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Stephen Barclay MP
The House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Open access

Dear Mr Barclay

Re: DWP statistics

In your capacity as my local MP I invite you to please ask the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for access to updated statistics regarding the mortality totals for claimants of the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), which are long overdue.

The last published ESA mortality statistics¹ were up to and including February 2014 and, for research purposes, it is essential that DWP statistics are regularly updated. Academics at several universities are waiting for these statistics, and so am I in my capacity as the lead independent researcher regarding the American corporate influence with UK welfare reforms. My recent research summary² will alert you to the overwhelming evidence of the identified preventable harm created when using the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to restrict access to the ESA, as identified in my letter published in the *Guardian*³ today.

Furthermore, access to the mortality statistics of the numbers of claimants who following a WCA were refused access to the ESA, were instructed to claim Jobseekers Allowance, and then died within twelve months of being obliged to claim unemployment benefit are also awaited. I would be grateful if you could please establish with the DWP when these statistics will be published, as previously requested in the House of Lords, given that as a matter of routine they should be in the public domain.

On a related subject, can you please invite the Department for Health and Social Care to respond to critically acclaimed independent academic research, confirming that there is a direct link to a significant increase in mental health problems and suicides and the WCA, as demonstrated in 2015 published research by Dr Ben Barr⁴ and colleagues. The WCA is also negatively impacting on the NHS budget, as demonstrated by increased demands at the Accident and Emergency Departments

1 ESA mortality statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortality-statistics-esa-ib-and-sda-claimants>

2 Preventable Harm and the Work Capability Assessment

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324587956_Preventable_harm_and_the_Work_Capability_Assessment

3 Disabled people facing government hostility in the UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/11/disabled-people-facing-government-hostility-in-the-uk>

4 'First do no harm': are disability assessments associated with adverse trends in mental health? A longitudinal ecological study <http://jech.bmj.com/content/70/4/339>

due to this unnecessary human suffering created for ideological purposes, and for no other reason⁵. The banking crisis was simply the excuse needed for politicians to begin to demolish the welfare state⁶ as planned since 1982.

The DWP knowingly used discredited⁶ DWP commissioned research⁷ to justify adopting the Waddell and Aylward bio-psycho-social (BPS) model of assessment for the WCA. That same Waddell and Aylward BPS model has also recently been discredited by academic excellence⁸, and I must draw to your attention the fact that there is no possible justification for the WCA to continue to be used when demonstrated to be a direct link to an increase in suicides^{4,9}.

The former DWP Chief Medical Officer and co-author of the discredited DWP commissioned research, namely *The Scientific and Conceptual Basis of Incapacity Benefits*⁷, admitted as long ago as 2012 that he now found the BPS model of assessment to be “*unsatisfactory*” and believed it “*...no longer addresses the real needs of disabled people and the exclusion of disabled people from society*”¹⁰. So, the question remains as to why this fatally flawed WCA continues to be used when demonstrated to be creating such unnecessary death, despair and preventable harm¹¹ when the fatally flawed assessment totally disregards diagnosis, prognosis and all medical opinion?¹²

In the past it was instructions from the Information Commissioner’s Office that obliged the DWP to publish updated ESA mortality totals¹³, and a letter in the *Guardian* in 2015 by almost 100 health specialists warned of the negative impact on health of recent government policies¹⁴.

Yours sincerely

Mo Stewart

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

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mo_Stewart/publications

4 ‘First do no harm’: are disability assessments associated with adverse trends in mental health? A longitudinal ecological study <http://jech.bmj.com/content/70/4/339>

5 Margaret Thatcher’s role in plan to dismantle welfare state revealed

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/dec/28/margaret-thatcher-role-plan-to-dismantle-welfare-state-revealed>

6 Cash Not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state

<http://www.newgeneration-publishing.com/books/reference/cash-not-care-the-planned-demolition-of-the-uk-welfare-state-3/>

7 The Scientific and Conceptual Basis of Incapacity Benefits

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Scientific-Conceptual-Basis-Incapacity-Benefits/dp/011703584X>

8 Blaming the victim all over again: Waddell and Aylward’s biopsychosocial (BPS) model of disability

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0261018316649120>

9 Coroner’s ‘ground-breaking’ verdict: Suicide was ‘triggered’ by ‘fit for work’ test

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/coroners-ground-breaking-verdict-suicide-was-triggered-by-fit-for-work-test/>

10 Former DWP medical boss makes WCA pledge to protestors

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/former-dwp-medical-boss-makes-wca-pledge-to-protesters-2/>

11 State Crime by Proxy Update: corporate influence on state sanctioned social harm. An independent report

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325013167_STATE_CRIME_BY_PROXY_UPDATE_corporate_influence_on_state_sanctioned_social_harm_An_independent_report

12 Reply to DWP Ministerial Correspondence Team Manager

<http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/uploads/attachment/609/redacted-letter-to-dwp.pdf>

13 DWP told to publish ESA death totals, after two year delay

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/dwp-told-to-publish-esa-deaths-report-after-two-year-delay/>

14 US and British health specialists support NHS

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/may/03/us-and-british-health-specialists-support-the-nhs>

Copied to:

Professor Dame Sally Davies - Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health
Professor Chris Whitty – Chief Scientific Adviser, Department of Health and Social Care
Professor Danny Dorling – Halford Mackinder Professor of Geography, University of Oxford
Professor Tom Shakespeare - Professor of Disability Research, Norwich Medical School
Professor Roger Goodman – Head of Social Science Division, University of Oxford
Professor Peter Beresford – Professor of Citizen Participation, University of Essex
Professor Mayur Lakhani – President, Royal College of General Practitioners
Professor Nick Watson - Professor of Disability Studies, Glasgow University
Professor Wendy Burn – President, Royal College of Psychiatrists
Professor Jane Dacre – President, Royal College of Physicians
Professor Woody Caan - Editor, British Journal of Psychiatry
Dr Anne Daguere - Associate professor in work, welfare and employment, Middlesex University
Dr Kayleigh Garthwaite - Birmingham Fellow, Dpt of Social Policy, Sociology & Criminology
Dr Ruth Patrick - Postdoctoral Research, School of Law & Social Justice, Liverpool University
Dr Alex Scott-Samuel - Senior Lecturer in Public Health, Liverpool University
Dr Simon Duffy – Director, the Centre for Welfare Reform
Dr Craig Newnes - Editor, JCPCP
Elizabeth Denham, Information Commissioner
Elizabeth Loder - Head of Research, BMJ (British Medical Journal)
Alastair McLellan - Editor, HSJ (Health Service Journal)
Barbara Keeley, MP - Shadow Minister for Mental Health and Social Care
Sharon Hodgson, MP - Shadow Minister for Public Health
Justin Madders, MP - Shadow Health Minister
John Pring - Editor, Disability News Service
Frances Ryan - Columnist for the Guardian