



NATIONAL MESOTHELIOMA NETWORK

The **Government** announced that it will take action to **improve** the level of **care** for **mesothelioma patients** and **raise** the **awareness** of the condition within the NHS.

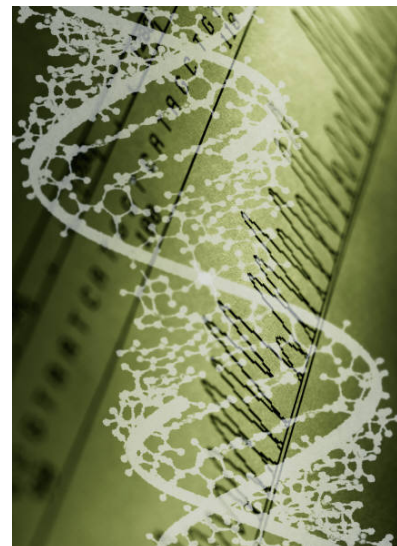
The National Mesothelioma Framework aims to **improve** the care that mesothelioma patients receive during their illness. Although **not** a **mandatory** framework, it forms a **highly recommended practice** throughout the **NHS**.

The Framework will provide **advice** to **NHS staff** on **how** to **organise services** to ensure achievement to the **improvements** of quality of **care** for mesothelioma patients. This will build upon the structures already in place for lung cancer patients.

Mesothelioma **incidence** is still **rising** and is expected to **peak** between 2010 and 2015. Between 2006 and 2020 up to 30,000 people will die of the disease in the UK.

Mesothelioma patients **must**:

- receive an **early diagnosis**
- offered a **radical treatment**, where appropriate, have access to optimal palliative interventions and care, and
- receive **appropriate information** and **advice** including advice on financial benefits and possible compensation



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What are the recommendations?

We have summarised below the Framework aimed at implementing these recommendations:

- All patients with **diagnosed mesothelioma** (and undiagnosed unilateral pleural effusion where mesothelioma is a possible diagnosis) should have their case **discussed** by a **lung cancer team** - designated specialists to advise on the diagnosis of more difficult mesothelioma cases and, in some cases, the management of patients
- Each *cancer network* should have a **lead clinician** and **lead nurse** for mesothelioma
- Introduction of **Primary Care Trusts** in **areas associated** with **asbestos-related industries/high mesothelioma incidence**, consider targeted local initiatives in primary care (and perhaps local hospitals) to:
 - maintain a **higher level** of suspicion of the disease in appropriate patients than is otherwise necessary in other parts of the country, and
 - ensure that all **local clinicians** know what to do if they have a **suspicion of mesothelioma** ie, when and where to refer patients for specialist advice
- All mesothelioma patients will have a **key worker** (Clinical Nurse Specialist) with **responsibility** for:
 - the provision of **information** to patients and their families in a timely manner and within a supportive environment
 - ensuring that a patient's level of **understanding** is assessed, documented and communicated throughout the care pathway, and
 - ensuring patients receive **information** on **benefits** and **legal advice** on possible **compensation**

Therefore, with the implementation of this Framework, we hope that the NHS will **understand** the **needs** of patients and their families and be better prepared to **diagnose** and **treat mesothelioma**.

We hope that this information will provide **guidance** to **patients** and their **families**, at a time that requires specialist advice and treatment.

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