



The Creation Of Preventable Harm

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To: Professor Paul Gregg, colleagues & interested parties

I have been invited to provide information for the new Labour Market Advisory Board regarding the identified public health crisis and preventable harm created by UK social policy primary legislation.

Re: The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms

[Justice, Power and Resistance 6\(2\): 217-228](#)¹

“To justify the adoption of harsh and unnecessary austerity measures, which were introduced without ethical approval, the Coalition administration elected in 2010 vehemently challenged the integrity of the chronically ill and disabled community and routinely accused disability benefit claimants of fraud, while failing to produce evidence to support their claims. Their often hostile rhetoric encouraged a 213 percent increase in prosecuted disability hate crimes, and successive administrations disregarded the thousands of deaths directly linked to the Work Capability Assessment, which was adopted using a discredited and dangerous biopsychosocial model of assessment to restrict access to long-term disability benefit. Influenced by corporate America since 1992, the UK social policy reforms guaranteed that many of those in greatest need were destined to die when, covertly, killed by the State.”¹ [Published 2023]

- 1 As an introduction, please be advised that I write in my capacity as the research lead for the [Preventable Harm Project](#).
- 2 I note with great interest that you are the appointed Chair of the new [Labour Market Advisory Board](#), which boasts significant members but no disabled member, and certainly no expert regarding the identified [government induced public health crisis](#) now ongoing in the UK, which is negatively impacting on the health, wellbeing and survival of many of the chronically ill and disabled community who are unable to work. It is also linked to a [disturbing number of suicides](#) of some of those in greatest need following relentless intimidation by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) when adopting the [politics of fear](#) using the fatally flawed Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to restrict disability benefit access.
- 3 This was identified in a [significant BBC Radio 4 series](#) investigating the preventable harm created by the use of this dangerous assessment, which was identified by Professor Jonathan Portes as [‘one of the biggest social policy failures in the past 20-30 years.’](#) I believe you are familiar with the Radio 4 series Professor as you contributed to it, and this detailed evidence will demonstrate a



growing government induced public health crisis that I hope will benefit members of the new Labour Market Advisory Board.

- 4 Whilst the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for the Labour administration has invited the expertise of the new Advisory Board when working towards her planned White Paper, and certainly her comments since taking office demonstrates [the same disturbing commentary](#) as the previous Conservative administration regarding the numbers of people who claim disability benefit, once again we have a government that disregards the [identified public health crisis](#) created by past hostile social policy primary legislation. This was guaranteed to cause preventable harm to many of those in greatest need, not least the adoption of the fatally flawed WCA that totally disregards all clinical need which was always dangerous and guaranteed human suffering on a vast scale with no-one held to account.
- 5 Whilst I do fully comprehend you have a job to do, please consider that there has never been any evidence of vast numbers of fake disability benefit claims, but [the hostile political rhetoric](#) attacking disability benefit claimants adopted since 2010 by the Coalition government worked well and watched as prosecuted disability hate crimes [climbed by 213%](#) during the Coalition government's term in office (2010-15) when aided by the tabloid press. Years later, the former Secretary of State for the Coalition administration is still attacking the disabled community '*languishing on benefit*' in his column in the *Telegraph*, without providing any evidence. This man has a habit of using false statistics to gain attention to his hostile rhetoric and was challenged by the UK Statistics Authority who identified his many claims advising that they were '[unsupported by the official statistics](#)'.
- 6 Of course, he is disregarding that it is very difficult to access long-term disability benefit due to the hostile social policy agenda adopted when he was in government and benefit fraud for the Personal Independence Payment ([PIP disability benefit is zero](#)), so this relentless DWP persecution should end. However, the latest Labour administration, which initially introduced the WCA in 2008, is continuing with this demonisation of chronically ill and disabled people who are not in paid employment, which is based on fake news and right-leaning ideology.
- 7 We are living in very dark and dangerous times since the adoption of neoliberal politics in the UK, the [influence of corporate America with UK social policy reforms since 1992](#), and the adoption of social policies introduced using a fiscal priority whilst disregarding the health, wellbeing and survival of those in greatest need which guaranteed that many people would be '[killed by the state](#)' with no-one held to account.
- 8 There is a disturbing history of preventable harm against those in greatest need created by successive UK neoliberal administrations and [identified by a multitude of academics](#) from a variety of universities, which is detailed in published evidence routinely disregarded by the DWP.
- 9 We have an ageing population, fatal diseases from years ago can now be survived, recently identified conditions can be permanent and debilitating, such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome that politicians attempt to dismiss, and Liz Kendall – the DWP Secretary of State - disregards long-Covid



