Service Guide

For anyone affected by Mesothelioma or other Asbestos related diseases in London and the South East, including Essex, Kent and Hertfordshire

Registered Charity No.1174543

London Asbestos Support Awareness Group

0808 278 2515
www.lasag.org.uk
**Testimonials**

“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

“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

“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

“LASAG are an incredible organisation. Louise has been a massive help, giving both sound advice and much needed support to my parents as my father is suffering from Mesothelioma. With the rock of LASAG support, our family can move forward with direction and understanding, no longer feeling lost in the enormity of the situation. My Dads application for a disabled parking permit has been approved and should be with him in approximately ten days. Thanks again for everything!”

Dave Knight

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“Many people in Swindon, because of the old railway works, have suffered over past years from various lung diseases, including Mesothelioma. As someone, who has lived in the town since 1970, as a teacher and FE manager, it was a major shock to receive a diagnosis of Mesothelioma. It followed a year of increasing breathlessness. Having undertaken various searches on the Internet, I came across LASAG and their close link to Hodge Jones & Allen. I have nothing but thanks to both organisations for their encouragement and help in getting me the various benefits and lump sums available to Mesothelioma sufferers. Thanks particularly to Kelly from LASAG and Lorna from HJ&A.”

Pete

“After my diagnosis I understandably found myself with a range of emotions, not least of which complete shock. As part of my consultation, I was handed a range of information and leaflets for advice and support and one of these was for the London Asbestos Support Awareness Group. I am so pleased that I was given this information and that I reached out to find out more. The London Asbestos Support Awareness Group has provided me with so much support, one of the most useful things to me has been advice on how to talk to my friends and family about my diagnosis. In addition to the coaching support, they were able to give me information that enabled me to get the right legal support, in addition to understanding and claiming benefits needed to help me deal with my illness and importantly to understand it. I highly recommend attending the support groups and I find these incredibly useful to meet and talk to other people in a similar position to myself. I can’t recommend the support groups strongly enough, they are friendly and extremely professional, and I have found it is good to talk!”

Colin Denton
Our services

We offer a wide range of FREE services to all our Mesothelioma and other asbestos related disease sufferers, in a variety of ways.

Advice and support
Our support workers are very experienced in supporting sufferers of Mesothelioma and other asbestos related conditions, and fully understand the impact such diseases have on individuals and their families, both physically and psychologically. They are very knowledgeable about state benefits payments and will assess your eligibility to ensure you are receiving your full entitlement. They maintain close working relationships with Clinical Nurse Specialists and other key professionals in the care of the sufferer and families.

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

Support group meetings and events
Our staff hold monthly support group meetings across London, Essex and Kent for sufferers and their carers to meet others undergoing the same experience. Our experienced support staff, together with special guest speakers and other professionals will be available to provide information, advice or a listening ear in a safe and private environment. We have good working relationships with Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) meaning they are available to us to answer any questions about your treatment plan (with your consent) or symptoms you are experiencing.

Help with compensation
Our support workers will provide information about FREE legal advice from a panel of lawyers who are experts in dealing with asbestos disease claims and have the full interest of sufferers at heart.

Care at home support
We have dedicated staff members who have vast experience in the social care sector and are able to provide information to sufferers when applying for funding for those who require care and would like to continue to live at home. We can liaise with the local authority, continuing healthcare teams, palliative care support as well as advise on how district nursing, occupational therapists and dieticians can support you to continue to live at home.

Befriending service
We are able to offer a befriending service for a friendly chat for those who feel alone and overwhelmed.

Bereavement support
If you have been affected by the loss of a loved one either recently or in the past, our support workers may provide bereavement support to you. We are also able to signpost you to other local organisations who will be able to support you if you are struggling with your grief. St Clare Hospice offers a Grief Helpline which is open to everyone in the local community and offers emotional support over the phone. They also have a number of bereavement cafes allowing you to connect with others who have had similar experiences to you.
Our team

Our team is very diverse and is experienced in supporting sufferers of Mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases. London Asbestos Support Awareness Group’s staff all have the skills, professionalism, knowledge and empathy that is expected to deliver a first class service to our clients at all times. Our team is continually upskilling and trained to ensure their professional and personal development is of a high standard. Our staff are all DBS checked for extra security.

