

## DISABILITY NEWS SERVICE

Disabled researcher's book exposes 'corporate demolition of the welfare state'

**A string of activists, academics, politicians and journalists have welcomed the publication of a new book by a disabled researcher which exposes how successive governments have planned the “demolition of the welfare state”.**

Mo Stewart has spent eight years researching the influence of the US insurance giant Unum over successive UK governments, and how it led to the introduction of the “totally bogus” work capability assessment (WCA), which she says was designed to make it harder for sick and disabled people to claim out-of-work disability benefits.

Stewart's book, *Cash Not Care: The Planned Demolition Of The UK Welfare State*, published this week, argues that the assessment was modelled on methods used by Unum to deny protection to sick and disabled people in the US who had taken out income protection policies.

She says in her book that the WCA was “designed to remove as many as possible from access to [employment and support allowance] on route to the demolition of the welfare state”, with out-of-work disability benefits eventually to be replaced by insurance policies provided by companies like Unum.

She warns that the UK is now close to adopting that kind of US-style model.

Stewart is a former healthcare professional and a female veteran and self-funded her six years of research, which has been repeatedly referenced in parliamentary debates, and **has been highlighted by Disability News Service**(DNS) for nearly five years.

She describes in her book how Peter Lilley, secretary of state for social security in John Major's Conservative government, hired senior Unum executive John LoCascio to advise the UK government on how to cut the number of claimants of long-term sickness benefits.

She says that Mansel Aylward (*pictured*), the chief medical adviser in Lilley's department – which was later to be renamed the Department for Work and Pensions – went on to co-author an academic paper with LoCascio in 1995 which argued that GPs should be side-lined from advising on claimants' fitness for work.

Both Aylward and LoCascio went on to contribute to a conference held at Woodstock, near Oxford, in November 2001, which examined so-called “malingering and illness deception”.

The conference papers were later published, says Stewart, and argued that “malingering” was a lifestyle choice for many claimants of long-term sickness benefits.

She argues in the book that the conference was hugely influential in pushing the idea that claimants of out-of-work disability benefits were “guilty until proven innocent, regardless of diagnosis or prognosis” and provided “justification for the future demolition of the welfare state”.

She adds: “There was no evidence of the presumed mass ‘malingering’ of course, but that suggestion was enough to introduce American designed government funded medical tyranny into the UK.”

Stewart told DNS: “My last research report was published in January 2015 and then friends suggested that perhaps I could write a book, which would combine the results of the years of research into a detailed text.

“I started the research back in 2008 when I’d had a bogus WCA from a staff member from Atos Healthcare, when I’d been expecting a review of my war pension, which is unrelated to out-of-work benefits.

“By 2009 I realised that the evidence I was discovering about the WCA would benefit other disabled people, and I began sharing the research evidence with disabled people’s organisations.”

She added: “I hope the research will offer sick and disabled people more ammunition to challenge their bogus WCAs, that people will alert their MPs to the overwhelming evidence that the WCA is dangerous and should be stopped, and that academics will pursue this research further.

“To date, I’ve had seven requests by PhD students to quote from my reports in their research, so the evidence is slowly spreading when the UK national press will not touch it.”

Those praising her years’ of research include Sir Bert Massie, former chair of the Disability Rights Commission; Professor Danny Dorling, author and Halford Mackinder Professor of Geography at the University of Oxford; Guardian journalist and author Mary O’Hara; and Dame Anne Begg, former chair of the Commons work and pensions select committee.

Another to praise her work is Debbie Jolly, co-founder of [Disabled People Against Cuts](#), who says in the book that Stewart’s “groundbreaking and tenacious research has led the way in exposing the destructive force of the corporate state on the concept of welfare” and has “traced the twists and turns of the devious tricks played on the British public”.

Jolly adds: “It has exposed the duplicity, harm and abuse these actions have caused to disabled people with the courage of truth.”

Professor Peter Beresford, co-chair of the service-user network [Shaping Our Lives](#), says in a foreword to the book that Stewart's research exposes "the realities behind the populist rhetoric of 'welfare reform'".

He says that it shows "the hidden, often dubious relationships between policymakers and international corporations; the questionable independence of supposedly neutral 'experts' and most of all the scale and severity of the suffering of innumerable disabled people, in some cases resulting in their deaths".

*Cash Not Care is published by New Generation Publishing and is available from [Amazon](#), including via [Kindle](#), and from [Waterstones](#) and other book stores.*

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