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Ms Joanna Wallace
Independent Case Examiner
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Dear Ms Wallace

Re: DWP Serious Case Panel

It is my understanding that you are the Independent Case Examiner and also a member of the DWP Serious Case Panel, and it is in that capacity that I contact you.

Please be advised that I am the lead researcher for the Preventable Harm Project (the Project) and, following ten years of independent research, the Project concluded in November 2019 with the publication of the *Influences and Consequences*¹ report. Please be further advised that since the adoption of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), as used to limit access to long-term out-of-work disability benefit(s), I have conducted independent disability studies research for the Project which identified the American corporate influence with UK social policy reforms since 1992. As a consequence of increasingly punitive social policy reforms, the preventable harm of many of those in greatest need was inevitable, and there have been thousands of deaths linked to social policy reforms, together with the combined impact of the austerity measures adopted by the coalition government. I have promoted the Project findings during the years of research,^{2,3,4,5} which included making contributions to academic projects⁶ and providing chapters for academic texts.^{7,8}

Influenced by the American corporate giant Unum (Provident) Insurance since 1992, future social welfare policies would create fear within the disabled community, with an NHS report advising that 50% of ESA claimants had attempted suicide at some point.

The Waddell and Aylward BPS model of assessment disregards diagnosis, prognosis, past medical history and prescribed medicines. So does the WCA.³

I understand that you may identify maladministration, which negatively impacts on the wellbeing of many, yet you cannot pass opinion regarding the often fatal consequences linked to social policy primary legislation, which has been demonstrated to be fatally flawed and directly linked to the death of thousands of those in greatest need.^{8,9}

Whilst this may be the limitations of your remit, Ms Wallace, may I suggest that a government advisor should at least be alert to the vast amount of published evidence demonstrating that preventable harm was inevitable with the adoption of a fatally flawed assessment model that totally

disregards clinical opinion;^{3,5} rendering the chronically ill and disabled claimants of long-term out-of-work disability benefits now living in fear of the DWP.¹⁰

It remains difficult to comprehend the purpose of the DWP Serious Case Panel, whose remit is to prevent identified serious problems being repeated in order to improve safeguarding, given that you are not fully informed or familiar with the creation of preventable harm adopted by social policy reforms in the UK since 2008; and significantly increased during the term of the coalition government from 2010. Coincidentally, prosecuted disability hate crimes increased by 213%¹¹ following the adoption of austerity measures, which were identified as being financially unnecessary and ethically unjustifiable.¹²

Significant public health research has demonstrated the relentless preventable harm imposed by the DWP against those in greatest need, with a direct link to a deterioration in public mental health of chronically ill and disabled benefit claimants,¹³ and the negative mental health impact created for the able bodied unemployed due to the stresses involved when claiming Universal Credit.¹⁴ Social policy reforms have been adopted using a fiscal priority, whilst disregarding health and wellbeing which is not only cause for concern, it is also in breach of ethical protocol and was guaranteed to cause preventable harm.^{5,8}

It is crucial that, when assessing the costs and benefits of new welfare policies, policy makers take into account the potential health consequences. To date, the national evaluation framework for Universal Credit only includes an assessment of labour market outcomes. There is no plan to assess the effects on health and wellbeing. Given the evidence for the adverse effects on health of welfare change – as suggested by this study and previous analyses – it is crucial that a robust health impacts assessment exists within any evaluation for welfare change, including Universal Credit, and that health effects are considered when redesigning welfare systems.¹³

Understand me please when I alert you to fact that, by definition, when care, concern, compassion, humanity and dignity are all removed from any form of DWP ‘assessment,’ the only thing remaining is DWP tyranny.^{2,3,5} I think the Serious Case Panel needs to make sure they have access to a multitude of serious cases, where those in greatest need have been abandoned by the DWP, with a growing number of those in greatest need now starving to death¹⁵ when, quite literally, ‘*killed by the state.*’¹⁶ Neoliberal politics identified those in greatest need as little more than a financial burden on the state,^{17,18} as the human consequences of the adoption and influence of American social and labour market policies are demonstrated,^{8,19,20} which has led to a human catastrophe in the UK.^{8,9}

Yours sincerely

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>

Copied to:

Peter Schofield – Permanent Secretary, Leslie Evans – Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government, Chair WPSC, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People MSP, Director-General of Work and Health Services, Minister for Mental Health MSP, Minister for Health and Social Services Welsh Government, Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services - Welsh Government, Professor Ben Barr, Professor Anna Lawson, Professor Danny Dorling, Professor Tom Shakespeare, Professor Peter Dwyer, Dr Kayleigh Garthwaite, Dr Anne Daguere, Dr Sophie Wickham, Chair Health and Social Care Committee, WPSC, HSCcom, Duncan Selbie PHE, Dr Simon Duffy, Dr Maria Berghs

Enclosures:

- Preventable Harm: creating a mental health crisis
Journal of Public Mental Health, Vol 18, No 4 2019, pp 224-230
- Psychological tyranny prescribed by the DWP: preventable harm is government policy
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