



DAST Newsletter
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February – March 2015 Edited by Joanne Gordon

This is our first newsletter of 2015 so please accept my belated New Year's wishes.

Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme increased

On 10th February 2015 the Government announced that payments under the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payments Scheme will increase from 80% to 100%. The scheme provides payment where a person who is diagnosed with Mesothelioma can prove they were negligently exposed to asbestos, but they are unable to trace a relevant employer or an insurance company against whom to pursue a personal injury claim.

As we (the Asbestos Support Groups' Forum) have been campaigning for 100% justice for a long time, we welcome this increase in payment but more needs to be done!

You may be one of the 200 people who have already received payment under the scheme; we are now campaigning for you to receive the additional 20% you were always entitled to. We also believe that anyone diagnosed with an asbestos related disease who cannot trace the relevant insurer should receive payment under the scheme.

BTOG Conference

On behalf of the Asbestos Support Groups' Forum, I attended the Annual BTOG (British Thoracic Oncology Group) Conference which was held in Dublin on 29th and 30th January.

This was an excellent opportunity for the Forum to make a presence.

The BTOG Conference was very well attended and included Respiratory Consultants, Surgeons, Oncologists, Researchers as well as Lung Cancer and Macmillan Nurses. Also in attendance were drug companies and a number of legal firms. Throughout the two days we heard about new trials which are recruiting patients for Mesothelioma and Lung Cancer. Mesothelioma UK have a list of all trials and if you are interested in finding out which are appropriate for you, please contact Mesothelioma UK on **0800 169 2409**.



The formal meal on Thursday 29th January provided Professor Fennell from Glenfield Hospital with an opportunity to promote the forthcoming International Mesothelioma Interest Group (iMig) Conference which will be held in Birmingham in 2016. Professor Fennell is proud that the next iMig Conference will be hosted in the UK and is already working on attracting delegates to the Conference. The Asbestos Support Groups' Forum is hoping to have a presence at the conference to welcome international delegates and provide information about the UK Mesothelioma patients.

Love Notes

by Yvette Oldham

In January this year I received an e-mail from the 'Kindred' Agency – who collated information for the Health and Safety Executive's 'Hidden Killer' campaign at the end of last year. They advised they are now working on a project that involves commissioning an artist to create a public artwork based around messages written by those who have lost loved ones to Mesothelioma. They wrote to the case studies used in the campaign, as well as support groups, to see if people would be willing to write a 'Love Note'. One-hundred Love Notes will be required, each one consisting of up to 30 words with a message from the bereaved to their loved ones.

Despite the emotions pulled to the fore, I penned my note and sent it off for consideration to the project. So now just waiting to hear what form the artwork will take - and the location - and hopefully will be able to provide an update in the next newsletter.

Yvette Oldham

Government Review of Asbestos Policy for Schools

Report by Michael Lees

The Government are considering the final draft of their report on the review of asbestos policy for schools. This is an opportunity that must not be squandered.

The Minister pledged that they would review their policy for schools when they received the conclusion of the Committee on Carcinogenicity (CoC) on the vulnerability of children to asbestos. In 2013 the CoC concluded that children are more vulnerable to exposure to asbestos, the younger the child the greater the risk. To put the scale of the problem into perspective a leading epidemiologist gave evidence

to the Education Select Committee that between two hundred and three hundred people will die each year from their asbestos exposure as a child at school. The latest statistics show that 158 school teachers died of Mesothelioma in the last ten years, in addition school secretaries, cooks, cleaners, caretakers and teaching assistants have died of Mesothelioma. However, the Minister informed us that the Health and Safety Executive have advised him that the risks to staff and pupils from asbestos in schools are very low, and because of that he cannot justify to the Treasury spending large amounts of money on remediating the problem of asbestos in schools. There must be very few people who would consider that the risks are very low when between 4,000 and 6,000 people will die of Mesothelioma over a twenty-year period from the simple act of attending school.

In 2013 Australia completed a review of their asbestos problem and introduced legislation that will, over time, eradicate asbestos from their buildings and finally eradicate asbestos disease. More than thirty years ago the USA carried out an audit of the extent of friable asbestos in their schools and estimated that over a thirty-year period 1,000 people would die, and for every teacher and support staff death from Mesothelioma, nine children would subsequently die from their exposure at school. Because they recognised the particular importance of protecting children, they introduced stringent asbestos laws specifically for schools and provided the resources so that they could effectively manage their asbestos.

