

Crime Without Punishment When Killed By The State

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October 2018 is the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), as used by successive UK governments to restrict access to the out-of-work long-term sickness and disability benefit known as the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

The [most radical reform](#) in British welfare policy since the 1942 [Beveridge Report](#) was promoted as offering opportunity and [releasing the potential](#) of chronically sick and disabled people. It has been described ever since by politicians and civil servants as “[supporting](#)” those in receipt of long-term benefits for chronic illness and disability to return to work, regardless of any clinical diagnosis or prognosis which is completely disregarded by the WCA, rendering the assessment both [meaningless and dangerous](#).

In reality, the adoption of the WCA in October 2008 introduced the greatest government [enforced human suffering](#) in the history of social security funding, as chronically ill people who are too ill to work are being, quite literally, [killed by the State](#) with an average of [90 people per month dying](#) after being refused access to ESA and found “fit for work”.

It is surely cause for serious concern to learn that the government’s own mental health technical working group, as used by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in 2006 and 2007 to help to design the WCA, were then disregarded when advising the DWP that the WCA should be abandoned as it would create preventable harm, especially for those with a [mental health problem](#).

As exposed by the Disability News Service: “Ministers and civil servants were [“ruthless”](#) and [“reckless”](#) in forcing through their new “fitness for work” test and refusing to abandon it, even after they were told of the harm it was causing...”

Perhaps of greater concern is that the 2005 [DWP commissioned research](#) “*The Scientific and Conceptual Basis for Incapacity Benefits*” by the former DWP Chief Medical Officer [Mansel Aylward](#) and former orthopaedic surgeon [Gordon Waddell](#), as used by the DWP to justify the adoption of the WCA, has been totally discredited and has failed all academic scrutiny.

This DWP commissioned research [funded by corporate America](#) was used to justify the language of [shirkers and scroungers](#) in the relentless political attack on the sick and disabled community by adopting the Waddell and Aylward biopsychosocial (BPS) model of assessment for the WCA, and has been [discredited by academic excellence](#). Co-written with colleagues, Shakespeare’s paper concluded that the Waddell and Aylward BPS model demonstrated “[no coherent theory or evidence behind this model](#)” and revealed a “*cavalier approach to scientific*

evidence". That's as damning a critique of one academic's work by another that I have ever seen.

More commissioned research appeared in 2007 by the former banker David Freud. The '[Freud report](#)' emphatically suggested that one million sick and disabled people should be removed from the then 2.68 million people claiming Incapacity Benefit, which was the disability benefit replaced in 2008 with the adoption of the ESA.

Justified by sweeping generalities such as "*work is good for you*", when citing 2006 [DWP commissioned research](#) that presented very little evidence other than sweeping generalisations, Freud recommended the reduction of one million claimants whilst disregarding the health implications having later admitted in a 2008 interview that "[I didn't know anything about welfare at all when I started](#)".

Gently introduced by the New Labour government in 2008, it was the Coalition government who added to the burden of chronically ill and disabled people by manufacturing evidence [for their official reports](#), and adding unnecessary [austerity measures](#) to the ongoing welfare reforms in 2010.

The DWP totally disregarding all [detailed evidence](#) of the [preventable harm](#) to public mental health created by the fatally flawed WCA, as independent academic research identified the WCA as being directly linked to an additional [five hundred and ninety suicides](#) in a three year period to this imposed [ideological tyranny](#) as NHS statistics identified [50% of ESA claimants](#) having attempted suicide.

"[...] In total, across England as a whole, the WCA disability reassessment process during this (3 year) period was associated with an additional 590 suicides, 279,000 additional cases of self-reported mental health problems and the prescribing of an additional 725,000 antidepressant items.

"In particular the reviews indicated that the (WCA) process was impersonal and mechanistic and did not adequately capture the impact of chronic health conditions...

"Given that doctors and other health professionals have professional and statutory duties to protect and promote the health of patients and the public, our evidence that this process is potentially harming the recipients of these assessments raises major ethical issues for those involved...

"Our study provides evidence that the policy in England of reassessing the eligibility of benefit recipients using the WCA may have unintended but serious consequences for population mental health, and there is a danger that these adverse effects outweigh any benefits that may or may not arise from moving people off disability benefits..."

'First do no harm': are disability assessments associated with adverse trends in mental health? A longitudinal ecological study.

B.Barr, D Taylor-Robinson, D Stuckler, R Loopstra, A Reeves, M Whitehead
Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health
Volume 70, Issue 4, November 2015

Using the Waddell and Aylward [totally discredited](#) biopsychosocial (BPS) model of assessment for the WCA, that disregards diagnosis and prognosis, leading to the inevitable [death of thousands](#) of chronically ill people, the DWP were very confident that [their American influenced welfare reforms](#) would be successful, not least because the British press had been silenced and would not report the [influence of corporate America](#) with the British welfare reforms.

Instead, the British press were successfully [used to demonise](#) those too ill to work, as the planned destruction of the British welfare state increased. Sick and disabled people were stigmatised by the [dangerous commentary](#), and prosecuted [disability hate crimes](#) increased by 213% during the Coalition government's term in office.

The latest DWP Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey MP, recently gave evidence to the [Social Security Committee](#) of the Scottish government, demonstrating that no details of claimant suffering and distress were of interest.

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