


Labour Condemn SNP U-turn on Asbestos Research

Scottish Labour has today launched a scathing attack on the UK Government following its 'ruthless' decision to axe a £10 million UK-wide research centre into asbestos-related diseases.

The National Centre for Asbestos Related Diseases centre – proposed by the previous Labour Government – would have coordinated research into tackling asbestos-related diseases.

A total of 2,617 of Scottish men died from mesothelioma – a lung cancer caused by breathing in the deadly asbestos fibres between 1981 and 2005 – higher than the national average, while each week across the UK around 20 people die from asbestos-related diseases.

Mesothelioma is now the twelfth most common cancer killer in men and the cancer of most rapidly increasing incidence in women.

 **John Park** MSP, who has pressed for a UK-wide approach to research on asbestos-related diseases, has today written to Nicola Sturgeon demanding to know what efforts the Scottish Government will now take in light of the decision to improve research into these deadly diseases.

Mr Park said:

"The decision by the Tory Lib Dem coalition to axe investment in a research centre into asbestos-related diseases – which have killed thousands of Scots – is deeply disappointing, but not surprising.

"The thousands of people suffering from asbestos-related diseases will understandably be appalled by the Government's

short-sighted and ruthless decision to axe funding into the research centre.

"The Scottish Parliament have a proud record of dealing with the damages aspect of asbestos-related diseases, but there is a desperate need for further research into the causes and treatment of such diseases.

"A UK-wide centre of research excellence was widely acknowledged to be the right approach and axing the centre is a real backwards step.

"It is vital that we do not let the UK Government decision derail the progress that has been made and that is why I have today written to Nicola Sturgeon asking what action she intends to take in light of this decision."