Since 1999 the Mesothelioma incidence in the USA has gradually reduced and is now less than 13 per

million of the population per annum, whereas in Britain the Mesothelioma incidence continues to rise and is now 39.2 per million of the population per annum. Britain has the worst Mesothelioma incidence in the world, by far, and yet it is only now that we are reviewing our asbestos policy for schools.

The review has taken a year and the report is now eight months overdue. The dissolution of Parliament is on 30th March and, therefore, unless the review is published very soon there will not be time to debate it in Parliament or to introduce the necessary measures. For the sake of the present and future generations of children, teachers and support staff it is essential that the example of the USA and Australia are followed and a long term strategy introduced that will, over time, finally eradicate the danger of asbestos from our schools.

Michael Lees

Dates for your Diary

- **Coffee Morning for Patients and Carers**

There is still time to book a place.

Doubletree Hotel, Brayford Wharf, Lincoln, LN1 1YW on 27th March 2015 between 10.30am – 12.30pm.

A DAST benefits' advisor, along with a representative of Mesothelioma UK, will attend to answer your questions. Please bring along partners, relatives or friends. Tea, coffee and cake will be provided.

- **Afternoon Tea for bereaved relatives at the same venue
Time 1.30pm – 3.30pm**

There is still time to book your place.

If you have been bereaved due to your loved one's exposure to asbestos, please join us for afternoon tea. There will be an opportunity to chat to one another and to hear Yvette's story, who lost her husband to Mesothelioma. Representatives from Cruse will be present for an informal discussion.

- **Mesothelioma in the Midlands Conference**

**Monday 20th April 2015
11am – 4pm at 138 Digbeth,
Birmingham, B5 6DR.**

Speakers will include Liz Darlison, Mesothelioma UK, Professor Dean Fennell, Glenfield Hospital (an update on research), a representative from the Asbestos Support Groups' Forum. More details to follow.

- **Vintage Afternoon Tea
19th June 2015**

**from 1.00pm – 3.00pm
Imperial Rooms, Imperial
Road Matlock Derbyshire
DE4 3NL– more details to follow**

- **Action Mesothelioma Day
Friday 3rd July 2015 – details to be confirmed**

Fundraising News

From Sarah

DAST is pleased to be able to announce that we have finally been successful in securing a grant from the Big Lottery Fund! We have been awarded £110,215 for a three-year bereavement support project. We will shortly begin the recruitment process to fill the new job that has been created as a result. The Asbestos Bereavement Support Worker will support those contacting our office who have been newly bereaved, signposting them to counselling or accompanying them to inquests if this

is required. They will also set up a Befriending Scheme and an Asbestos Friends and Relatives Forum, to help people to find ongoing mutual support.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Watch this space for developments. Don't forget that you can get updates on DAST news online...find our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @dast24

Calling all runners! We still have one place on the Manchester 10K in May. We pay for the place, you just need to make your way to Manchester and pledge to raise over £100 in sponsorship. If you would like to grab the last space, then let us know as soon as possible. Free running vest provided! Alternatively, you can sponsor Joanne Gordon, our Co-ordinator. Please find enclosed sponsorship form.

Diary date: Due to the brilliant success of last year's 'Walk a Mile for Mesothelioma', we will be repeating the event this year. If you'd like to organise a walk in your area on the first weekend in September, please start thinking about it now and put a note in your

diary. We will provide sponsor packs to anyone taking part.

The 2014 total exceeded £2,500 – so a big THANK YOU to everyone who walked a mile for DAST.



Pictured, presenting a cheque to our Chair, Dave Trigg, are Paul Bickerton, Mark McFarlane, Steve Copestake, Kevin Sherlock and Steve Hughes.



William Bear now appears on his own card. These are blank inside and are available to buy in packs of 5 for £2.00 plus 50p contribution towards postage.

Donate to DAST

- To make a regular monthly donation, ask us for a standing order leaflet or download a form from our website www.asbestosupport.co.uk
- Donate online through The Big Give or Virgin Money Giving websites
- Send a cheque made out to DAST
- Save us your used ink cartridges, stamps and mobile phones
- Hold a fundraising event
- Leave a legacy – ask us for more information about leaving us a gift in your will. Many people also support us through an In Memoriam collection