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**Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum
UK**

News Release

No Embargo

Government Acts to Help Sick and Dying Asbestos Victims

Today, Lord McKenzie, Minister Department of Works and Pensions, announced the publication of a consultation document to introduce a tracing office to locate employers Liability insurance and an insurance fund of last resort to pay compensation where insurance cannot be traced.

Tony Whitston, Chair, Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum says:

“Government’s decision to set up a fund of last resort for injured workers, whose employers’ liability insurers cannot be traced, is welcomed wholeheartedly by asbestos victims throughout the UK. At last, dying asbestos victims, who, through no fault of their own, cannot trace their employers’ insurance may be able to call on a fund of last resort. This landmark decision by government addresses a long-standing and fundamental injustice and, if implemented, will provide comfort and solace to many people affected by asbestos disease.”

For further information contact Tony Whitston Tel: 0161 636 7555 and 07748189387

Employers Liability Insurance Bureau (ELIB)

Because asbestos diseases develop several decades after exposure to asbestos, companies that exposed asbestos victims to asbestos are often no longer trading by the time the disease develops. Since there has never been a system to record employers liability insurance policies, it is often impossible to trace an insurer to recover compensation.

Employers' liability (EL) insurance has been compulsory since 1972 and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) research shows that over 99% of employers held EL insurance. But, the Association of British Insurers' insurance tracing scheme shows for 2008 that only 46% of post-1972 insurance enquiries were successful.

In almost all cases, insurers were paid for EL insurance and the Government expects them to honour the liability they have for insurance they wrote, even if the insurance policy cannot be traced.

This approach is consistent with that taken for injured motorists where the Motor Insurance Bureau pays where a negligent motorist fails to hold insurance or that insurance cannot be traced.