



Invite to our Annual General Meeting (AGM)

This year's AGM is planned to take place on Thursday 14th October at 11am at the Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. If you are unable to attend in person then we will also be providing an option to attend over Zoom, we hope that this will enable everyone who wishes to attend the opportunity to do so.

If you would like to join us to find out more about our activities then please do give us a call on **01709 360672** or contact us by email: enquiries@saragasbestosupport.org and we will provide further details and send out a Zoom link to the meeting nearer the time.

Update on the Loss of Compensation under the Pneumoconiosis Worker's Compensation Act (1979) due to delays in Industrial Injuries Medical Assessments

As previously reported, the DWP suspension of Medical assessments for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) has resulted in delays of awards for people who have been diagnosed with Asbestosis or Diffuse Pleural Thickening.

Lump-sum payments under the Pneumoconiosis Worker's Compensation Act (PWCA) are not made until IIDB is awarded and the amount awarded under the PWCA are dependent upon how old someone is at the time of award. As such this delay has resulted in a loss for those people who have had a birthday whilst waiting for an award to be made.

Along with our colleagues in the UK Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum, we had alerted MPs to this problem and are

pleased to report that we have finally received a response from Justin Tomlinson MP, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, who has confirmed that the DWP will be awarding a one-off Special Payment for the period of the suspension of face-to-face assessments. This will put claimants back into the position they would have been in had they not been affected by the suspension of services.

We have not been provided with any timescale as to when this payment will be made but understand that anyone affected by this issue will receive a letter which confirms whether they have qualified for a top-up payment due to the delays caused by the COVID19 pandemic, and the impact it has had on their claim to the Pneumoconiosis Act 1979.

Covid may have changed our lives but not our support for each other

Writing this blog from my kitchen table brings to mind the so many changes that have been thrust upon us all since the first lockdown which began nearly 18 months ago. I never envisaged then how the world would change so dramatically and probably irreversibly. However, one thing that has remained a constant throughout this time is the utter dedication and professionalism of the medical profession and in particular, the clinical nurse specialists and asbestos support groups, who have provided unwavering support to all victims of mesothelioma and asbestos-related conditions.

Adversity has ushered in ingenuity and we have all adopted new ways of working and staying in touch. Many support groups continue to hold coffee mornings online and have managed to generate significant charitable donations through fund raising efforts. At the virtual meetings we have attended we have been struck by the stoicism and enthusiasm of all the patients and clinicians. It is encouraging that so many wish to share their experiences with others despite these challenging days. Many of our clients have expressed that they have found friendship and kinship with fellow patients and have greatly benefited from the support services offered by SARAG and other groups.

Mesothelioma UK continue to provide support to an ever increasing number of nurse specialists throughout the UK, who are at the coal face providing care, consultation and treatment for those most in need. Their expert gave up to date advice about treatment options including trials has been and continues to be invaluable. Dr. Mavis Nye, Mesowarrior, continues to be the champion for all victims of mesothelioma and it's a testament of her enduring courage and enthusiasm that during lockdown she had been awarded, by the Queen, the prestigious British Empire Medal for her services, despite her own constant battle with the disease. What a true warrior! The legal profession has also adapted and innovated ways of working, offering virtual meetings for all of our clients which have proven to be an excellent way of building relationships and keeping in touch, where safe face to face contact is not yet preferred or possible. The use of technology to facilitate the claims process, whilst maintaining a high level of client care has been fundamental. We will build upon these experiences and the knowledge gained over the past 18 months to continue to improve our legal services and further streamline the claim process.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we have been able to continue achieving great results for our clients. Below we discuss a recent case we successfully pursued on behalf of a retired Police Superintendent who was diagnosed with peritoneal mesothelioma.

Peritoneal mesothelioma is a cancer that develops in the lining of the abdomen, which is known as the peritoneum. Like the most common type of mesothelioma which occurs in the lining of the lung, peritoneal mesothelioma is also caused by asbestos exposure. Peter* was enjoying his retirement after a successful

30 year career in the police when his condition developed. He had joined the force as a young cadet and once he qualified as a police officer a few years later, he rose through the ranks to become a superintendent. Sadly, 20 years into his retirement and now a full-time carer to his wife, he began to suffer with a distended stomach and swollen ankles.

