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The Rt Hon the Lord Burnett of Maldon
Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales
The Royal Courts of Justice
Strand, London WC2A 2LL

VIA EMAIL

Dear Lord Chief Justice

Re: A Catastrophic Indifference To Human Need:
The Mental Health Crisis Created By The DWP
British Journal of General Practice, Jan 2021¹²

Please excuse this unsolicited contact as I write to alert you to an ongoing government enforced public health crisis, which is being totally disregarded, as those in greatest need live in fear of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) whose social policy reforms were guaranteed to kill many, and so they have.¹

I should advise that I am writing in my capacity as the research lead for the Preventable Harm Project (the Project), which ran for ten years and concluded with the *Influences and Consequences* report, as published in November 2019 by the Centre for Welfare Reform.² I should further advise that I am a healthcare professional by training, and a disabled veteran of the Women's Royal Air Force medical branch. Therefore, I am familiar with the significance of medical diagnosis and prognosis, and the implications of them both for those who are too ill to work.

During the Project I identified the fact that the Waddell-Aylward biopsychosocial (BPS) assessment model, as adopted by the DWP to assess the fitness for work of the chronically ill and disabled community, was fatally flawed.³ Co-designed by discredited corporate American advisers, this BPS assessment model was guaranteed to cause preventable harm when the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) was introduced by the DWP. The WCA is identified as a '*non-medical functional assessment*' which totally disregards all clinical opinion. Therefore diagnosis, prognosis, past medical history and prescribed medicines are all disregarded. Consequently, many thousands of those in greatest need, often living with a catastrophic diagnosis, were destined to die when found '*fit for work*' by the flawed WCA.³

There is a catalogue of published academic papers demonstrating the ongoing preventable harm created by the social policy reforms,^{4,5,6,7} with suicide notes which regularly identify the DWP and the WCA as being the cause of anguish and despair for disability benefit applicants. There is also evidence that the DWP failed to show WCA reviewers evidence of links to benefit deaths,⁸ and that the DWP disregarded Coroners' warnings about the deaths linked to the WCA.⁹ Over time, Coroners have attempted to alert various administrations to an identified causal link between the WCA and suicides; with all Coroners' reported concerns disregarded by the DWP, including alerts under the 'Rule 43' Coroner's alert to prevent future deaths.¹⁰ This is an ongoing gross dereliction of duty by the DWP, who refuse to conduct a cumulative impact assessment regarding the impact of social policy reforms, based on a fiscal priority and disregarding consequences to health and wellbeing.

I have taken the liberty of providing access to a recent detailed letter to the Minister of State for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health. The letter contains 45 relevant references following ten years of research. Given that the DWP continue to disregard published academic research which identified long ago a link between the WCA and suicides,⁴ I am inviting the Judiciary to acknowledge the consequences of this government imposed preventable harm impacting on the chronically ill and disabled community, as orchestrated by corporate America.¹¹ The Chief Coroner and the Acting President of the Social Entitlement Chamber are copied into the letter to the Minister, as are several other experts whose evidence is routinely disregarded by the DWP.

As the research lead for the Preventable Harm Project, I am inviting the Lord Chief Justice to please advise when the government will be held to account? When will the government be required to end the politics of fear, and to remove an assessment model that disregards all clinical opinion which guaranteed that many of those in greatest need would be, quite literally, '*killed by the state*'.¹²

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely



Fellow, Centre for Welfare Reform

Mo Stewart

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

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

<https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/preventable-harm-and-the-wca.html>

Copied to :

The Chief Coroner: HH Judge Edward Thomas Teague QC

The Acting President of the Social Entitlement Chamber: HH Judge Mary Clarke

Professor of Applied Public Health Research: Professor Ben Barr

Director, Centre for Welfare Reform: Dr Simon Duffy

Enclosed:

Letter to Minister of State for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health, Jan 2021

'Preventable Harm: Creating a Mental Health Crisis' : Journal of Public Mental Health, Dec 2019

References

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- 10 Pring J (2020): *Errol Graham: Coroner urged to act on evidence that DWP hid links to deaths*. Disability News Service, February 2020
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