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

<https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/about-us/centre-fellows/mo-stewart.html>

His Honour Judge Thomas Teague QC
Chief Coroner, England and Wales
Chief Coroner's Office
Room C09
Royal Courts of Justice
Strand, London
WC2A 2LL

Private & Confidential

via email

Dear Judge Teague

Re: The Preventable Harm Project, 2009-2019

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

I write in my capacity as a former healthcare professional and the Research Lead for the Preventable Harm Project (2009-2019).

It is with growing concern that I alert you to the identified and ongoing public health crisis created by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) by the adoption of the fatally flawed Work Capability Assessment (WCA), which was initially introduced in 2008 to restrict access to long-term disability benefit. Since 2010, when austerity measures were adopted without ethical approval, together with extreme social policy reforms and sanctions which remove all income for a period of months, there has been a catastrophic impact on public mental health which is directly linked to a growing number of suicides of those in greatest need who were pronounced “*fit for work*” following a WCA.^{1,2}

The identified prevalent intimidation of chronically ill and disabled benefit claimants by the DWP is a growing public health concern, not least because of the relationship between physical and mental health and the fact that deteriorating mental health can accelerate a deterioration in physical health.^{3,4,5}

The WCA is the adoption of the discredited Waddell-Aylward biopsychosocial (BPS) model of assessment,⁶ which totally disregards clinical diagnosis, prognosis, past medical history and prescribed medicines and successfully introduced disability denial into social policies.⁷ The Waddell-Aylward BPS model of disability assessment (2005,⁸ 2010⁹) was adopted by the DWP to break the past psychological security of the welfare state, in advance of the move to health and welfare to be eventually provided by private income replacement health insurance; which is a long-held political ambition that enjoys bipartisan support.¹⁰

I believe you will be alert to the “*Prevention of Future Death*” reports, as provided by various coroners over the years since the WCA was adopted. The DWP disregarded them all,^{11,12} and are now refusing to offer the findings of a panel set up to examine the disturbing and increasing number of deaths linked to the WCA.¹³ Since 2010 a fiscal priority has been adopted for all social policy

reforms, which disregards health and wellbeing,¹ with what are catastrophic human consequences for many as the chronically ill and disabled community who are clinically unfit to work are persecuted by the State; which has become “the norm” in the UK.¹⁻⁷

The listed references include research conducted by academics at various universities, which demonstrates the preventable harm created by social policy reforms since 2010, the excessive use of sanctions which can starve to death those who are too ill to attend an assessment,¹⁴ and the fear imposed by the DWP on the chronically ill and disabled community who are unfit to work.¹⁵

I have routinely copied you into a variety of emails exposing this ongoing identified DWP preventable harm, but I have no way of knowing if they were made available to you. Therefore, I hope this letter reaches your attention, so I can be sure that the Chief Coroner is alerted to the unnecessary suffering created by social policies, which are linked to the death of many thousands of chronically ill and disabled people whose only crime is that they are unfit to work.

Judge Teague, death was always inevitable for disability benefit claimants when diagnosis, prognosis, past medical history and prescribed medicines are all disregarded by the use of the dangerous WCA. Perhaps the Office of the Chief Coroner may wish to express concern as to this government-imposed public health crisis, which guaranteed that many of those in greatest need have been, quite literally, “*killed by the state*”.¹⁶

This catastrophic situation cannot improve as long as the WCA is used by the DWP to resist providing disability benefit to as many as possible of those in greatest need, regardless of what are often fatal human consequences. All evidence of a moral code has disappeared for anyone whose too ill to work in C21st UK.

It is surely past time to stop killing those in greatest need who are unfit to work, and it is hoped that the Office of the Chief Coroner will help identify this disturbing consequence of social policy reforms.

Many thanks for your time.

Yours, most 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:

Lord Low of Dalston CBE, Chair of the Working Party: *Reforming Benefits Decision-Making*

Professor Michael Adler, Emeritus Professor of Socio-Legal Studies & Leverhulme

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

Professor Robert Thomas, Professor of Public Law - University of Manchester

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Lindblom, Chair Administrative Justice Council

The Rt Hon Steve Reed MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice

Judge Kate Markus QC, President Social Entitlement Chamber

The Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP, Attorney General

Sir Robert Neill QC MP, Chair Justice Committee

Lindsey Poole, Director Advice Services Alliance

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