and punishes those who have it with her hostile rhetoric. There is a constant political insistence that there are far too many people claiming disability benefit, with the implication that many must be fake, whilst overlooking the fact that the assessment model adopted since 2008 and extended in 2010 is linked to the death of thousands since the Coalition administration increased conditionality, which had [fatal consequences for many](#). Indeed, civil servants with an exalted title of 'Decision Maker' are **unqualified** for the significant responsibility they have, as identified by Professor Harrington in 2010. The only thing they do well is an excessive use of sanctions, which is linked to poverty, starvation and a growing government induced [mental health crisis in the UK](#).

- 10 Those in greatest need live in fear of the DWP who demonstrate a hostile ideology with a presumption of guilt, and adopted intimidation with every written communication with disability benefit claimants, including relentless threats of sanctions. 'Decision Makers' freely admit that they don't understand the medical evidence provided by claimants, so they disregard it, which is how we have [catastrophically ill people identified by the WCA as being 'fit for work'](#) who die trying to find a job. This [is a national scandal](#), so please don't disregard this government induced public health crisis whilst making recommendations to Liz Kendall for her pending White Paper. And do please remember that the numbers of chronically ill and disabled claimants of out-of-work long term disability benefit was identified as being 2.5m in 2005 and 2.6m in 2008. So, given that there has been a pandemic, and there are 7.4 million people waiting for NHS treatment, the fact that the numbers are now 2.8m in 2024 is hardly surprising.
- 11 It all boils down to how published evidence is presented and how the British public are easily manipulated by successive administrations using fake news. With a mind-set of MPs since 2005 that 1 million people claiming disability benefit should return to work, this has prejudiced all social policy reforms, and it looks like the latest administration intend to continue this relentless intimidation, which originated in a discredited government commissioned 2005 report which identified 1 million people with a mental health problem claiming benefit. Hence, social policy legislation demonstrates [a political prejudice](#), and a disturbing ignorance, relating to the significance and severity of [mental health problems which are often fatal](#) when persecuted by the DWP.
- 12 The removal of care, concern, compassion, humanity, and dignity from any disability assessment is identified as tyranny, as ongoing in the UK since 1992 and dramatically increased since 2008, following the influence of corporate America with UK social policy reforms. And, let's not forget that there have now been a total of 3 UN reports identifying the UK for [failing to protect disabled people's rights](#), which of course the UK administration also disregarded.
- 13 There is a reason many chronically ill and disabled people are '*economically inactive*' which is that they are clearly **unable to work**. ... which would be obvious if the WCA considered diagnosis, prognosis, and prescribed medication – significant clinical evidence which the WCA, and the DWP, disregard during what is a fatally flawed and dangerous assessment model using the [totally discredited Waddell-Aylward biopsychosocial model of assessment](#). Only DWP Ministers think it reasonable to challenge chronically ill and disabled people relentlessly, and



publicly, with what is a thinly veiled non-stop character assassination, which is directly linked to a [growing public health crisis](#) for which the DWP accept no responsibility.

- 14 The DWP also need to grasp the concept that many people are permanently ill and will never, ever, be able to return to work, which is a concept that the DWP and their 'medical advisers' fail to comprehend, which makes them very, very dangerous to those in greatest need.
- 15 Given the identified [government induced public health crisis](#) in the UK, I can make no apology for the length of this document and I hope the evidence within it may be helpful to the new Labour Market Advisory Board. Most members of the Advisory Board are economic experts, but please remember you are dealing with peoples' lives when making recommendations to the Secretary of State who seems devoted to the welfare budget and very little else. ... Actions always have consequences, and the consequences of any new pending DWP White Paper should not be that more people in greatest need in the UK will once again be demonised and terrified by the DWP.
- 16 Distribution of this evidence will be shared with members of the Advisory Board, together with interested parties and various significant academics whose published research identified the ongoing preventable harm created by UK social policy reforms. There is a reason life expectancy in the UK has stalled. ...
- 17 I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the research findings of the Preventable Harm Project with the Labour Market Advisory Board if considered helpful. Thank you for your time.

Mo Stewart
1st October 2024