



Ministry of Defence

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Laurie Kazan-Allen
Reply to lka@btinternet.com

8 February 2016

Dear Laurie Kazan-Allen,

Thank you for your email of 4 January to Mark Lancaster TD MP regarding compensation arrangements for veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma. As you will understand, the Minister receives lots of correspondence and is unable to answer it all personally, therefore your email has been passed to this section of the Ministry of Defence as the area responsible for service personnel issues and I have been asked to reply.

Please let me start by paying tribute to our Armed Forces veterans, for their commitment and sacrifice in serving this country and to whom we all owe a debt of profound gratitude. Mesothelioma is a devastating disease affecting not only the individual who is diagnosed but their family and loved ones. It has been important to ensure we offer the right support for those veterans who are affected by this disease. Therefore, following a review of the support we provide, the Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans announced that veterans who are diagnosed on or after 16 December 2015 with diffuse mesothelioma as a result of exposure to asbestos during their military service prior to 6 April 2005 will now have the option of receiving a lump sum of £140,000, under the War Pensions Scheme.

For those who elect to take the lump sum option, it would then take the place of the War Disablement Pension and Supplementary Allowances, and War Widow(er)'s Pension and Supplementary Allowances which they would traditionally have received. For those with mobility needs, arrangements can be made for the Ministry of Defence to transfer part of the lump sum to Motability on their behalf. Claimants who would prefer the current arrangements can opt to receive the War Disablement Pension and Supplementary Allowances, and War Widow(er)'s Pension.

Defence Business Service Veterans UK will write to all veterans diagnosed on or after 16 December with mesothelioma and where entitlement to a War Pension is established, to explain that they have the option of having the current payment arrangements or the new lump sum. Those who elect to receive the lump sum prior to 11 April 2016, will be able in the interim to receive the War Disablement Pension and Supplementary Allowances until the lump sum is paid. Any such payments made would be deducted from the lump sum. The Veterans Welfare Service will be on hand to help claimants with their understanding of the details.

While this is a positive step we are aware that there are those who are currently in receipt of weekly or monthly payments of War Pension for mesothelioma, who will not be eligible for this new option. The policy of no retrospection has been maintained by successive Governments. Whether it should be applied to this group is a complex issue that has been the subject of much discussion within the Government. However, the MOD continues to review the options to support these claimants in a similar manner and we hope to be in a position to provide an update soon.

Yours Sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat