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Adele Eastman
Senior Counsel
Farrer & Co LLP
66 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3LH

Private & Confidential

Dear Ms Eastman

Re: Killed By The State?

Social Policy Abused: the creation of preventable harm

FRI 27th November, 13:30 – 15:00 GMT

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/social-policy-abused-the-creation-of-preventable-harm-tickets-124404951559>

Please excuse this intrusion into your no doubt busy day, and my apologies for what will be a lengthy letter.

I write to you in my capacity as the research lead for the *Preventable Harm Project* (the Project), which concluded in November 2019 following ten years of research. I have spent the past year promoting the research findings and this will come to a conclusion on November 27th with the above webinar, hosted by the Centre for Welfare Reform. The talk will identify the ongoing preventable harm created by “welfare reforms”, together with austerity measures, as adopted by successive UK governments since 2010 which led to the introduction of Universal Credit (UC).

Given your speciality in safeguarding both children and adults with care and support needs, I invite you to consider accessing the webinar. Places are limited and so early registration is recommended.

I note the fact that you serve on the Board of the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) and that Lord Shinkwin will Chair the planned CSJ Commission on disability, which will include Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. Tanni is very familiar with the often disturbing evidence identified by the Project, and she has quoted my research findings during various welfare reform debates in the House Of Lords. www.mostewartresearch.co.uk

The government commissioned reports used to justify the welfare reforms failed all academic scrutiny and the Waddell-Aylward biopsychosocial (BPS) model of assessment, adopted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), as used to “assess” disability benefit claimants, was identified by academic experts as being “conceptually and empirically invalid” when using “policy-based” evidence. Also, the report commonly known as the “Freud Report,” as produced by David Freud, was exposed by academics within weeks of being

published as Freud had “got his numbers wrong” and had “misunderstood his own references.” So, there never was going to be vast numbers of disability benefit claimants leaving benefit and moving into work – unless compelled to by identified DWP “tyranny,” when adopting the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and now promoting the roll out of UC. The DWP were warned against adopting the WCA by their own health advisory team, but were “ruthless” and “reckless” when disregarding clinical opinion as this fatally flawed assessment model was ideologically motivated.

This is the evidence which is overlooked by the CSJ, who tend to disregard the volumes of published research reports and academic papers demonstrating the preventable harm created by the welfare reforms, the use of a fatally flawed assessment model used to resist funding disability benefit when adopting a fiscal priority and disregarding clinical opinion; and the fact that those in greatest need now live in fear of the DWP, whose persecution of the chronically ill and disabled community who are unfit to work knows no limits.

Please see published papers:

Psychological tyranny prescribed by the DWP: preventable harm is government policy
British Journal of General Practice 2018; 68 (677): 579

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp18X700001>

Preventable Harm: creating a mental health crisis

Journal of Public Mental Health Vol. 18 No.4, pp.224-230

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-07-2019-0070>

Psychological tyranny masquerading as welfare reform

Journal of Critical Psychology, Counselling & Psychotherapy Vol.19, Issue 1, pp.26-35

<https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Psychological-Tyranny-Masquerading-Welfare-Reform.pdf>

“Cameron’s 2010 coalition government successfully misled and manipulated the British public by making many false claims to justify the adoption of austerity measures which were ideologically motivated, were adopted without ethical approval and were not financially necessary. The often brutal political rhetoric by coalition Ministers regarding disability benefit claimants was repeated by front page tabloid press headlines that clearly influenced public opinion, and coincided with a 213 per cent increase in prosecuted disability hate crimes during the coalition government’s term in office. Eleven years after the introduction of the ESA, the Waddell-Aylward BPS model is still used to limit access to the benefit, as chronically ill and disabled claimants in need of financial support by the state are intimidated and coerced by the DWP. Regardless of the disturbing increase in numbers of suicides associated with the assessment, the DWP continues to resist collating the necessary evidence that could establish a causal link between the WCA and deaths by suicide of ESA claimants. Two Coroners have already made the link. Therefore, peer-reviewed published academic research, demonstrating the suffering and preventable harm endured by chronically ill and disabled ESA claimants, who are unfit to work, is disregarded by the DWP.” (PDF) *Influences and Consequences. The conclusion to the Preventable Harm Project 2009 – 2019*. Available from:

<https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/influences-and-consequences.html>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337472394_Influences_and_Consequences_The_conclusion_to_the_Preventable_Harm_Project_2009_-_2019 [accessed Oct 31 2020].

