



Bad Dust: Writing the history of the asbestos disaster & thinking about what happens next

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UK asbestos maker withheld information on material's risks, court papers show

According to documents, Cape played down dangers and lobbied for warning labels to be tempered

Ilona Sagar, *The Body Blow*, Film Still, 2022

Archives and Special Collections: Asbestos

Guide to resources in Archives and Special Collections at the University of Strathclyde

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[Collections overview](#)

[Resource guides](#)

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[Why are these collections at Strathclyde?](#)

[Asbestos - timeline](#)

[Blog posts about the asbestos collections](#)

[Culture: art, music & drama](#)

Introduction

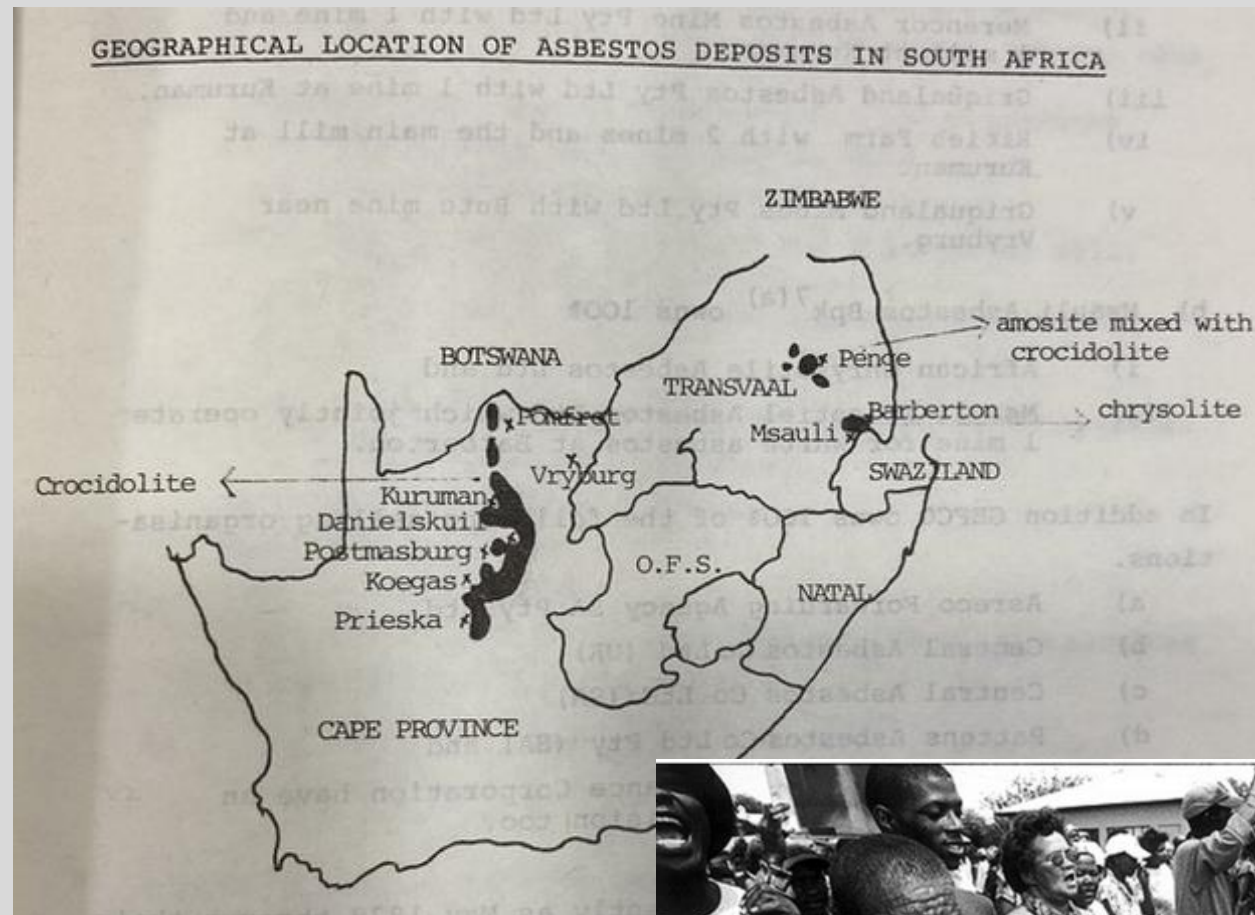


The collections in this guide are a unique corpus of material providing first-hand evidence of the fight to gain scientific acceptance of the lethal effects of exposure to asbestos and to get compensation for the victims of asbestos-related disease. Asbestos production had always been dominated by a handful of companies which exercised worldwide control over scientific research into asbestos and prevented access to their own company records. A notable feature of the material is the inclusion in three separate collections of copies of the corporate archives of Turner & Newall (T&N), one of the world's leading asbestos manufacturers. T&N had never allowed access to its archives but was obliged to allow them to be inspected and copied by lawyers as part of a lawsuit initiated against the company in 1987 by Chase Manhattan Bank in the US. The copies reveal at first-hand when and what T&N knew about the dangers of asbestos and how it handled the health of its employees. An equally notable feature of our collections is the presence of the voices of the victims of asbestos-related disease. Particularly poignant are the oral history interviews with victims and their families.

[Header image: OEDA/C/3/9]

Asbestos collections at Strathclyde

1. asbestos mining in South Africa



2. asbestos manufacturing in the North

MURDER FOR PROFIT IN ASBESTOS PLANTS

by Laurie Flynn

THERE IS A SLAUGHTERHOUSE in the little Yorkshire town of Hebden Bridge. Its victims are human beings, people who have had the misfortune to work for Cape Asbestos since it brought its mill there after the last war.

Thirty-three men in Hebden Bridge have already been found to be suffering from asbestosis, the killer industrial cancer. Another 19 are suspected to have the same disease. Every one of them works for Cape Asbestos.

