pneumoconiosis Worker Compensation Scheme.

Fortunately, his new hospital consultant advised him to get in touch with us and one of our benefits workers visited him at his home address. He told us that he had worked as a welder and had regularly had to remove asbestos lagging from pipes.

Our worker obtained details of his employment history and completed a claim for Industrial Disease Disablement Benefit and a lump sum payment through the Pneumoconiosis Workers Compensation Scheme.

Our worker also sent off an Employment History Request to HM Revenue & Customs to verify his employment details, this was used for accurate completion of his claim forms.

Mr Moorhouse was provided with details of reputable solicitor firms that specialize in dealing with, asbestos related, personal injury claims and advised to seek a second opinion around making a civil claim. He did so, quickly, before the expiry of the three-year time limitation. The details of his work history, that we had obtained from HMRC, were passed on to the solicitor that he had instructed, and his new solicitor progressed the claim.

Mr Moorhouse attended a medical assessment with the DWP and was awarded 20% in terms of Industrial Injury Disablement Benefit, which meant he receives a weekly payment of £35.30, he also received a lump sum payment of £8,108.

Action Mesothelioma Day Friday 3rd July 2020



SARAG had organised an event at Sheffield Cathedral to mark Action Mesothelioma Day for Friday the 3rd of July 2020 but, due to the circumstances around Covid-19, we have had to cancel this year's event. We are very disappointed but feel that holding the event would put too many people at risk.

It is hoped that once things get back to some sort of 'normal' we can incorporate some of the activities normally held on Action Mesothelioma Day into another SARAG events later in the year.

SARAG Coffee Mornings

Before the outbreak of Covid 19, SARAG had set up monthly Coffee Mornings unfortunately, we have had to suspend these.



We will be going ahead with these once the restrictions are removed so, please look out for further information on this.

The Coffee Mornings are a support group for people with asbestos related diseases and those who care for them. These meetings provide an opportunity to meet others who understand what you are going through, learn more about mesothelioma and asbestos related conditions and the help that is out there.



International Workers Memorial Day

Tuesday, 28th April,
was International
Workers Memorial

Day – when Trade Unions, workplace safety campaign groups and other concerned parties commemorate the sacrifices made by working people all over the world in terms of ill health, injuries, accidents and loss of life; all caused by working in unsafe conditions simply to provide a living for themselves and their families.

This year there was no public ceremony, but at SARAG paid our usual tribute to all workers, but especially to those harmed or killed by workplace asbestos exposure, by laying a wreath and holding a minutes silence in Sheffield. The remembrance event was managed to observe social distancing guidelines and was attended by about 20 people.



Representatives from SARAG were also part of a ZOOM meeting facilitated by Sheffield TUC. There were up to 100 people involved and discussion took place about workers health and safety, the importance of trade union health and safety reps in protecting workers health.

In 2020, SARAG still picks up the pieces of year upon year of failed health and safety practices. Our clients and their families suffer, as many workers lose their health and their lives to asbestos related disease, such as asbestosis, mesothelioma and other lung cancers that could and should have been prevented.

However, this year, as we remember and pay our respects to asbestos victims, Covid 19 and the current situation that all our essential NHS, care, emergency, transport, food, retail, postal and delivery workers find themselves in cannot be ignored. Once again, we see people being forced to work unprotected, without adequate health and safety measures.

And, this is happening while those far away from the front line – and therefore shielded from danger - get to make the decisions, hold the power, and call the shots.

In 2020, the lack of adequate PPE has already become the workplace scandal of this, a brand-new decade. Lifesaving lessons that should have been learned from past mistakes have simply not been heeded.

So, this year, our solidarity and our hearts went out to those affected by asbestos related disease. They also went out in equal measure to all our front-line colleagues working in these unprecedented, dangerous, and challenging times. You and your efforts will not be forgotten.

How to contact SARAG

Telephone:

Rotherham: 01709 360672

Leeds:

York:

Hull:

Email:

enquiries@saragasbestosupport.org

Twitter:

[@SARAG53892706](https://twitter.com/SARAG53892706)

Address

SARAG Unit 37, Moorgate Crofts Business

How you can help SARAG?

SARAG is only able to provide our service because of the generous donations made from our Solicitor panel members and individual donations.

We would like to take a moment to thank all of you who have donated or contributed to the charity over the years. Without this support the charity would cease to exist. Best wishes to you all.

If you feel you can donate to SARAG, please fill in your details below.

How to donate

- Complete the form below and make cheque payable to *“Yorkshire and Humberside Asbestos Victims Support Group”* and send to: SARAG, Unit 37, Moorgate Crofts Business Centre, South Grove, Rotherham S60 2DH
- JustGiving - www.justgiving.com
- Standing order/ Direct debit (contact us for information)

Name.....

Address.....

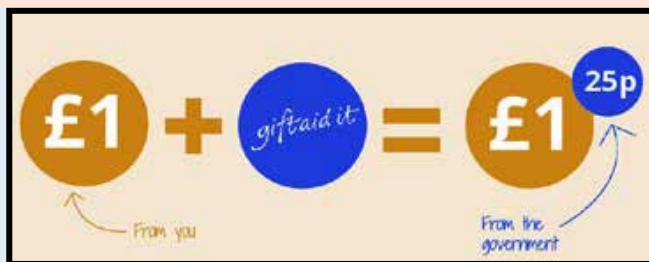
.....Post Code.....

Email.....

GIFT AID important (please tick):

Donation Amount: £

If you are a UK tax payer, for every £1 you donate we receive and additional 25p from HMRC !!



I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future to, Yorkshire and Humberside Asbestos Victims Support Group. I understand that I must pay an equal amount of UK income tax at least equal to the tax that SARAG will claim in my donations in each year (currently 25p for every £1 you donate).

DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT CONTACT DETAILS ?

SARAG are trying to update our mailing lists, it would be helpful if you could fill in the form below and return it to: **SARAG Unit 37, Moorgate Crofts Business Centre, South Grove, Rotherham S60 2DH**

Name.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Email.....

Mobile No.....Home No.....

You are receiving this newsletter because you are currently on our mailing list. If you wish to unsubscribe email: enquiries@saragasbestsupport.org or, phone the office on 01709 360672.