“Introduced on an exclusive fiscal basis, with a dangerous disregard for health and wellbeing (Barr et al, 2016), this flawed method of assessment guaranteed that disability benefit claimants would learn to live in fear of the WCA (Garthwaite, 2014), which became a matter of life or death for many of those in greatest need. The use of harsh sanctions by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for often minor misdemeanours associated with the WCA is linked to a disturbing number of chronically ill and disabled benefit claimants attempting suicide (Mills, 2017; Barr et al 2016), and others have starved to death in C21st UK when they were sanctioned with all benefit income removed, identified as being “killed by the state” (Elward, 2016: 30).” (PDF) *What price preventable harm: social policies designed to disregard human need*. Available from: <https://www.centreforwelfareform.org/library/what-price-preventable-harm.html> https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344463743_What_price_preventable_harm_social_policies_designed_to_disregard_human_need [accessed Oct 31 2020].

As long as the CSJ claim to be concerned to “help” disabled people into work, whilst disregarding the human impact of these fatally flawed assessments, claimants will continue to die when quite literally “killed by the state.” (Elward, 2016: 30). The CSJ’s motivation to move disabled people into employment disregards the fact that many are chronically ill and incapable of working, but have been intimidated by the DWP, whose every letter threatens sanctions including letters to claimants living with a life threatening diagnosis.

I wonder what evidence the CSJ uses to claim that the roll out of UC has been a resounding success? Any perceived success is the amalgamation of various benefits into one, which may be considered an administrative success. However, the identified preventable harm UC has created for claimants isn’t identified by the CSJ. There is no evidence of this claimed success, but there is a great deal of evidence of the ongoing human catastrophe UC has created:

“Results Participants’ accounts of the UC claims process and the consequences of managing on UC are reported; UC negatively impacts on material wellbeing, physical and mental health, social and family lives. UC claimants described the digital claims process as complicated, disorientating, impersonal, hostile and demeaning. Claimants reported being pushed into debt, rent arrears, housing insecurity, fuel and food poverty through UC. System failures, indifference and delays in receipt of UC entitlements exacerbated the difficulties of managing on a low income. The threat of punitive sanctions, for failing to meet the enhanced conditionality requirements under UC, added to claimant’s vulnerabilities and distress. Staff reported concerns for claimants and additional pressures on health services, local government and voluntary and community sector organisations as a result of UC.

Conclusions The findings add considerable detail to emerging evidence of the deleterious effects of UC on vulnerable claimants’ health and wellbeing. Our evidence suggests that UC is undermining vulnerable claimants’ mental health, increasing the risk of poverty, hardship, destitution and suicidality. Major, evidence-informed revisions are required to improve the design and implementation of UC, to prevent further adverse effects before large numbers of people move on to UC, as planned by the UK government.” <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/7/e029611>

There are many more papers offering similar evidence of the suffering created by the infliction of UC on anyone who cannot work, as the CSJ disregard the reality that many chronically ill and disabled people can’t work, and should not be persecuted by the DWP whose letters to claimants are described as being hostile, threatening and intimidating. And lets remember the vast amount of

increased poverty created by the roll out of UC, as reported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation:
<https://www.irf.org.uk/report/where-next-universal-credit-and-tackling-poverty>

In the C21st may I humbly suggest that causing preventable harm to those in greatest need, when influenced by the second worst insurance company in America, and adopting American social and labour market policies, always was a guaranteed catastrophe for anyone in greatest need; as identified in my book published in 2016 by New Generation Publishing: "Cash Not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state." This book is a referenced text now used by social scientists.
<https://www.newgeneration-publishing.com/books/reference/cash-not-care-the-planned-demolition-of-the-uk-welfare-state-3/>

Now there is recent academic research identifying that able bodied claimants of the unemployment benefit, Jobseekers Allowance, are presenting with mental health problems as they also feel persecuted by the introduction of UC:
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30026-8/fulltext?hss_channel=tw-27013292](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30026-8/fulltext?hss_channel=tw-27013292)

Given your distinguished reputation for safeguarding, I felt duty bound to alert you to this ongoing human crisis created for those in greatest need by the enforced welfare reforms, which has led to the adoption of UC regardless of inevitable catastrophic human consequences for many.

I trust this contact is welcome, and that you may benefit from accessing the webinar on 27th November.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if thought helpful.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards

Fellow, Centre for Welfare Reform

Mo Stewart

Independent Disability Studies Researcher

Author of '*Cash Not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state*'. New Generation Publishing, 2016

<https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk>

<https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/influences-and-consequences.html>

cc Dr Simon Duffy, Director - Centre for Welfare Reform

Bns Tanni Grey-Thompson

Lord Kevin Shinkwin

Prof Tom Shakespeare

Prof Danny Dorling

Prof Ben Barr

Dr Kayleigh Garthwaite

Dr Mandy Cheetham

Helen Barnard - JRF

Kayley Hignell – CAB

Mhoraig Green – CAS