

# NEWS UNISON PERSONAL INJURY LEGAL SERVICE

OCTOBER 2005

## USE YOUR UNION'S LEGAL SERVICES

### What's the difference between a compensation claims firm and UNISON's legal services?

UNISON's legal services are absolutely free to members, and their families. They will not deduct a penny from your compensation.

The union's lawyers are the UK's leading personal injury law firm, experts in winning justice for people injured due to the negligence of employers and others.

Claims firms, the sort that advertise no-win-no-fee legal services on day time television and in daily newspapers, make all

sorts of deductions from damages.

One UNISON member who went to a compensation claims firm after being injured when she fell down stairs at work, was persuaded to sign an agreement that committed her to paying the company over £1,000 for an insurance policy.

They told her she had to have this policy in case her compensation claim was unsuccessful. She would also have had to pay interest on top of this.

Luckily, she sought advice from UNISON's lawyers Thompsons and didn't have to pay a penny. She got to keep 100 per cent of her damages.

Overleaf are some real examples of cases where UNISON members in London have received compensation for workplace injuries, accidents away from work, and for diseases caused by exposure to asbestos at work.

Linda Perks, UNISON London regional secretary said: "UNISON members should never have to turn to a compensation claims firm when they are injured or need legal advice.

"There are all sorts of hidden costs, and no guarantee that they will get the maximum compensation a claim is worth."

UNISON's legal service is genuinely free to members injured at or away from work, and to their family members injured away from work. ■

UNISON  
Greater London



### UNISON WINS OVER £3 MILLION FOR INJURED MEMBERS IN LONDON

Your union won over £3 million in compensation for injured members in the first eight months of this year. That's why membership remains the best and safest legal protection money can buy.

UNISON's priority is to protect its members from accident and disease caused by unsafe workplaces and working practices. We put constant pressure on employers to provide a safe and healthy working environment.

But when employers don't heed the warnings, and when things do go wrong, UNISON members have the best legal advice and representation available. UNISON's lawyers Thompsons is the largest specialist personal injury and trade union law firm in the UK.

UNISON's legal services are totally free to members, their friends and families if they are injured away from work.

#### UNISON's legal services cover:

- accidents at work
- diseases caused by work
- road traffic accidents
- accidents in the street
- accidents while on holiday
- slipping and tripping accidents
- free legal advice on non-work issues
- friends and family covered for non-work accidents
- low cost conveyancing
- free wills

#### Linda Perks

Regional Secretary  
UNISON London region



Photo: Mark Pinder/Report Digital

IF YOU ARE NOT IN UNISON YOU CAN'T BENEFIT FROM OUR SERVICES

## WIDOW CLAIMS AFTER TRAGIC ASBESTOS DEATH OF HUSBAND

**The widow of a UNISON London member, who died of an asbestos related disease, has received £55,000 compensation.**

Raymond Gough died in March 2003.

He had worked as a fire inspector for the Greater London Council from 1971 to 1978.

He was responsible for attending sites where other workers were cutting asbestos sheets used for fire proofing.

He was not provided with an adequate mask or other protective.

Mr Gough died before making a claim for compensation through UNISON's legal scheme. But his widow claimed using UNISON's legal service.

Because there was no witness statement from Mr Gough, UNISON's lawyers Thompsons had to prove that he had been exposed by his ex-employers by tracing his former colleagues.

They confirmed that Mr. Gough's job was to look at plans relating to fire protection

and fire escape routes in buildings including hotels, offices, shops and factories.

Inspections could last from 30 minutes to two hours, depending on the size of the premises and the work being carried out.

The witnesses recalled how, when asbestos sheets, commonly made from a material called Asbestolux, were being cut, there was always a layer of dust on everything in the area.

Mrs Gough said: "Asbestos was used in these buildings even though its dangers were known about.

"There must be lots of men walking around like time bombs, not knowing that they have an asbestos related disease.

"Raymond's was a cruel loss, but at least, thanks to UNISON and Thompsons, his former employers have been made to pay for causing his death." ■



Raymond Gough

## STAIR SLIP ENDS CAREER

**A community support worker who was seriously injured when she fell down steps while visiting a client has been awarded £92,000 compensation.**

Sandra Drury, who was employed by Haringey Social Services, was forced to take medical retirement as a result of her injuries.

Sandra was leaving the client's flat when she slipped on a concrete step which was partly missing and covered in moss.

She fell 10 steps down, suffering multiple injuries, including injury to her back, chest, hip and ankle.

Although she returned to work after six months, she went off again a couple of years later due to her ongoing symptoms.

Sanctuary Housing Association, which owned the property and was responsible for maintaining the step, admitted liability and the case settled for £92,000 the day before the court hearing to assess damages.

Sandra said: "I was in and out of hospital for several months after the accident. I wouldn't have been able to pursue a claim for compensation without UNISON's support. Even though no amount of compensation can make up for the loss of my job and my career, the union was there for me when I needed it, and I am very grateful for that." ■

## PARAMEDIC IN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT IN COMPENSATION FIGHT

**A paramedic injured in a road traffic accident received compensation after UNISON took up his claim.**

The member was on a motorbike and was hit by a car on a roundabout.

The driver's insurer insisted that the UNISON member ran into the car, rather than the other way round.

But UNISON's lawyers fought the case all the way to court and the defendants eventually agreed that they were liable for the accident shortly before the trial.

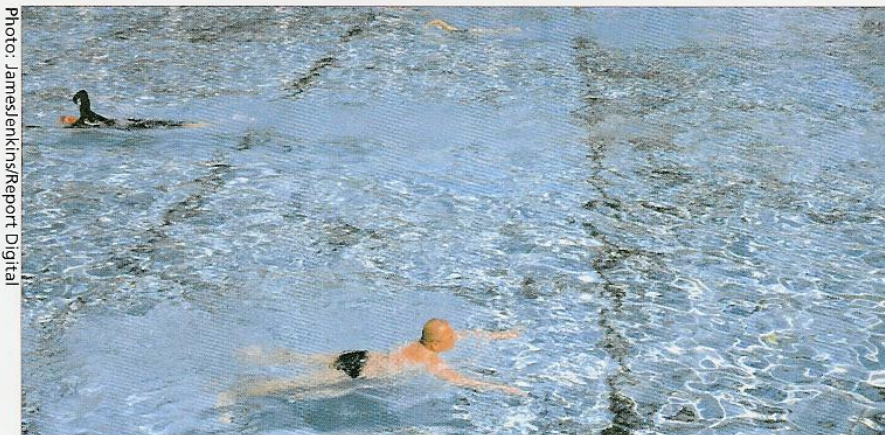


Photo: JameslenkinsReport Digital

**A slip on a plastic bag at a local authority swimming pool left a UNISON member unable to work again. The plant operator at the swimming pool sustained back and psychological injuries in the accident. He received £70,000 compensation through UNISON's legal service.**

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