Peter went to his doctor who referred him to hospital for investigation where, after various tests and procedures, he was told that he had developed peritoneal mesothelioma as a result of exposure to asbestos. This exposure could only have occurred during his time in the police force. Peter instructed us to pursue his claim and as a result of a painstaking investigation, we identified that Peter had been exposed to asbestos whilst retrieving boxes of files stored in basements near to boiler rooms of the various police stations where he had worked and also whilst supervising riot training undertaken twice a year at former MOD buildings constructed out of asbestos-containing materials.

As Peter's condition worsened with loss of appetite and weight, reduced exercise tolerance, side-effects from prolonged treatment, and the mental stress of his terminal condition, he became increasingly more worried about caring for his wife and how he could possibly continue to do so when he too had a debilitating medical condition.

Peter recalled flash bangs grenades being released during riot simulation training within the MOD buildings, causing significant disturbance of the building materials resulting in Peter being exposed to asbestos dust and fibres. This exposure was denied by the defendant and court proceedings were promptly commenced at the High Court so that a judge could be invited to decide whether Peter was exposed to asbestos as he alleged.

Peter exhibited great courage by, despite his declining health, giving evidence at an interim court hearing. His evidence was convincing and compelling and the defendant admitted liability shortly after Peter gave his evidence. Following the admission, a six-figure offer was put forward by the defendant in settlement of Peter's claim and following negotiation a settlement was agreed to conclude the claim. The settlement agreement included an order requiring the defendant to fund any treatment recommended to Peter not available to him on the NHS. The agreed settlement has allowed Peter to secure the private medical treatment recommended to him by his treating oncologist at no cost to Peter.

We were delighted to have been able to assist Peter to achieve this result in what was a challenging case.

His name has been changed for the purpose of anonymity

Jordan Bell
Head of Industrial Disease Team
Slater and Gordon

New Benefits Advice and Support Worker appointed to support our clients

We are delighted to have welcomed Doug Jewell to the team at SARAG. Doug joined the SARAG team at the beginning of July this year as a Benefits Advice and Support Worker. For the previous decade he had been working in a similar role for the Asbestos Support Central England Group and based in Birmingham, so joining SARAG meant a move to Yorkshire was on the cards.

As he said, “at least it’s the right side of the Pennines”.

Before becoming involved in the campaign for justice for asbestos victims Doug had a variety of jobs, from being a building maintenance worker to running campaigns for a human rights charity. In addition to this, he has also been involved in a wide range of community campaigns. None of which has stopped him from enjoying his main hobbies of reading, cooking and listening to a wide variety of music.

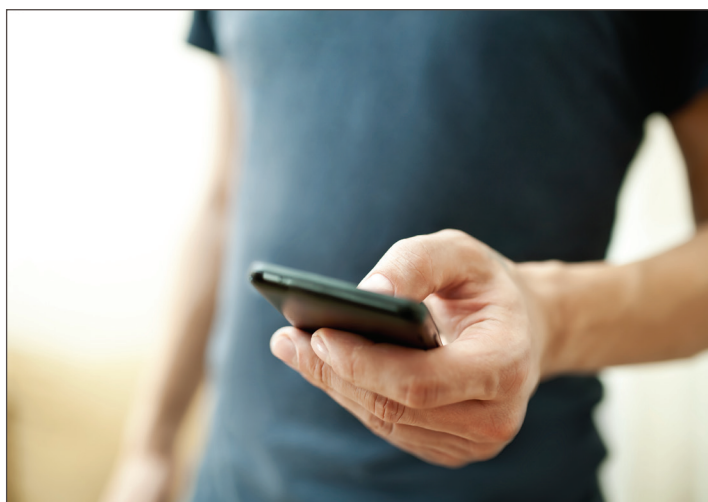
Clinical Trials for Mesothelioma Patients

Mesothelioma UK has launched a mobile app to provide mesothelioma patients with easy access to up-to-date information on UK-wide clinical trials.

The app, available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, provides general information about trials including different types and phases, things to consider before joining a trial and how to join.

Patients can then search for a trial which is suitable for their type and stage of mesothelioma. The app will tell patients everything they need to know including eligibility and exclusion criteria, treatment schedule, location and contact information.

The free app can be downloaded in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store by searching for ‘Mesothelioma UK’.



Effectiveness of the Health & Safety Executive regulations for managing asbestos to be reviewed

Despite the importation, supply and use of asbestos being banned in the UK since 1999, it remains the largest cause of work-related fatalities, with more than 5,000 deaths each year from asbestos-related diseases.