Inspectors on *Granada's World in Action* team showed the week that Cape Asbestos had brought about this situation by deliberate and flagrant breaches of the industrial safety regulations. The 1931 Asbestos regulations insist that only specially thick sacks should be used for asbestos fibres. The men in Cape's warehouse were using sacks which let the dust through until the 1960s.

Nowhere in the mill were there proper extraction fans to take the dust away. In defiance of the regulations, Cape let their employees breathe it in.

Machines should be used to clean down the mill rollers but Cape Asbestos used the hand method until 1962. When a factory inspector came near the place the men were instructed to cover this up.

Cape Asbestos deliberately sacrificed the lives of their employees in their quest for a cheap product and high profits.

A labour lawyer with some know-

ledge of the case told Socialist Worker that Cape had been covering up the truth of what they had done was, he said, just as criminal as bombing with napalm. In fact the casualty rate at Cape is probably proportionally higher than in Vietnam. There is a chance of escape from asbestos.

UNTOLD

Already 32 men either are diseased or are suspected of being so since the war Cape Asbestos has employed around 300 workers in the mill. So these practices already a one-way ticket to disaster.

But there are an untold number of others who are likely to have the same fate. The toll could well run above one in

Decisions are taken not to prosecute the employees. They prefer to sack them, doing for 20 years until men and women are in the mortuary.

Perhaps the most appalling recent example of the Factory Inspectorate's weakness is to be found in another asbestos factory, this time in Burslem, London.

RESISTED

In the knowledge of the Inspectorate, the Central Asbestos Co had been operating its plant in flagrant breach of the regulations since 1953. But there was not one prosecution or one charge before 1964.

The superintending factory inspector was warned of this from his field staff in 1962. He did not act.



An asbestos worker: higher casualty rate than Vietnam

these workers who have ever had the pleasure of selling their labour to the

MERSEYSIDE UNEMPLOYMENT SOCIALIST WORKER



3. asbestos use in Glasgow

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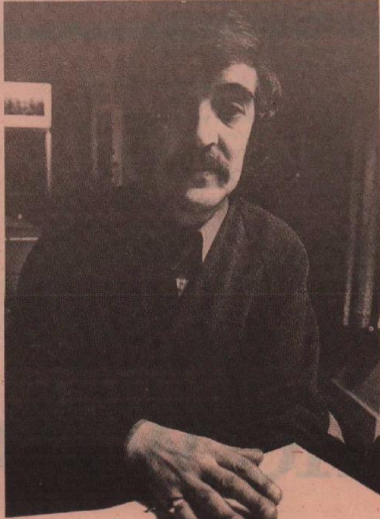
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LAURIE
FLYNN'S
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THE ASBESTOS MURDERS