Jodie Bull Support Manager

Jodie is our support manager and has worked in the healthcare profession for 13 years managing services and staff in the South East. She has experience in supporting clients in the community who were suffering with conditions ranging from COPD, Motor Neurone Disease, several types of Cancer, Parkinson’s Disease and Dementia to End of Life Care. She has experience of working with social services, district nurses, occupational therapists, dietitians, doctors, discharge planning teams and specialists. Jodie then expanded her knowledge and experience into the private ambulance sector as an operations manager. She is a First Aid and Manual Handling Trainer and has completed her First Response Emergency Care Level 3 certificate. Jodie has a passionate, caring nature and her clients, valued staff and volunteers are always her priority.

To contact Jodie please email jodie@lasag.org.uk or call 07949 767839.

Louise Chaffe Support Worker for London, Surrey and Hertfordshire

Louise spent 11 years working in a police control room, where she supported people from all walks of life before progressing to management. She then decided to expand her experience in the community to support vulnerable adults in their homes. This role included support and encouragement to access the community. Louise has a calming, caring, empathetic and productive work ethic due to the nature of her experiences.

To contact Louise please email louise@lasag.org.uk or call 07713 492486.

Jenny Tompkins Support Worker for London & Essex

Jenny began her career as a mortgage adviser and arrears counsellor for 15 years at Halifax Building Society. The fundamental part of this role was understanding the needs of her clients in their current situations, giving accurate advice and guidance and gaining sensitive information. She then joined The Metropolitan Police as a controller and 999 call taker dealing with people from different backgrounds and situations. Jenny used her experience when joining the private ambulance sector as an operations manager. Jenny is pro-active and organised with an understanding and kind nature.

To contact Jenny please email jenny@lasag.org.uk or call 07526 499163.

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Our team

Denise Hodges
Support Worker for Kent

Denise started her career as an adult nurse in acute medicine and worked with bowel cancer patients as a nurse practitioner before becoming a Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist. She has gained a wealth of experience and a vast knowledge of Mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases from working with patients over a number of years. When she retired from the NHS, she joined us and has been able to continue “to use her registered nurse knowledge to give invaluable support to the sufferers and their families.

To contact Denise please email Denise@lasag.org.uk or call 07956 922874.

Jade Hannan
Support Worker for Kent

Jade has been a qualified therapeutic radiographer for 11 years, treating various cancer patients with Radiotherapy. Jade has personal, as well as professional experience having had family members who have had cancer treatments in the past so can express empathy around this area making it even more important to her to make a difference to patients and their families going through this difficult and daunting process.

To contact Jade please email jade@lasag.org.uk or call 07585 337230.

We are proud to be a part of the forum as we feel it is important to work together to give a voice to asbestos victims.

The Forum is a registered charity and an umbrella organisation for asbestos victims support groups in the UK. Joanne Gordon, the Chair of the Forum, was pleased to welcome the representatives of the London Asbestos Support Awareness Group – which have now joined the Forum as a network member in April 2021.

Joanne said, “We are a collective of support groups who join together to fight for a better future for victims of asbestos related diseases.

We campaign for improvements in benefits and for fairer compensation, raise money and fight for Mesothelioma research, demand decent medical treatment, raise awareness of asbestos to protect future generations. Collectively we provide one voice for asbestos victims”.

Campaigning Over the years we have proved that working together, supported by the people we are here to help, the victims of asbestos related diseases, we have been able to achieve so much. The Forum have proved themselves a modern day ‘David versus Goliath’ against the Government and the asbestos industry.

For further information, visit www.asbestosforum.org.uk

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

Our trustees have been carefully selected and represent a diverse group with significant knowledge and experience of governance within the charity sector, as well as leading caring organisations and in campaigning for those suffering and in need of help and care.

Our Trustees

David Ellis OBE
David is committed to supporting the victims of exposure to asbestos. His wife died in 2011 from Mesothelioma. He has therefore experienced at first-hand the agony his wife suffered and the devastating impact her illness and eventual death had on the whole family and their friends. David has over 20 years experience as a charity trustee including as Chairman of Hospice Boards.

Christine Stephens
Christine has 40 years management/leadership experience in both corporate and for non-profit organisations. Included in that is over 10 years governance experience as a Hospice Trustee; previous Chair of Governors for a local junior school and a Chair of HR committee for an Independent girls school. Christine is passionate about working to build support networks to help alleviate the pain, fear and suffering for the victims of asbestos related diseases and their families.

