



About 47,000 women in the UK had PIP implants fitted
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Hope for women in £35m faulty breast implant case

Hundreds sue Hospital Medical Group over 'sub-standard' products

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Hundreds of women fitted with faulty breast implants by one of the UK's largest cosmetic surgery providers could be in line for compensation if a £35 million lawsuit is successful.

The Hospital Medical Group (HMG) was a leading provider of breast implants made by French firm Poly Implant Prothèse (PIP), which, in 2010, were found to contain substandard industrial-grade silicone.

A High Court case brought by litigation funder Henderson & Jones accuses three former HMG directors, David Ross, Stephen Barnes, and Gerard Barnes, of intentionally moving assets beyond the reach of PIP victims to prevent them claiming compensation. Barclays, HMG's bank, and the company's

solicitors, the Wilkes Partnership, are accused of assisting the directors.

The case centres on a 2012 restructure of the company. HMG's assets - including a hospital valued at £15 million - were transferred out of the business. The assets were moved into three other companies controlled by HMG's holding company, according to court filings. Under the agreement, HMG remained liable for trade debts, taxation and claims from patients.

It is estimated that about 47,000 women in the UK had PIP implants fitted, nearly all at private healthcare facilities. A 2012 review by NHS medical director Sir Bruce Keogh found that the implants were "significantly more likely" to rupture than standard silicone implants.

HMG operated from 18 clinics in the UK and is thought to have carried out thousands of procedures involving PIP implants. The company went into liquidation in 2016. At the time it was facing an £8.5 million claim for damages from hundreds of women. The company also "had, or was likely to have, a substantial VAT liability", according to court filings.

Henderson & Jones, which purchased the claim from HMG's liquidator, is suing the parties for £35 million plus costs. An early hearing is set to take place virtually at the High Court on Wednesday.

If the case is successful, money from the claim would be returned to the liquidator to distribute among its creditors. Lawyers for the women have submitted a proof of debt for £8.5

million plus interest to the liquidator, making them a major creditor.

“We are trying to recover monies that were deliberately put beyond the reach of thousands of PIP victims,” said Henderson & Jones co-founder Gwilym Jones. “In our view, the transactions were clearly intended to put assets beyond the reach of creditors, in particular the PIP victims and HMRC.”

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Barclays declined to comment. The Wilkes Partnership said: “The case against us is wholly misconceived and without merit, and we are vigorously defending it.”

Gerard Barnes said: “The allegations made are denied and the case is being defended.” David Ross declined to comment. Stephen Barnes could not be reached for comment.