

Baroness Buscombe
Chairman
Press Complaints Commission
Halton House
20-23 Holborn
London
EC1N 2JD

Our ref: SL/JT

16th April 2010

Dear Baroness Buscombe

The signatories to this letter wish to make a formal complaint about the inaccuracies in Mr C Booker's article in the Daily Mail of 23rd February 2010 entitled 'The Great Asbestos Hysteria'.

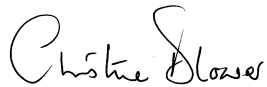
Gina Lees, wife of Michael Lees, did not 'supposedly' die of an asbestos-related cancer; it is a matter of record that she did and the coroner's report confirms this. This questioning of the illness that killed Mrs Lees is ignorant and is, furthermore, a cruel and unnecessary intrusion into the Lees' family grief.

Secondly, no asbestos is 'harmless' and all types have been completely banned for import and use since 1999 in the UK.

The article also seeks to draw a distinction between teachers and other education staff who have died as a result of asbestos related cancers and 'genuine victims'. The number of teachers dying of mesothelioma has steadily increased over the past two decades; between 1980 and 1985, 15 teachers died, this rose to 64 for the period 2000-2005. In total, 178 teachers have died as a result of asbestos exposure since 1980 (HSE statistics). All deaths from mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis are tragic from whichever sector or industry the victims were drawn.

The education sector unions are campaigning jointly for an audit of all asbestos in schools and the phased removal of all Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs). We are not interested in scaremongering or whipping up hysteria over the subject. Instead, we are working together to meet the challenge of asbestos in schools so that they are safe for pupils, staff and the wider school communities.

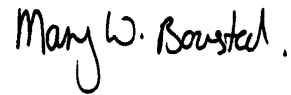
Yours sincerely



Christine Blower
General Secretary
NUT



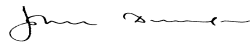
Chris Keates
General Secretary
NASUWT



Mary Boustead
General Secretary
ATL




Philp Parkin
General Secretary
Voice the Union



John Dunford
General Secretary
ASCL



Dave Prentis
General Secretary
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