Belinda Chadwick
Belinda has over 30 years experience of charity fundraising and support groups. Belinda has sound experience of governance through her trustee appointments and chair of three charities. Belinda’s motivation for trusteeship at the charity was instigated by the death of a very dear friend through an asbestos related disease.

Phil Lewis
Phil is one of the two founding trustees. He is a lifetime activist against asbestos, using all means at his disposal to campaign against it and support those victims affected.
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.

What is Asbestos?

Examples of products

Cement Roof
Pipe Lagging
Insulating Boards
Cement Tiles
Ceiling Tiles
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.
Support groups

Our support groups are designed to support anyone who is affected by Mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases. Please join us for coffee, cake and conversation at your nearest support group which cover London and the south east, including Essex, Kent and Hertfordshire. Our support groups have special guest speakers who can offer invaluable support include consultants, Lung CNS, cancer specialists and solicitors, as well as the opportunity to meet others living with the disease. Our experienced staff will be available to provide information, advice or a listening ear in a safe and private environment.

Surrey, London
Every 7th Friday
12.00 noon - 2.00pm
Holy Trinity Church,
Maldon Road, Wallington
London,
SM6 8BL
Contact
louise@lasag.org.uk
07713 492486

Canterbury, Kent
The 2nd Tuesday of each month.
2.00pm - 4.00pm
A.R.C.A. Hall, 151 Ashford Rd,
Thanington, Canterbury,
CT1 3XR
Contact
denise@lasag.org.uk
07950 922874
Jade@lasag.org.uk
07585 337230

Isle of Sheppey, Kent
The 1st Wednesday of each month.
3.00pm - 4.30pm
Harps Inn, Minster Rd,
Minster on Sea, Sheerness,
ME12 3N
Contact
denise@lasag.org.uk
07950 922874
Jade@lasag.org.uk
07585 337230

Dagenham, Essex
The last Thursday of each month.
11.00am - 1.00pm
Toby Carvery Moby Dick,
Whalebone Lane,
Dagenham,
RM6 6QJ
Contact
Jenny@lasag.org.uk
07526 499163

Rainham, Kent
The 1st Tuesday of every month.
3.00pm - 4.30pm
Rainham Cricket Club
Berengrave Lane
Rainham, Gillingham
Kent
ME8 7NA
Contact
denise@lasag.org.uk
07950 922874
Jade@lasag.org.uk
07585 337230

Other support groups
We are always looking to provide other support groups. For further updates or if you would like us to provide a group.
Contact
support@lasag.org.uk
Legal Help and Compensation

If you or a family member have been diagnosed with Mesothelioma or any other 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 is no longer in operation. 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 FREE legal advice from a specialist solicitor. Our carefully selected panel of expert solicitors will provide the right advice and will pursue and 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 sufferers do not recall where or how they were exposed to asbestos. One of the solicitors from our 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.

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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 did not take necessary precautions to protect their workers.

Compensation value:
The aim of compensation is to put you in the same financial position as though you had not developed Mesothelioma. Although the amount awarded in each case is different, the amount of compensation is usually substantial and could help with your care if needed.

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.

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How can we help?
We can provide you with information about making a civil compensation claim which includes contact details for solicitors who specialise in asbestos disease claims. To be on our specialist panel, solicitors have had to prove that they are law firms which only represent people with asbestos related conditions and never act for organisations defending asbestos disease claims.

Please note that we do not accept any responsibility relating to the appointment of a solicitor. Each of our panel firms of solicitors are completely independent of the charity.

If you’ve been affected by Mesothelioma, other asbestos related diseases, or would like to have a confidential conversation, please contact us today 0808 278 2515

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Customer commitment charter

We promise to do all we can to give you the best service, support and care that we can and make sure that you are cared for in the best possible way. We think about the sufferer in a person centred way to ensure that 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 your healthcare professionals providing your care including your clinical nurse specialists, benefits advisers and lawyers. We are committed to improving our services in an ever changing industry by talking to people and coming up with new ideas. These are our stated commitments to you:

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

Commitment 2
We promise that every time you see us we will do our best to ensure you are happy with our services. Our staff will be polite, respectful and caring at all times, tell you the truth, take time to listen to you, provide contact details and advise what will happen.

Commitment 3
We take time to understand what you need to give you the best service we can. Staff will ask you if our service can be improved and we will always treat you as an individual. This means we will think about you and your needs, advise you what we can and cannot do and keep information about you private and secure whilst remaining compliant with GDPR at all times.

