London Asbestos Support Awareness Group (LASAG)

Services Guide

FOR ANYONE AFFECTED BY MESOTHELIOMA OR OTHER ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES IN LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST

London Asbestos Support Awareness Group

Registered Charity No. 1174543

0808 278 2515

www.LASAG.org.uk

LASAG Support Workers

Marika Townsend

Educated to Masters level, Marika has worked with cancer patients most of her nursing career. She worked as a Clinical Nurse Specialist for the last 17 years in both palliative care and lung cancer. Her knowledge and experience has enabled her to support patients and families medically, emotionally and practically throughout their cancer journey. It seemed a natural progression after her retirement as a Lung Cancer CNS to work with LASAG where she is able to use much of her previous experience.

Yvonne Miah

Having completed her initial nursing training in the early 1980s, Yvonne continued her education up to PG Diploma/MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice (cancer nursing) at the University of Surrey. She completed 33 years in the health service, having worked at St Francis Hospice and in numerous hospitals, and has cared for many sufferers of asbestos disease. After retiring, she found it difficult to leave it all behind, so she felt well placed with her past knowledge and experience to undertake the role with LASAG.

Alison Blake

Alison spent 24 years at the Department of Work and Pensions, initially as a benefits advisor and then progressing into managerial roles. She became a board member for one of the first Maggie's Cancer centres and worked on a voluntary basis as a Samaritan. When Asbestos Action Tayside was first set up, Alison was appointed to manage the charity - providing practical and emotional support for sufferers and their families. She moved to Kent in 2014 and joined LASAG where her empathetic and friendly nature, together with expertise in her field helps provide people with the reassurance, guidance and support they need.

Denise Hodges

Denise started her nursing career as an adult nurse in acute medicine. She then went on to work with bowel cancer patients as a nurse practitioner. For the past 7 years she has worked as a Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist. During this time she set up 2 very successful support groups. Denise has gained a lot of knowledge and experience of mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases during her time as a Lung Cancer CNS and has attended many workshops and conferences. Having now retired from the NHS and joined LASAG she feels that her knowledge and experience will be invaluable in supporting sufferers of asbestos related diseases.

About LASAG

The London Asbestos Support Awareness Group operates across London and the South East. The Group was set up by The London Hazards Centre Trust Limited, a registered charity, established in 1984. LASAG obtained independent charity status in 2017.
All of the services offered by LASAG are free.

Advice & Support

Our Support Workers are very experienced in supporting sufferers of mesothelioma and other asbestos related conditions, and understand the impact such diseases have on individuals and their families, both physically and psychologically. They are also knowledgeable about state benefits and compensation schemes, and maintain close liaison with other key professionals in the care of the sufferer and their families.

Home Visits

Our team are available to visit individual sufferers in the comfort of their own home, or can be contacted by telephone, to assist with paperwork and provide ongoing support and guidance.

Support Group Meetings

LASAG holds monthly support group meetings for sufferers and their carers to meet others undergoing the same experience. Our experienced staff, together with specialist guest speakers and other professionals will be available to provide information, advice or a listening ear in a safe and private environment.

Help With Compensation

We can signpost to legal advice and help from lawyers who are experts in dealing with asbestos disease claims.

Feedback

“It is so nice to speak to people with the same condition as myself. And so interesting for me and my wife to listen to the guest speakers. This is a marvellous group run by such lovely people who are so kind and helpful and nice to know they are always at the end of the phone. Long may it continue.” **Ron**

“Marika, I have benefited greatly from your visits which have become an essential lifeline for me as a cancer sufferer. The charity is a very important part of the overall support required by patients affected by asbestos related diseases.” **Andy**

"These sessions I find amazing. I leave at the end of them feeling very elated. After being with people in the same boat as me, my fears and worries are sent back to where they belong and my positive mental attitude is maintained." **Lewis**

“I was given a booklet about LASAG when my diagnosis was confirmed of mesothelioma so gave them a call and was contacted by Marika. We made an appointment and she came to see me at my house and I was really impressed with her knowledge that she had about cancer and what LASAG could do to help me. All my options were explained to me in clear layman’s terms and Marika helped me fill in all the forms needed to put a claim in for compensation, she also called the DWP and made a claim on my behalf for PIP. Once this was done she gave me my options for contacting a solicitor so that I could pursue a civil compensation claim. I am very grateful to LASAG as you need support at a time like this and Marika has given support and advice ever since.” **BM**