Left: Arthur Rhodie's
swollen fingers show
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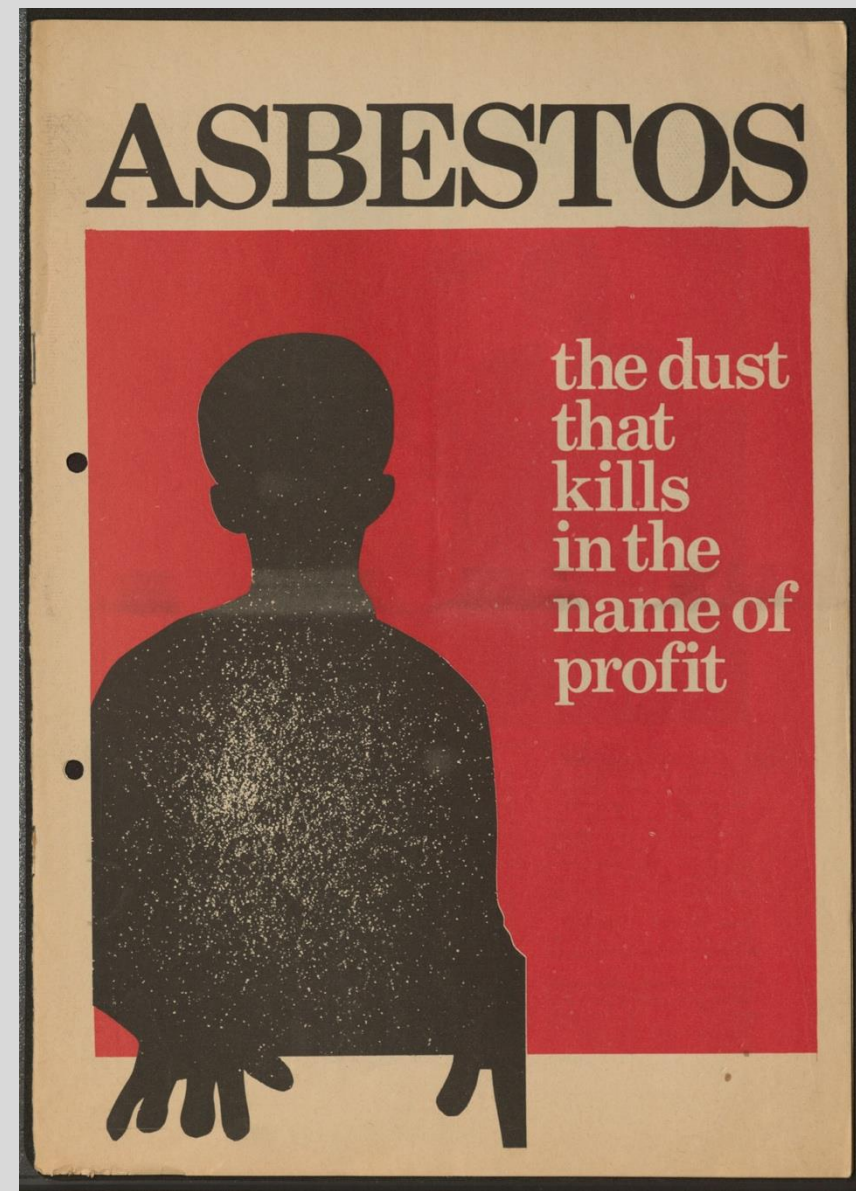
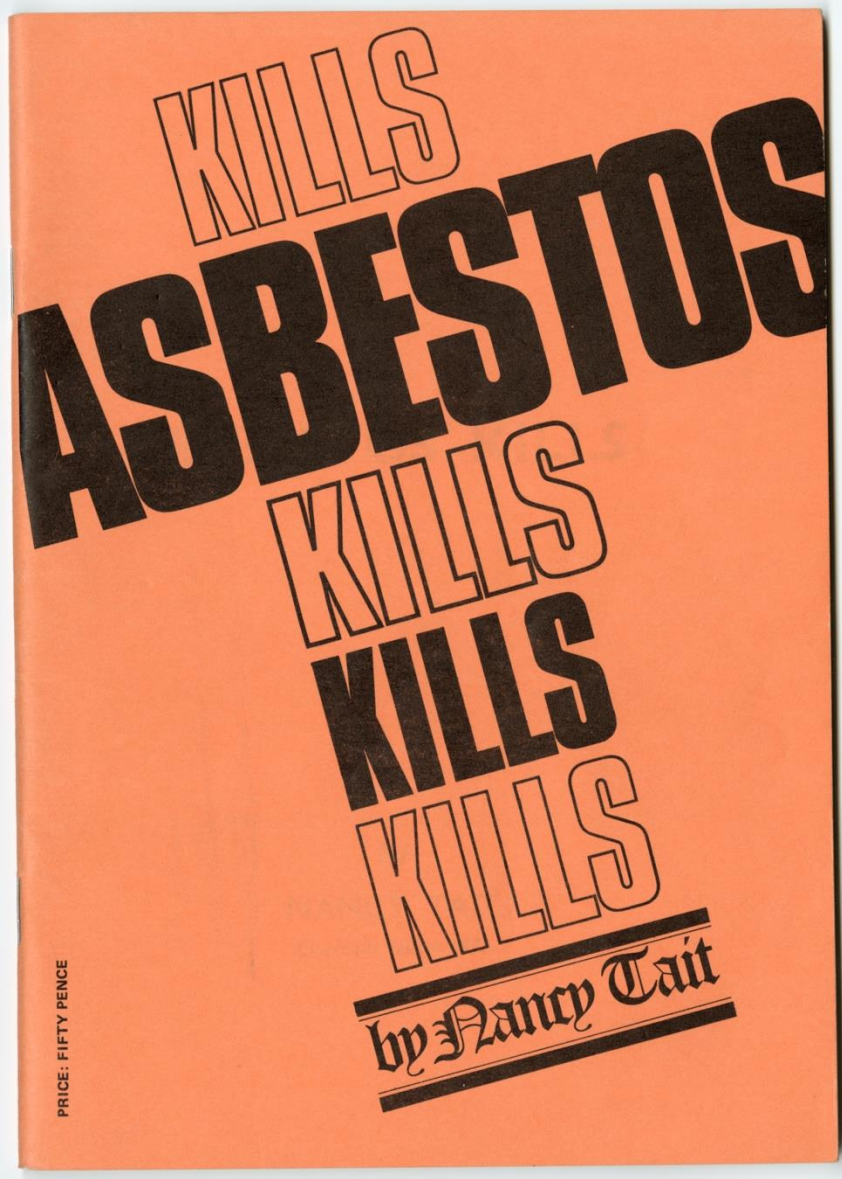
Asbestos
CANCER hazard



