

Mesothelioma

A guide to compensation for asbestos related illness, mesothelioma

Expert advice

Being diagnosed with mesothelioma can be both shocking and devastating news for the person diagnosed and their family. Having specialised in cases of mesothelioma for many years, Slater and Gordon understand just how much life can change at this time and it's our aim to make the claims process as easy as possible for everyone concerned.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral that has been mined for hundreds of years and was used due to its fireproof qualities. There are three common types of asbestos which are Chrysotile (white), Amosite (brown) and Crocidolite (blue).

Where might exposure to asbestos take place?

Asbestos was once used everywhere. It was used at home, in schools and other public places. Most people who develop an asbestos related illness were exposed to asbestos many years ago whilst working in professions such as:

- engineers
- plumbers
- joiners
- ladders
- dockyard workers

and could be found in places such as:

- lagging on pipework and boilers
- artex and ceiling tiles
- fire proof insulation
- linoleum floor tiles
- panels, boards and partitions

What is mesothelioma?

Mesothelioma is a form of cancer which can occur in the lining of the lungs and the linings of certain other organs. It's nearly always caused by breathing in asbestos dust, which causes damage to the cells of the pleura and the outer linings of the lungs and internal chest wall.

It's thought that over time, this damage results in changes which can eventually turn them into cancerous cells.



What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms of mesothelioma are breathlessness, chest pain, tiredness and weight loss.

How is mesothelioma diagnosed?

A diagnosis of mesothelioma will be made following investigations which normally include x-rays and a CT scan. Although a CT scan provides strong evidence to diagnose mesothelioma, a definite diagnosis can only be obtained from looking at the cells and tissue, which is usually done by way of a biopsy under local or general anaesthetic.

Is there treatment available for mesothelioma?

Although there is no known cure for mesothelioma, there are treatments available which may ease suffering, such as:

- Talc pleurodesis
- Radiotherapy
- Chemotherapy
- Extrapleural pneumonectomy
- Pleurectomy-decortication
- New treatments / clinical trials
- Physiotherapy

Advice on making a claim for compensation

For those who don't have experience of the legal process, contacting a lawyer and making a claim for compensation can be a daunting prospect. However, we're with our clients every step of the way, ensuring they understand the claims process, and relieving the burden of having to deal with a variety of practical issues, at what can be a difficult time.



What should you do if you think you have a claim?

Contact us. Our team of specialists have a vast amount of experience in dealing with asbestos related illnesses such as mesothelioma, and have been involved in some of the most important and ground-breaking cases.

Once we've taken details, we'll confirm whether or not you have a claim. If you are entitled to compensation, we can start work on your case straightaway and begin gathering evidence. Time limits apply when making a claim for compensation, so don't delay in contacting us.

What is the cost of making a claim?

We understand that the cost of legal advice can be a worry, but there are options available to fund injury claims.

You may have legal expenses insurance under an existing insurance policy which will entitle you to free representation. If legal expenses insurance is not in place, we can conduct your case under a Conditional Fee Agreement, also known as a 'No Win, No Fee' Agreement. This means if the case fails, no payment is due.

Once we know the circumstances of your claim, we'll be able to discuss your funding options in more detail.

What is the amount of compensation likely to be?

Compensation is based on your personal circumstances and it's aim is to put you in the same financial position that you were in before the onset of mesothelioma. Compensation is awarded for pain and suffering to reflect the nature and severity of the case, together with any financial losses.

Most mesothelioma sufferers receive compensation somewhere between £100,000 and £300,000, although in some cases the awards can be a lot higher.

Where the employer admits fault, it may be possible to get an interim payment (a payment which is made before the case reaches settlement).

Frequently asked questions

Will I have to go to court?

A large majority of cases settle before a trial takes place. However, if the case doesn't settle before trial, attendance at court may be necessary.

Can I claim compensation if my employer has gone out of business?

Don't worry if the company has gone out of business. It is often still possible to trace their insurers. Our Industrial Disease team has unrivalled expertise in tracing insurance providers of companies which have been out of business for many years. We often take over cases and succeed in tracing the company's insurers, where other firms have failed.

What if I've lost a loved one due to mesothelioma?

A claim can still be made by the Estate's legal representative (the person named as Executor in the Will if there is one) or otherwise by a family member.

What if there's an inquest?

An Inquest can be a daunting prospect for a bereaved family. We have a team of specialist lawyers with a vast amount of experience in representing families at Inquests. They can guide families through the process and ensure all their questions are addressed with empathy and understanding and that the events are investigated thoroughly.

What if I need assistance in other areas?

We have expert lawyers in many areas of law such as family, employment, welfare benefits, trusts, and disability rights and work closely with those departments to ensure that you get the best possible outcome.