Commitment 4
We will make sure the places we meet you are friendly, safe and easy to access. Staff will be friendly and welcoming, thinking about your needs and support when you use our services and will ensure the locations we see you are safe, clean and tidy.

Commitment 5
We will listen to your feedback and make changes where possible. Trustees and managers will listen to what our clients have suggested and decide if we need to make changes. We will make sure our staff learn from each other and follow good practice.

Need help?
Our support manager can support you. You can ask questions, make suggestions and log a complaint. Please email support@lasag.org.uk

Our Complaints Policy and Procedure is available on request.

A Testimonial from a Cancer Nurse Specialist

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 consist of retired Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists and benefits claims specialists. 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
Lead Macmillan Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist/Mesothelioma UK CNS
Kent and Canterbury/QEQM Hospitals

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FAQs

Our experienced staff are always available to provide information and advice, below are a few frequently asked questions about us and services available to you.

How much do you charge for your services? All our services are completely free of charge.

Where are you based? Our support workers are based in various areas including London, Essex, Kent, and Hertfordshire.

Will I have an allocated support worker? Yes, you will be allocated a support worker who is local to you.

What will happen on initial contact? Your support worker will give you a call and explain how we can support you and arrange a home visit if you feel comfortable.

How long do benefits take to come through? Depending on the type of disease you have been diagnosed with such as Mesothelioma benefits can take 2-3 weeks to process, however other claims may take longer.

Will the benefits you are applying for affect any other benefits I get? Attendance Allowance and PIP are not means tested therefore other benefits are not affected, however, IIDB will affect benefits such as housing benefits, pension credits and universal credits.

What benefits can I apply for and can my support worker help me with the completion? Your support worker can help you complete the benefits forms for Attendance Allowance/Personal Independence Payment (depending on age), Blue Badge, Government Lump Sum, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (depending on your asbestos exposure at work).

Do solicitors charge a fee for their service? We have a panel of expert solicitors, who are selected by us as they are impartial and do not charge you for their services. Your support worker can help with this.

How much do you charge for my nurse if I am unable to contact her? Yes, our support worker is able to act as a go between to ensure consistency.

Will staff do LFT tests before meeting? All staff carry out Lateral Flow Tests before home visits and support groups.

Is there parking and wheelchair access at support groups? Yes, the locations of our support groups are very carefully considered to ensure easy access.

Can I get involved in raising funds for the charity? Yes, there are various ways you can support fundraising. You can email support@lasag.co.uk or discuss with your support worker.

Will I have an allocated support worker? Yes, you will be allocated a support worker who is local to you.

Can I apply for benefits if I have a lot of savings? Yes, you can still apply for these benefits.

Can my support worker help me with my future care? Yes, your support worker is able to liaise with social care and continuing healthcare to support if you require care at home or in a hospice if you prefer.

Can I get a copy of my medical file? Yes, your support worker can help with this.

Do solicitors charge a fee for their service? We have a panel of expert solicitors, who are selected by us as they are impartial and do not charge you for their services. Your support worker can help with this.

I am worried about my spouse when I have passed away, will you still ring her/him to make sure they are ok? Yes, our support workers will continue to support family members.

I am not well enough to get out at the moment, do you run zoom support groups? Yes, in addition to our face to face support groups we do run zoom groups. Please contact your support worker who will give you details on how to access.

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Join us for coffee, cake and conversation at your nearest support group.
Everything we do depends on the generous donations of our supporters. 100% of the money we spend each year comes from the people, companies and trusts who decide to support us. Whether it is putting a few pounds in the donation tins, donations in lieu of flowers, making a corporate donation, leaving a legacy in a will, or hosting an event, we are extremely grateful for your support.

Visit www.lasag.org.uk/fundraising for more ways you can support us

Bank Payments
London Asbestos Support
SC: 30-98-90 Acc. No: 18406368

Card Payments
Secure online donations: www.lasag.org.uk/donate

Cash / Cheque
Farthings, Bridle Lane Rickmansworth, WD3 4JQ

I wish to make a donation to London Asbestos Support for £

Title   Name
Address   Postcode
Email
Phone

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

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.

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.

www.linkedin.com/company/london-asbestos-support-awareness-group
www.facebook.com/LondonAsbestosSupportAwarenessGroup
www.instagram.com/londonasbestossupportgroup
www.twitter.com/LASAG_UK
For anyone affected by Mesothelioma or other Asbestos related diseases in London and the South East, including Essex and Kent | Registered Charity No.1174543

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