NO LIVING IN THIS AREA

RED ROAD FLATS
GLASGOW

ASBESTOS DOES KILL



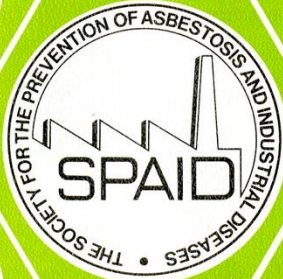
SPAID RESEARCH

ASBESTOS-FREE
ENVIRONMENT

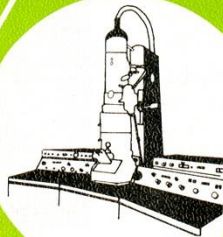
FELLOWSHIP



PROTECTION
FOR WORKERS



LEGISLATION



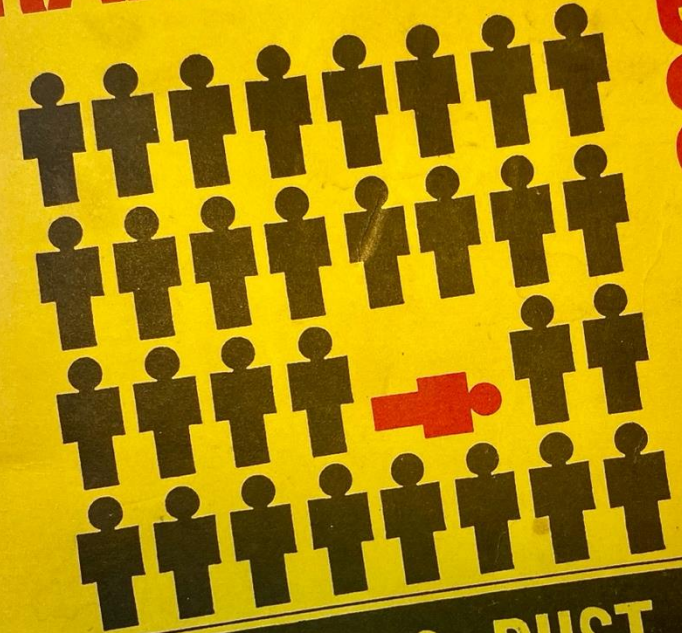
ELECTRON
MICROSCOPY



FAIR
COMPENSATION



RAISING THE DUST



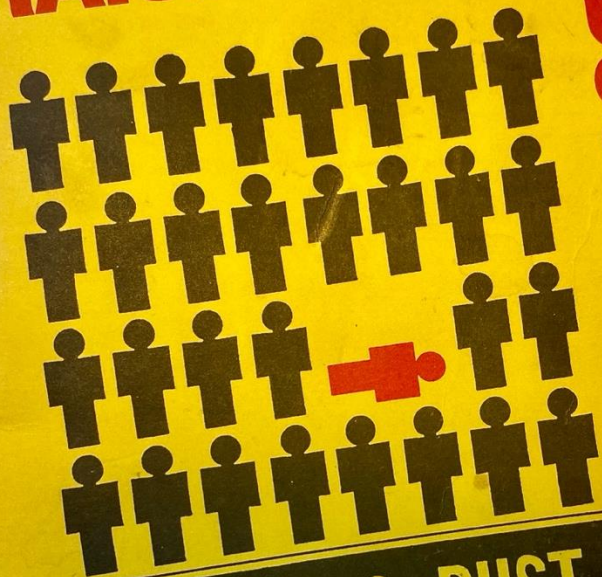
ASBESTOS DUST KILLS YOU DEAD

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RA

A REPORT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL TENANTS'
AND TRADES UNION ASBESTOS CONFERENCE

RAISING THE

DUST



**ASBESTOS DUST
KILLS YOU DEAD**

363.1791
RA

A REPORT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL TENANTS'
AND TRADES UNION ASBESTOS CONFERENCE

BASFORD FLATS AND BALLOON WOODS TENANTS ASSOCIATIONS

THE COUNCIL SENT US THIS LEAFLET

ASBESTOS



IN
BALLOON WOOD & OLD BASFORD
FLATS AND MAISONNETTES

**WE REJECT IT AS
TOTALLY
INADEQUATE**

**YOU WILL GET ONE TOO -
WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

Examples of how 2 tenants groups reacted to misleading official leaflet.

ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE

HACKNEY TENANTS FEDERATION
HAROLD HILL TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
HEBDEN BRIDGE ASBESTOSIS ACTION GROUP
HYSON GREEN TENANTS ASSOCIATION
HULME ASBESTOS GROUP
HULL ACTION ON SAFETY AND HEALTH
HULL INDEPENDENT HOUSING AID CENTRE
ISLINGTON COMMUNITY HOUSING/GMBATU
ISLINGTON BRANCH NALGO
LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
LOUGHBOROUGH ASBESTOS ACTION GROUP
LEICESTER AND DISTRICT TRADES COUNCIL
MALLETTS CLOSE ASBESTOS GROUP
MILTON KEYNES TRADES COUNCIL
MURDISHAW ASBESTOS ACTION COMMITTEE
NATIONAL HOUSING LIASON COMMITTEE
NEW HIGHBURY ESTATE ASBESTOS GROUP
NEWCASTLE TENANTS FEDERATION
NORTH KENSINGTON LAW CENTRE
NORTH LAMBETH LAW CENTRE
NOTTINGHAM ASBESTOS CAMPAIGN
NOTTINGHAM AND DISTRICT TRADES COUNCIL
NUPE MILTON KEYNES
ROEFARM TENANTS ASSOCIATION
ROOF
SAFETY LOBBY AGAINST ASBESTOS SLATES
SERVICES TO COMMUNITY ACTION AND TRADES UNIONS
SHEFFIELD TENANTS FEDERATION
SHELTER NATIONAL HOUSING AID TRUST
SOUTH WALES AREA TENANTS



