

Thompsons secures nearly £4 million compensation for RMT members in 2015

OVER THE last 12 months, Thompsons Solicitors has won millions of pounds in compensation on behalf of hundreds of RMT members in England & Wales.

Thompsons Solicitors has secured almost £4m in compensation for RMT members during 2015 for cases ranging from asbestos-related disease and road traffic accidents, to workplace accidents.

RMT members using the union legal service provided by Thompsons Solicitors receive free legal advice and representation on a range of issues, including personal injury, at or away from work, on holiday and on the road, serious injuries, including brain and spinal cord injuries and industrial disease. The scheme also covers family members for non-workplace accidents.

The firm, which has specialist accident at work teams, secured more than £1.7 million for clients who suffered an injury as a result of their work, including compensation for RMT member Andrew Tiffin after he suffered a severe crush injury while working at a maintenance depot.

Thompsons Solicitors, the firm which won the first ever successful case for an asbestos-related disease in the UK in the House of Lords in 1972, also settled claims on behalf of three clients suffering from asbestos disease to the value of almost half a million pounds (£497,417).

In the last 12 months, 93 RMT members were supported by the union through personal injury compensation claims after a road traffic accident.

Doug Christie, union and client director at Thompsons Solicitors, said: "RMT members who use the union legal service are entitled to keep 100% of their compensation, whatever the injury, however complex the claim.

"Our aim at Thompsons, working with the union, is to secure the maximum amount of compensation in the shortest possible time to help provide financial security and rehabilitative support.

"Since our foundation, Thompsons Solicitors has been committed to the trade union movement and this, coupled with our specialist teams of solicitors and connections with support groups, means that we are well-placed to offer wide-ranging support to clients at what is often a very distressing time in their lives.

"Thompsons Solicitors is proud to stand up for RMT members and their families with legal services accessible through a dedicated advice line on 08457 125495."

Our aim is to secure the maximum amount of compensation in the shortest possible time

For legal advice
that helps you read
between the lines



Get in touch for expert legal
advice today on **08457 125 495**



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SOLICITORS
STANDING UP FOR YOU

Compensation following crush injury at work

AN ENGINEER from Tiptree, Essex has been awarded significant compensation from his employer, Balfour Beatty, after he suffered a severe crush injury while working at an OTM maintenance depot in Colchester.

In April 2009, Andrew Tiffin was working on a tamper machine, which is used to calibrate and realign train track that has become uneven.

He was fixing a fault in the machine and needed to carry out a routine calibration and, together with a colleague, had set the machine into work mode and was lowering its measuring trolleys and wheels onto the train track.

As he reached through the machine to loosen a trolley, it shot towards him and trapped his left hand against the side of the machine.

Andrew sustained a severe crush injury to his left hand. He needed an operation to release scar tethering in his fingers and was off work for four months and was left with permanent loss of full sensation in the tips of his left index and ring fingers and a limited range of motion.

RMT member Andrew contacted Thompsons through

the union. Andrew said: "I'm relieved that my injury hasn't prevented me from working long term and I'm glad to be back at work. However, I'm not able to stretch my hand out fully and as a result I'm not as quick or efficient as I once was, which is obviously frustrating. Thompsons did a great job of making sure I secured compensation for my loss of earnings and injury."

Accident could have been avoided

Mick Cash, general secretary of RMT, said: "This accident could have been avoided so I'm pleased to see that in this case the employer has taken responsibility for the accident, paid up and also kept Andrew in employment."

Kam Singh, Andrew's representative from Thompsons Solicitors, said: "If the employer had a proper system for maintenance of machinery in place, this accident could have been avoided."

"Unfortunately, despite Balfour Beatty being an international employer who should lead by example when it comes to protecting their staff and providing a safe place of work they failed on this occasion."

Small Claims, Big Impact

IF YOU'RE injured in an accident, the right to have independent legal representation to help you get – not what the insurers decide they will give you but what a court would award you for your injuries, losses and expenses – is under threat.

The age-old entitlement that compensation is fair to all, regardless of your wealth or position in society, is currently being challenged by proposed government changes to the small claims limit.

In November's Autumn Statement, the chancellor announced that he wants the small claims limit to rise from £1,000 to £5,000 in road traffic accident cases.

This means that, if a person is injured in a road accident and their damages are likely to be worth less than £5,000 (that's about 90 per cent of all road accidents), the injured person won't be able to recover the money spent on a solicitor to represent them.

The government is essentially asking injured people to pay for the privilege of having legal support to bring the people responsible for their injuries to account.

The alternative? The injured person goes it alone in a legal case against an insurance company and their bank of lawyers.

The government, along with its mates in the insurance industry, says there is a "fraud and claims culture in the motor industry". The Association of British Insurers (ABI) claims that they "detected" 67,000 instances of "fraud" in 2013 alone. But there has never been any independent verification of the insurers' figures.

Without solid evidence to back up the idea that fraud is

at the level of an "epidemic" (as one insurer claimed), the figures being peddled are a self-serving rhetoric designed to reduce the money they have to pay out while increasing their profits and dividends to shareholders.

Motor insurance is compulsory and the £15 billion a year market is looking pretty healthy by anyone's standards. The chancellor claims that the proposed rise in the small claims limit will save the insurance industry £1 billion, however it is unclear how this has been calculated and even if it does happen, how this saving would be passed on to motorists. Ministers have admitted in parliament that they do not intend to intervene in the market to require savings to be passed on.

Attack on ordinary people

While this government continues its attack on ordinary people, members of RMT should remember that your union legal scheme will continue to work hard to protect you from the worst effects of Tory policy.

If you, or a family member, are injured in a road traffic accident, don't go it alone – contact Thompsons and get support from expert solicitors who represent union members in personal injury cases every day of the week.

Thompsons is working with trade unions and opposition parties to fight changes to the small claims limit before they are sneaked through as law. Help us fight them too – read the latest on our Small Claims, Big Impact campaign at www.thompsons.law.co.uk/CutPremiumsNow or on Facebook at bit.ly/SmallClaimsBigImpact.

