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Regional letter – Mesothelioma Bill

Victims of a fatal work-related lung cancer will benefit from a parliamentary Bill which aims to provide compensation to those who would otherwise receive nothing.

Mesothelioma does not develop until many years after exposure to asbestos. By this time, the responsible employer's insurer sometimes cannot be found and therefore does not have to pay much-needed compensation. Dying people are left without the support to make them more comfortable in their final months and the reassurance that their families will be financially cared for after they've gone. The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) of which I am president, is one of many victims' groups which have campaigned for more than a decade to help the victims of Liverpool's industrial legacy.

There is no doubt that the Government should be applauded for taking action. But, unfortunately, the Mesothelioma Bill does not go far enough. Victims will receive only 75 per cent of the damages they would receive if they were able to take their cases to court, as many people still can.

It is profoundly unfair that those who are forced into using this scheme, firstly because their disease has been caused needlessly by an employer's negligence, and then because insurance records have been lost over time, should be penalised.

Dying people, who are paying the price for simply turning up for work, should not be made to continue subsidising the insurance industry, which has taken premiums for decades precisely to pay this kind of compensation. MPs must challenge this as the Bill progresses in the New Year.



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