

SOCIETY

Minister to meet victims of maternity drug

By Storm Newton

Victims of a cancer-linked pregnancy drug will meet with the Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, today as part of a push to get a public inquiry into the “silent scandal”.

DES Justice UK (DJUK) is also calling for the creation of a screening programme to identify those who may be at risk from exposure to diethylstilbestrol, known as DES.

The synthetic form of oestrogen was prescribed to pregnant women from 1940 to the 1970s.

In 1971, it was linked to a cancer of the cervix and vagina, leading US regulators to call for it not to be given to pregnant women. But it continued to be prescribed to pregnant women in Europe until 1978.

DJUK is meeting Streeting to urge him to launch an inquiry into the events. In November, the Health Secretary told ITV News that the “state got this wrong” and apologised.

Clare Fletcher, partner at Broudie Jackson Canter, who represents DJUK, said: “We are delighted that Wes Streeting has kept his word and is meeting with us, but words will only go so far.

“We are demanding answers as to how this drug could have been prescribed to so many for so long.”

