ASBESTOS VICTIMS FIGHT FOR COMPENSATION AGAINST "CYNICAL" INSURERS

In what is being described as yet another "cynical attempt" by the insurance industry to dodge its responsibility to injured people, those who have been exposed to asbestos may lose their right to claim compensation.

For the past twenty years, the courts have awarded compensation to people with 'pleural plaques' – a scarring of the lungs which stems from exposure to asbestos. In a series of court hearings beginning today (November 8), insurers will try to overturn the law and persuade the courts that compensation for pleural plaques should be scrapped.

Colin Ettinger, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) fired a broadside at the industry for attempting to "side-line its responsibility."

"People diagnosed with pleural plaques are living in fear because they know they have been negligently exposed to asbestos," said Colin. "They are living under a black cloud day after day, wondering if they are going to develop a lung disease which could kill them.   These people are bound to be worried sick about what the future holds for them."

Ettinger says insurers' attempts to refuse people compensation is typical of their passion to put profits first.

"This is just another example of insurers trying to wriggle out of paying fair compensation," he said. "For years and years they did nothing to set premiums at the right level, even though they were fully aware of the dangers of asbestos and the consequences of exposure.

"Now they expect these people, who have been subjected to negligence, to bail them out and it is simply unbelievable."

The hearings begin today at the Manchester High Court.

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