“Yvonne came to see us. She was very helpful giving us all the advice on welfare benefits and other support numbers to help make things easier. She was in regular contact with visits and phone calls. Indeed all through Norman’s treatment and end of life and his passing, the LASAG team have been brilliant. I still get phone calls asking me how I am.” **Valerie**

“Alison, thank you so much for your visit. I am so glad I made the call to LASAG, the bonus being was to meet such a good person like you. The help you have given us so far has made everything feel so much easier.” **Ken and Heather**

“Thank you for coming to see me yesterday. My head's been in a bit of a spin over the past few weeks, so it was good to take time out with you and learn more about my diagnosis and the support you can offer. Notwithstanding the irreplaceable support and love that my family bring, you tend to feel a little isolated once you're outside of the direct care that the medical professionals have been providing. I understand now the importance of the support that you and your organisation offers to sufferers of asbestos related diseases, and how it provides a vital and seamless link between all the various elements of the process. I look forward to staying in touch and will get along to the support group meeting at Canterbury at the first opportunity I have.” **Keith**

What Is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring, fibrous mineral. It was used extensively in the UK from the 1900s. Due to its huge versatility, asbestos was moulded into many forms, including sheeting and cloth. Many people have been exposed to asbestos fibres through their own work, the work of colleagues near to them, washing a family member's contaminated clothing or living near to an asbestos factory. The exposure is likely to have taken place many decades ago. Not everyone who has been exposed to asbestos will develop an asbestos related condition. However, for those people who do, it is important that they receive independent and impartial advice from specialists.

Examples of Asbestos Products

Cement Roof

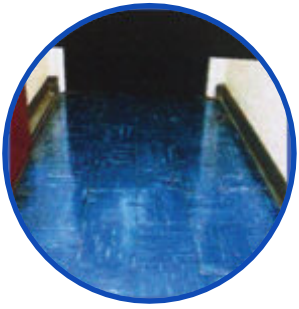
Cement Tiles

Pipe Lagging

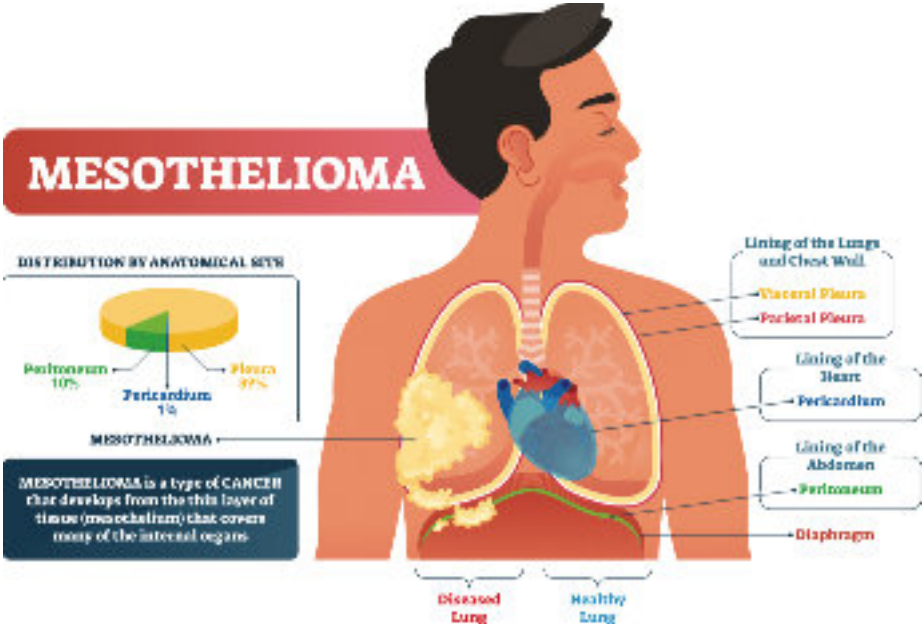
Ceiling Tiles

Insulating Boards

Floor Tiles



Asbestos Related Diseases



Mesothelioma is an incurable cancer caused by exposure to asbestos dust and fibre. It usually develops in the fluid in the lining of the lungs (pleural mesothelioma) but can also affect the lining of the abdomen (peritoneal mesothelioma) and the lining of the heart (pericardial mesothelioma).