HULL ASBESTOS ACTION GROUP



1992 REPORT

MILAN 1993



HAMBURG 1989

COPENHAGEN 1990

STRASBOURG 1992

STRASBOURG 1991

Dick Jackson of the Hull Asbestos Group at the lobby

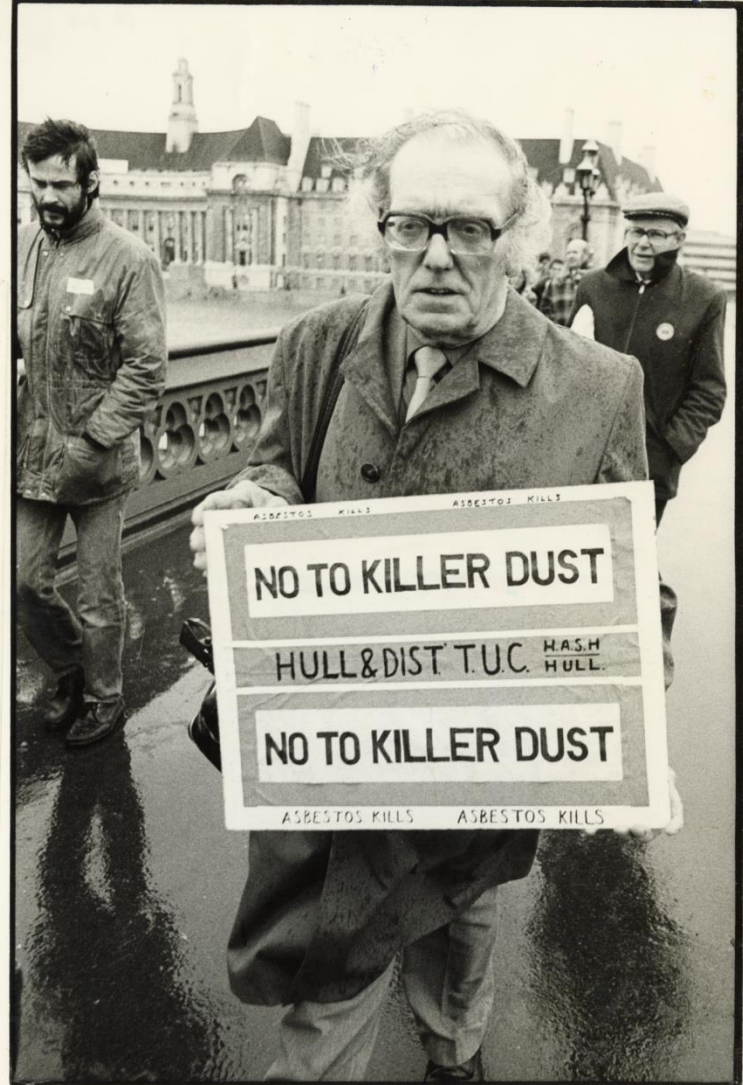


ADVICE
ON ANY
ASPECT
RELATING
TO
ASBESTOS.
CLAIMS,
HANDLING
DISPOSAL
ETC.

HULL ASBESTOS ACTION GROUP
R. JACKSON
123 CAMBRIDGE STREET
ANLABY ROAD — HULL
N. HUMBERSIDE HU3 2EE
Telephone: (0482) 223287
HULL ASBESTOS ACTION GROUP



LONDON. OCT'24TH 1984



DICK

JACKSON

ON A PEOPLE'S ASBESTOS ACTION CAMPAIGN LONDON

The asbestos crisis **Why Britain needs an eradication law**

**All-Party Parliamentary
Group on Occupational
Safety and Health**

- Where asbestos is identified in any premises, all refurbishment, repair or remedial work done in the vicinity of the asbestos-containing material should include the removal of the asbestos. Where no such work takes place, or is planned within the foreseeable future, the duty holder must develop and implement a plan for the removal of all asbestos which ensures that removal is completed as soon as is reasonably practical, but certainly no later than 2035. In the case of public buildings and educational establishments, such as schools, this should be done by 2028.

The graphic features a solid red background. Overlaid on this are numerous white line-art silhouettes of people of various shapes and sizes, representing a diverse crowd. In the center, a white rectangular box with a thin border contains the text 'FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. At the bottom left, the text 'THE LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO 2017' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

**FOR THE
MANY
NOT THE
FEW**

THE LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO 2017

1. Investment – we will make sure schools are properly resourced by reversing the Conservatives' cuts and ensuring that all schools have the resources they need. We will introduce a fairer funding formula that leaves no school worse off, while redressing the historical underfunding of certain schools. Labour will also invest in new school buildings, including the phased removal of asbestos from existing schools.

