

PLAQUES VICTIMS MUST RETAIN RIGHT TO COMPENSATION

Claimant lawyers are adamant that sufferers of pleural plaques must retain their right to compensation, as insurers prepare for a second time to persuade the courts that payments should be abolished.

Cases due to be heard in the Court of Appeal next week (from 14 November) follow an earlier, unsuccessful attempt by the insurance industry to overturn the law and block compensation for the asbestos-related condition. Richard Langton, vice president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said the appeals demonstrated how far insurers would go to save money.

“When these cases were heard last year, we said that it was nothing more than a greedy and shameless attempt by insurers to save yet more money at the expense of injured people,” he said.

“People diagnosed with pleural plaques have suffered physical damage because of exposure to asbestos, and are playing a waiting game to see if they go on to develop a disease which could kill them.

“They are not what some people describe as ‘worried-well’. This is an insult to people who are suffering from a medical condition which causes nothing less than mental torture, wondering day in day out if they are going to develop an illness which could devastate, if not end, their lives because someone negligently exposed them to asbestos. There should be no question about whether they should be compensated for this exposure and the consequent years of suffering.”

Insurers are arguing that compensation should not be paid as claimants have no ‘physical’ symptoms.

The six appeals will be heard on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday next week.

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