



**Rt Hon Lord Blunkett
of Brightside and Hillsborough in the City of Sheffield
House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW**

7th July 2023

Statement on Action Mesothelioma Day

Every year in the UK c2700 people are diagnosed with the incurable cancer Mesothelioma. This is entirely preventable.

Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos, most commonly within the workplace. Whilst use of asbestos was banned in the UK in 1999, this remains a key public health issue.

Asbestos was widely used, and it is still present in many domestic, industrial, and public buildings such as 80% of schools and 90% of hospitals.

Today I highlight the injustice of this disease. It is preventable. Treatment options are limited, and most people die within 6 months and 60% within a year.

The research undertaken by the Mesothelioma UK Research Centre at Sheffield highlights the experiences of both patients and families. Their research includes understanding the experiences of people exposed as a result of various occupations. Increasingly people are developing this cancer as a result of low level exposure due to work in buildings with asbestos in them. Examples include healthcare workers and school workers.

Every year on Action Mesothelioma Day buildings light up in blue across the UK to raise awareness of mesothelioma and the risks of asbestos. On this day, I am thinking of people living with this preventable disease, and of the families who have lost loved-ones because of it.

I want to shed a light on the work of Mesothelioma UK – the charity who support patients and families and fund the UK network of Mesothelioma Clinical Nurse Specialists – and the committed work of UK Asbestos Support groups.

I want to end with a message of hope that in the future the asbestos legacy of harm is ended through prevention or curative treatments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Blunkett'.

David Blunkett