MPs say asbestos must go from public buildings within 40 years

🕒 21 April 2022 · 💬 117 Comments



MPs have called for a 40-year deadline for all asbestos to be removed from public and commercial buildings.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "More than 22 years after the use of asbestos was banned, hundreds of thousands of workers are still put at risk of exposure every day.

"A 40-year deadline isn't ambitious enough. Ministers must commit to removing all asbestos to keep future generations safe."

The MPs' report, which also urges more funding for the HSE to support asbestos-removal projects, predicts that the likely increase in the retrofitting of buildings to meet net-zero carbon ambitions in the coming decades will result in more deadly fibres being disturbed.



Occupational lung disease

Health and safety at work
Summary statistics for Great Britain 2025

HSE, *Health and safety at work
Summary statistics
for Great Britain
2025*, p. 6

11,000

Lung disease deaths each year estimated to be linked to past exposures at work

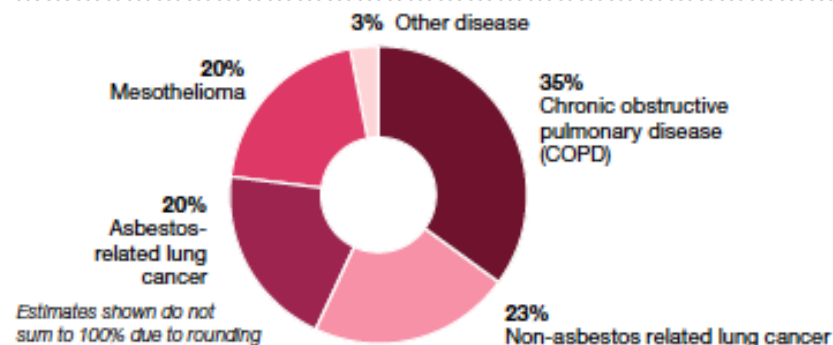
2,218

Mesothelioma deaths in 2023, with a similar number of lung cancer deaths linked to past exposures to asbestos

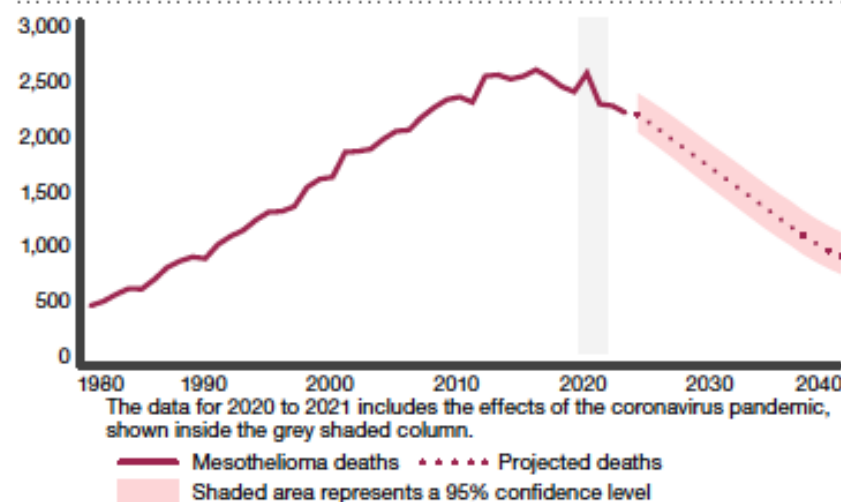
22,000

Estimated new cases of breathing or lung problems caused or made worse by work, averaged over the last three years according to self-reports from the Labour Force Survey

Lung diseases contributing to estimated current annual deaths



Annual mesothelioma deaths and future projections to 2040



Change over time

Annual **mesothelioma deaths** are expected to reduce over the period 2024 to 2040.

The rate of annual new cases of **occupational asthma** reported by chest physicians has been broadly constant since 2010. There is more uncertainty in recent years due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Occupational lung diseases account for around 11,000 of the 13,000 total deaths estimated to be linked to past exposures at work.

To find out the story behind the key figures, visit www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/index.htm

Known Unknowns: Asbestos and the great death rate cover-up

There is a lot we don't know about the presence of asbestos in UK buildings. We don't know where it is, and we don't know how much there is of it. Nor can we say with any confidence what condition it is in. More disturbing still, we do not know exactly how many people are dying of Asbestos Related Disease.