The Work and Pensions Committee have recently launched an inquiry into how the Health & Safety Executive manages the continued presence of asbestos in buildings. The inquiry will examine the current risks posed by asbestos in the workplace, the actions taken by the Health and Safety Executive to mitigate the risks, and how this compares to those taken in other countries. The results of this inquiry will feed into the Health and Safety executive’s review.

The Work and Pensions Committee have published a series of questions that they are seeking individual and group responses to. We have been working with our colleagues at the Asbestos Victim’s Support Groups Forum to provide a response.

For anyone who is interested in viewing the Terms of Reference and submitting a response, further details can be found at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/534/>

The deadline for responses is Friday 17th September 2021.

Legal support following an asbestos diagnosis after the death of a loved one

Marion Voss, an asbestos specialist at Thompsons Solicitors' Leeds office, talks through making a compensation claim – when asbestos-related disease is diagnosed after death.

It is always difficult coming to terms with the loss of a loved one – but finding out afterwards that it was caused by avoidable asbestos exposure is almost too much to bear.

Making decisions about what needs to be done and how to collect information for a claim that was not contemplated in life seems unfathomable.

However, SARAG and its panel of specialist asbestos solicitors, which includes those of us at Thompsons Solicitors, are used to these challenges and are here to provide advice and support in a clear and precise way, about how to make a claim for compensation.

We recently concluded a claim for Margaret from Rotherham, whose husband, Derek was diagnosed as having died from asbestosis after his death. Derek had not claimed any benefits or taken legal advice before he passed away and Margaret had nothing to go on to find out how her husband had been exposed to asbestos.

Margaret found herself having to consider these issues for the first time - obtaining benefits and legal advice - whilst grieving for late her husband.

Her claim was particularly difficult because her husband already suffered from serious ill-health difficulties, including dementia, which were not related to his exposure to asbestos. The key in Derek's case was that he had reported exposure to asbestos to his GP years prior and in those medical notes his work history was recorded.

With that knowledge, we sought out ex work colleagues, and got the confirmation we needed that Derek had been exposed to significant levels of asbestos while working at a steelworks from 1963 – 1981. With a bit of detective work in archive records and support from a contact at a SARAG event, we were also able to trace other potential witnesses.

Armed with this supportive evidence - which by now was pretty overwhelming- we were able to make a claim against the employer where Derek worked and they had little choice but to agree to settle the claim.

The medical evidence we obtained confirmed that despite other health problems, Derek's death was from asbestosis and Margaret was able to be compensated for her husband's untimely death.

Whilst anyone who thinks they've been exposed to asbestos, at work or elsewhere is always best to get legal advice immediately because a statement from them in person is the best evidence in a claim for compensation, Margaret's case highlights how we will always fight to get answers for those who have suffered as a result of asbestos – even when evidence is limited or the case is complex.

Union members can register any potential exposure in asbestos databases, but - as Derek did - we would also recommend recording any exposure, however small, with your GP so there is a note in your medical records recording your asbestos exposure.

As we mark our 100 year anniversary at Thompsons Solicitors – and almost 50 years since we brought about the first successful asbestos case to the House of Lords – our zeal to fight for those affected by asbestos whatever the circumstances are as determined as ever.

Coming Soon – Coffee Afternoons in Sheffield

Following the success of our recent afternoon tea event, we will soon be holding monthly coffee afternoons in Sheffield for our clients.

Anyone who has been affected by an asbestos-related disease in the Yorkshire and Humberside area is welcome to join us for a couple of hours of tea, coffee and biscuits. You'll have the opportunity to have a good chat and to share experiences and swap advice with people who understand, whether you have a personal diagnosis, are a family member or carer, or have been bereaved by an asbestos related disease.

We also plan to have professionals on hand for informal chats should you wish to access further information.

Over the coming months, we will be setting up further social events/coffee afternoons for our clients within the other cities we now cover following the development of our services across the Yorkshire and Humberside area.

If you would like to be kept updated on the Sheffield coffee afternoons, please contact our Activity and Support Co-ordinator, Laura Hogarth, on **07783510265** or email laura@saragasbestosupport.org



www.saragasbestossupport.org

Online Bereavement Peer Support Group

A small, friendly group of people who have been bereaved by asbestos-related diseases. We are here to listen and to provide support within a safe space.

