About Mesothelioma

What is Mesothelioma?
Mesothelioma (pronounced mee-so-thee-lee-oma) is a form of cancer that affects the thin membranes that line the chest (pleural mesothelioma). It can also affect the lining of the abdomen (peritoneal mesothelioma).

What causes Mesothelioma?
Mesothelioma is almost exclusively caused by exposure to asbestos. Most people diagnosed with Mesothelioma will have been exposed to asbestos some 20 to 50+ years earlier.

Why Action Mesothelioma Day?
Mesothelioma has been increasing over the past few years. The yearly number of deaths from Mesothelioma, in the UK, has risen from 153 in 1968 to almost 2000 in 2005. It is estimated that numbers will continue to rise until reaching its peak some time between 2015 to 2020. Action Mesothelioma Day is to raise awareness of the disease and seek improvements in areas such as prevention, treatments, care and research.

The June Hancock Mesothelioma Fund

The June Hancock Mesothelioma Fund was established in 1997 shortly after the death of June Hancock in July that year.

June Hancock died from Mesothelioma the same disease that claimed the life of her mother, Maie Gelder, in 1982. June had never worked with asbestos but had been brought up close to the J W Roberts asbestos factory in Armley, Leeds.

June’s high profile court case sought to establish that J W Roberts (and their parent company Turner & Newall) were not only responsible for negligently exposing their own workforce with deadly asbestos dust but also the local environment.

Public awareness of this deadly asbestos legacy and painful disease was raised as a result of the successful landmark victory, and so it was the wish of June’s family, together with her dedicated and professional team, to establish the fund to continue June’s battle in her name.

To date the fund has supported important research projects in Leicester, Glasgow and London and has underwritten ten large multi-professional educational events. The fund has also supported the MSO1 trial, enabled the setting up of the National Mesothelioma Helpline, and enabled the continued publication and distribution of the first patient specific information leaflet about mesothelioma (written by Mavis Robinson).