Lung cancer can be caused by significant exposure to asbestos dust and fibre over a period of time. Lung cancer can have causes other than exposure to asbestos, the most common being smoking.

Asbestosis is the name for fibrosis in the lung caused by significant exposure to asbestos. This condition is caused when large quantities of asbestos fibres, over time, damage the inner structure of the lungs, resulting in breathlessness.

Pleural thickening is caused when asbestos fibres breathed in penetrate the lining or pleura of the lungs, causing thickening of this lining. This causes restriction to breathing because the lungs cannot expand fully.

Pleural plaques are areas of scarring on the lining of the lungs caused by asbestos fibres penetrating the lining of the lung. They may become more extensive but they do not develop into any other asbestos disease.

Please contact us if you have been diagnosed with any of these conditions. Time limits apply to civil compensation claims and for certain benefits, so don't delay.

East Kent
Hospitals University
NHS Foundation Trust

Kent and Canterbury Hospital
Ethelbert Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 3NG

01227 868666

11th December 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LONDON ASBESTOS SUPPORT AWARENESS GROUP

I have referred many mesothelioma patients to the above group for help and advice with claiming compensation and benefits relating to their disease.

The Support Workers are retired Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists and due to this their professional knowledge and experience of mesothelioma is extensive.

I have had nothing but positive feedback from my patients who have been helped by LASAG. From my perspective I feel that because the service is run by professionals who I know and trust, I can refer patients to them confident in the knowledge that they will be given the best advice and support.

Toni Fleming,

Macmillan Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist

Customer Commitment Charter

We will do all we can to give you the best service, support and care that we can and make sure that you are looked after properly. We will think about the people we look after and make sure they are happy with our services. We want you to tell us what you need and we will tell you how we can help. We work with other people like nurse specialists and benefits advisors to make sure that you get the care that you need. We want to make sure our services improve by talking to people and coming up with new ideas. These are our stated commitments to you:

Commitment 1
We will help our staff to care about you and how you feel. To help them do this, we make sure they have the training and development they need.

Commitment 2
We will make sure that every time you see us you are happy with our services.

LASAG staff will: Be polite, respectful and caring; Tell you the truth; Take time to listen to you; Tell you our name and contact details; Tell you what will happen, if we can't help, we will tell you who can give you information you understand; Answer your questions as quickly as we can.

Commitment 3
We will try to understand what you need and give you the best service we can.

LASAG staff will: Ask you if we could do anything better; Treat you as a person - This means we will think about you and your needs; Tell you what we can and can't do; Keep information about you private and secure remaining compliant with GDPR at all times.

Commitment 4
We will try to make the places we meet you friendly, safe and easy to access.

LASAG staff will: Be friendly and welcome you; Think about your needs and support you when you use our services; Make sure the places we see you are safe, clean and tidy.

Commitment 5
We will listen to what you say and make changes if we can.

LASAG trustees and managers will: Listen to what our customers have said; Decide if we need to make changes; Make sure our staff learn from each other and from good practice from elsewhere.

NEED HELP?
Our Operations Director can support you. You can ask a question or tell them if you are unhappy about something. (Support@LASAG.org.uk)

Our Complaints Policy and Procedure is available on request

Legal Help and Compensation

If you or a family member have been diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease, you may be entitled to compensation. If you were exposed to asbestos in your workplace, it may be possible to bring a claim against your former employer, even if the employer went out of business a long time ago. Alternatively, your condition may have been caused outside of your work, for example from washing a family member's asbestos contaminated work clothes.

Whatever asbestos-related disease you have and however you believe it was caused, it is important that you obtain legal advice from a specialist solicitor. LASAG's carefully selected panel of expert solicitors will provide the right advice and will pursue a claim for you whenever possible. This legal service is FREE, whatever the outcome of the claim.

You may know how your asbestos exposure occurred but frequently, people don't recall where or how they were exposed to asbestos. One of the solicitors from LASAG's panel of specialist law firms will meet you at home and go through your work history and other possible sources of exposure to find out when, where and how you came into contact with asbestos.