We meet fortnightly online via Zoom; meetings take place every other Friday, 12-1.30pm. Open to those in the Yorkshire & Humberside area.

Dates of next meetings:

June 25th
 July 9th and 23rd
 Aug 6th and 20th
 Sept 3rd and 17th
 Oct 1st, 15th and 29th
 Nov 12th and 26th
 Dec 10th

Full support available beforehand if you've not used Zoom before.

For further information or to join us, please email our Activity & Support Coordinator, Laura Hogarth, on laura@saragasbestossupport.org or call/text on 07783510265.



Bereavement Peer Support Group Quotes

"I was sceptical at first about joining the group as I thought it would be too difficult for me or it wouldn't be useful. Since getting to know the others in the small group, I'm really enjoying the sessions. It helps to know that others have similar feelings and that I'm not alone in how I feel."

"It's a group you never want to have to join, but when you do it helps. You can unburden yourself and not feel bad about it because you know that everyone else has also been through a bereavement and they want to support you as much as you want to support them."

"It's often difficult to find someone to talk to about how you feel as you don't want to upset family members or keep bringing up the death of a loved one with those who also knew them. Talking things through with people who understand what you're going through really does help."



www.saragasbestossupport.org

Online Social Group

A small, friendly social group for people who have been diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease. An opportunity to have a good chat and to share experiences and advice with people who understand.

We meet fortnightly online via Zoom; meetings take place every other Friday, 12-1.30pm. Open to those in the Yorkshire & Humberside area.

Dates of next meetings:

June 18th
 July 2nd, 16th and 30th
 Aug 13th and 27th
 Sept 10th and 24th
 Oct 8th and 22nd
 Nov 5th and 19th
 Dec 3rd and 17th

Full support available beforehand if you've not used Zoom before.

For further information or to join us, please email our Activity & Support Coordinator, Laura Hogarth, on laura@saragasbestossupport.org or call/text on 07783510265.



Recent Social Events

Social Event – Picnic in the Park

On Friday 28th June we joined forces with the Mesothelioma Support Yorkshire (Messy group) to provide a picnic in Roundhay Park. Unfortunately, the sun failed to make an appearance, but despite the biting wind there was a really good attendance and the picnic blankets came in useful! It was lovely to finally meet people face to face after the long lockdown period, the food was great and everyone enjoyed the event.



Simon Bolton, a Mesothelioma Nurse Specialist, facilitates the Messy Group which aims to provide information, support and practical advice to people affected by Mesothelioma. If you are interested in attending please see below for further details.



Social Event – Afternoon Tea

Following the further easing of Covid restrictions, we also held an Afternoon Tea at the Showroom Cinema, Sheffield.

The event was attended by some of our clients, staff and Trustees. The food was fantastic and those who attended enjoyed a pleasant afternoon of socialising. Laura, our Activity and Support Coordinator intends to set up a monthly coffee morning in Sheffield, so if you are interested in attending please do get in touch.

The Picnic in the Park and the Afternoon Tea were kindly funded by the Barchester Foundation, we are very grateful for their support.



MESSY 
Mesothelioma Support Yorkshire

Meetings are every two weeks between 2–4pm.
Meetings are virtual and take place via Zoom.
Dates for 2021 are:

9 and 23 July 2021
6 and 20 August 2021
3 and 17 September 2021

MESSY will be supporting Action Mesothelioma Day on 2 July 2021, for details about the 2021 Action Mesothelioma Day events please contact Simon Bolton.

If you would like to know more about the Group, or would like a Zoom invite to the meetings, please contact Simon Bolton on 07717 693 177 or email simon.bolton1@nhs.net

You are invited to our Zoom session: “Navigating Your Wellbeing Through Bereavement”

SARAG’s Bereavement Peer Support Group is a small, friendly group of people in the Yorkshire & Humberside area who have been bereaved by asbestos-related diseases. We meet fortnightly via Zoom; meetings take place every other Friday, 12.00pm – 1.30pm.

On 3rd Sept, our group will open up to welcome Jennie Kate McCreight (Therapeutic Coach and Wellbeing Facilitator) who will be running a 30 minute session on “navigating your wellbeing through bereavement”. Jennie Kate will share a simple resource to help you identify and prioritise useful strategies which support your wellbeing. The session will take a gentle look at ways to manage mental health, in ourselves and others, and self-care in times of change, uncertainty and bereavement.

