
Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

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Government Exempts Mesothelioma Sufferers from Paying Legal Costs under Legal Aid Bill

The Government gave way to pressure from the House of Lords in the debate on the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Prosecution of Offenders Bill and agreed to exempt mesothelioma sufferers from the provisions in Part 2 of the Bill which require claimants to pay up to 25% of their damages in legal costs.

Lord Alton successfully moved the amendment to exempt mesothelioma sufferers, which was subsequently overturned in the Commons, but with the second lowest majority in this Parliamentary session. Five Conservative MPs and two Lib Dem MPs voted against the Government.

Lord Alton won the vote on the amendment again when it returned to the Lords and on return to the Commons on the 24th April the Government agreed to exempt mesothelioma sufferers from paying legal costs until the impact of the Bill on mesothelioma sufferers is properly assessed and a report is made to the Lord Chancellor.

Tony Whitston, Forum Chair said:

“Lord Alton has rendered a great service to mesothelioma sufferers in moving this amendment through the Lords with support from Peers from all parties and none. Many MPs from all parties simply could not stomach taking compensation from people dying from the fatal asbestos cancer, mesothelioma. It is vital that this concession is honoured and that there are no further attempts to reduce compensation to mesothelioma sufferers.”

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