Have We Underestimated the Cancer Risk from Asbestos?

Professor Daniel Murphy

March 27, 2026

I recently visited a hospital in Glasgow to give a blood sample. I hate needles, always have, so I was chatting away to the nurse taking the sample to distract myself. Our conversation turned to what I do for a living. "I run a research laboratory studying Lung cancer and Mesothelioma" I told her. "My father and uncle both died from Mesothelioma" she replied. I offered condolences. "Were they in the shipyards?" I asked. "No, they were carpenters".

Asbestos from China discovered in 1,000 UK wind turbines

White asbestos, banned in this country since 1999, is believed to have come from third-party suppliers, raising concerns about supply chains

Dozens of toys recalled in the UK after asbestos found in play sand

Candle-making kits and rubber toys among products recalled after revelation about play sand sold by Hobbycraft



📷 Campaigners have criticised the UK government for failing to crack down on potentially hazardous toys. Photograph: Addictive Stock Creatives/Alamy

Beach closed again after asbestos found in sand



GRACE STICKLAND

Mount Batten beach has been closed "until further notice"

Cameron Weldon
Devon

10 July 2026

Book

London Underground

London Underground users should know about toxic dust risk, whistleblower says

Former tube network cleaner says tribunal vindicated his health concerns, including about asbestos, that could affect public

Matthew Weaver

Sat 18 Jul 2026 07:58 BST

Share

Prefer the Guardian on Google



Edinburgh schools: Asbestos found in 90 schools and nurseries in Edinburgh – full list revealed

By Rachel Fergusson
Live Reporter



3 Comments

Published 26th Feb 2026, 12:08 GMT

Jeonbuk Provincial Office of Education Declares Zero Asbestos in Schools



Reporter Park Jong-su input February 26, 2026, 1:35 PM | correction February 26, 2026, 1:35 PM

Write a comment

Complete removal of asbestos from 1.65 million square meters over 10 years starting in 2015.

[iNews24 Reporter Park Jong-su] 100% of the asbestos in school buildings in the Jeonbuk region has been removed.

The Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province Office of Education announced on the 26th that as of the end of December last year, the amount of asbestos remaining in a total of 790 schools in the province, including public kindergartens, elementary, middle, and high schools, and special schools, was 0m².



Jeonbuk Office of Education Building [Photo = Jeonbuk Office of Education]

Most viewed news

Porsche driver involved in B appears in court, wearing a wheelchair.

"Innocent because she's pre suspected Gangbuk serial m private after controversy

The families of the victims o serial murders demand imm the suspect's identity.

[Breaking News] Prosecutor Disclosure of Personal Infor Gangbuk Motel Serial Murde

Roh Tae-moon's Decision: S Electronics' Galaxy S26 Ultr Freeze (Comprehensive)



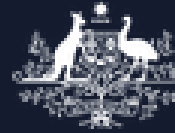
MPs say asbestos must go from public buildings within 40 years

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MPs have called for a 40-year deadline for all asbestos to be removed from public and commercial buildings.

Books



Australian Government

Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency

Asbestos National Strategic Plan Phase Three 2024–30



Taking action to save lives

Articles:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/20/uk-asbestos-maker-withheld-information-on-material-risks-court-papers-show>
- Laurie Flynn: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/sw-gb/1971/index.html>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-61168335>
- <https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/article/b/mps-back-tucs-calls-asbestos-removal-public-buildings>
- <https://www.airtightonasbestos.uk/post/known-unknowns-asbestos-and-the-great-death-rate-cover-up>
- <https://www.bohs.org/media-resources/faam-newsletter-article/detail/have-we-underestimated-the-cancer-risk-from-asbestos/>
- www.thetimes.com/uk/scotland/article/asbestos-china-uk-wind-turbines-s6pkdfhw9
- <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2026/apr/27/dozens-of-toys-recalled-in-the-uk-after-asbestos-found-in-play-sand>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz0jzz2249go>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/jul/18/london-underground-passengers-should-know-about-toxic-dust-risks-whistleblower-says>
- <https://www.scotsman.com/news/scottish-news/asbestos-found-in-90-schools-and-nurseries-in-edinburgh-full-list-revealed-5611307>
- <https://www.inews24.com/view/1943214>