Attendees are then invited to stay for a taster session of our usual Bereavement Peer Support Group afterwards.

Date: Friday 3rd September 2021

Time: 12.00pm – 1.30pm

Full support is available beforehand if you’ve not used Zoom before.

If you’d like to attend, please email our Activity & Support Coordinator, Laura Hogarth, on laura@saragasbestossupport.org or call/text on **07783510265**.

For further info on Jennie Kate’s work, please see her JKChangeWork website: www.jkchangework.life and her coaching in nature website, Where The Mind Grows, www.wherethemindgrows.co.uk

Volunteer Opportunity

We are currently seeking volunteers for our new Telephone Support & Befriending Service, which will offer one-to-one support to people who are affected by asbestos related disease, including family members/carers and those who have been bereaved.

The aim of the service is to provide a ‘listening ear’ and emotional support, reduce isolation and loneliness and increase social and community connections.

The volunteer role will be based at our office in Rotherham, one day a week. Laura, our Activity and Support Coordinator will be on hand to offer assistance and support.

Ideally we are looking for someone who can demonstrate an understanding of working with people who may be in

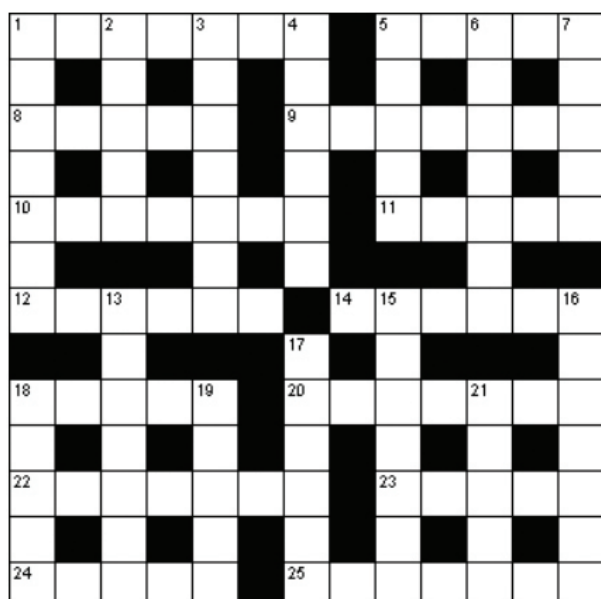
distress or adjusting to major change in their lives, and also an understanding of the hazards of asbestos, asbestos related disease and the issues facing people who are affected.

You will receive induction training, ongoing support and paid expenses as well as invaluable work experience in the charity and voluntary sector.

Due to the nature of the role (supporting and building trusting relationships with people who may be in distress/facing major life changes), you must be reliable and able to commit to working one day a week from our office for a minimum of 6 months.

For further information please contact our Activity and Support Co-ordinator, Laura Hogarth, on laura@saragasbestossupport.org or **07783510265**.

Further information can also be found on our website <https://saragasbestossupport.org/category/news/press-releases/>



Yorkshire Prize Crossword

Across

1. Seemliness (7)
5. Male duck (5)
8. Skin of the head (5)
9. Young hare (7)
10. Amaze (7)
11. Poverty-stricken (5)
12. Preferably (6)
14. Jail (6)
18. Dull persistent pains (5)
20. Wavelets (7)
22. Scornful words (7)
23. Gesture of indifference (5)
24. Easily irritated (5)
25. Non-surgical treatment (7)

Down

1. Abandon hope (7)
2. Seashore (5)
3. Ecstasy (7)
4. Tune (6)
5. County of SW England (5)
6. Stuffy (7)
7. Way in (5)
13. Casual garments (1-6)
15. Rejoinder (7)
16. Posy (7)
17. Punctual (6)
18. Useful or valuable quality (5)
19. Wobbly (5)
21. Immature form of insect (5)

Send your completed crossword back to us and you may be one of two lucky prize winners! Return your puzzle via post to the address on the back page, or email a photo to enquiries@saragasbestossupport.com. Remember to include your name and contact details.

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

Mobile No Home No

Gift aid IMPORTANT (please tick):

Donation Amount: £

If you are a UK tax payer, for every £1 you donate we receive an 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

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Contact us today

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