Why claim? It has been known for many decades that asbestos was dangerous to health. From the mid 1960s employers knew it caused mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases and yet many employers took no precautions to protect their workers.

Compensation value: The aim of compensation is to put you in the same financial position as though you hadn't developed mesothelioma. Although the amount awarded in each case is different, the amount of compensation is usually substantial.

Timing & Time Limits: A claim should be brought within three years of the date of diagnosis or within three years of the date of death. Asbestos related compensation claims are dealt with as quickly as possible by our panel solicitors and the Courts have fast track procedures in place for dealing with asbestos claims.

Legal Fees: If the case is successful then the organisation paying your compensation will also pay your legal costs. If your case is unsuccessful then there is no charge to you. Our panel solicitors will explain how the costs work when they meet with you.

How can LASAG help? We can signpost you to expert solicitors who specialise in asbestos disease claims. To be on our specialist panel, they have had to prove they are law firms which only represent people with asbestos-related conditions and never act for organisations defending asbestos disease claims.

Please note that LASAG does not accept any responsibility relating to the appointment of a solicitor. Each of LASAG's panel firms of solicitors are completely independent of LASAG.

Fundraising

Everything we do depends on the generous donations of our supporters. We have included different ways to support us below.

Fundraising

Individual Donations

Corporate Donations

Volunteering

I wish to make a donation to LASAG for £____ by Cheque / Cash / Standing Order

Please make cheques payable to: London Asbestos Support Awareness Group
Post to: Farthings, Bridle Lane, Loudwater Rickmansworth Herts. WD3 4JQ

Bank Transfer/Standing Orders should be made to London Asbestos Support Awareness Group
Bank: Lloyds **Account Number:** 18406368 **Sort Code:** 30-98-90
(Please get in touch if you require a Standing Order mandate)

Credit and Debit Card donations can also be made online: www.justgiving.com/LASAG

Title:	**Name:**
Address:	
	Postcode:
Email:	**Phone:**

Please let us know how we can keep in touch with you by ticking the relevant boxes below.

I am happy for LASAG to contact me by (tick all that apply): ☐ Post ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ SMS

giftaid it	Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate by ticking the Gift Aid box *	☐ I am a UK taxpayer and wish to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years.

*You must pay income tax equal to the tax reclaimed by the charity on the donation. If you pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all donations in that tax year it is your responsibility to pay any difference.

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Support Groups

for anyone affected by mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases

Join us for coffee, cake and conversation at your nearest support group.

An opportunity to meet others living with the disease

Regular talks on topics including:

- Managing Diet
- Clinical Trials
- Hobbies & Interests
- Benefits available
- Alternative therapies
- Updates on new treatments
- Advice on insurance
- Health and Wellbeing

Our experienced staff together with specialist guest speakers and other professionals will be available to provide information, advice or a listening ear in a safe & private environment.

Canterbury

Second Tuesday (2pm - 4pm)
Ashford Road Community Association
151 Ashford Road,
Thanington Without,
Canterbury, Kent CT1 3XR
Contact: Alison Blake
M: 07585 337230
E: alison@LASAG.org.uk

Sevenoaks

Third Wednesday (2pm - 4pm)
The Luggage Room
Bat & Ball Station,
Bat & Ball Road
Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 5AP
Contact: Marika Townsend
M: 07880 201751
E: marika@LASAG.org.uk

Dagenham

Last Thursday (11am - 1pm)
Toby Carvery Moby Dick,
Whalebone Lane North,
Dagenham, Essex RM6 6QU
Contact: Yvonne Miah
M: 07917 194454
E: yvonne@LASAG.org.uk

Bexley

First Friday (2pm - 4pm)
Baldwyne Park Baptist Church
The Manse, Dartford Road
Bexley, Kent DA5 2AY
Contact: Marika Townsend
M: 07880 201751
E: marika@LASAG.org.uk

London

First Tuesday (11am - 1pm)
Dimbleby Offices, Ground Floor
Guys Cancer Centre.
Great Maze Pond, London SE1 9RT
Contact: Rachel Thomas
T: 0207 188 4758
E: Rachel.C.Thomas@gstt.nhs.uk

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Postal Address:

20-22 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU

Charity Registered Address:

Farthings, Bridle Lane, Loudwater

Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 4JQ

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