



Mo Stewart Research

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Date: 10th February 2025

Her Honour Judge Alexia Durran
Chief Coroner's Office
Room C09, Royal Courts of Justice
Strand, London
WC2A 2LL

via email

Your Honour,

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

[Justice, Power and Resistance 6\(2\): 217-228](#)³

I am writing in my capacity as the research lead for the Preventable Harm Project,¹ ongoing since 2009, to alert you to growing concerns regarding the historic dismissal of successive Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) reports by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).²

'The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has repeatedly dismissed concerns raised by coroners who have investigated the deaths of benefit claimants, in a pattern of behaviour that stretches back 14 years, analysis by Disability News Service (DNS) has revealed. ...

The coroner had called on Work and Pensions secretary Mel Stride to act to prevent flaws in the benefits system leading to further suicides, through the prevention of future deaths (PFD) report.

But in its response, published this month, the DWP told the coroner it disagreed with each of the three key concerns she raised about the way its systems were working, particularly for universal credit claimants. ...

DWP has now been sent at least seven PFD reports since the start of 2010, and in each report the coroner has called for significant action by the department to prevent further deaths.

But the DNS analysis has shown that only twice has the department promised to take anything more than superficial action from the department to prevent further deaths.

And in four of the cases ... the department refused to accept that it had made any errors in the lead-up to the death of the claimant.'²

¹ [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

² [DWP's 14-year history of dismissing coroners' concerns over benefit claimant deaths](#)



In my most recent published paper³ I identified the ongoing government-induced public health crisis with preventable harm impacting on those in greatest need as generated by successive administrations, with the adoption of a disability benefit assessment model that totally disregards clinical need. Deaths were always inevitable, and there have been thousands of deaths since 2010 when those in greatest need were *'killed by the state'*.⁴

'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 disability hate crimes, and successive administrations disregarded the thousands of deaths directly linked to the Work Capability Assessment, which was adopted using the 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 be, covertly, killed by the State.'³

The chronically ill and disabled community who are unable to work are living in very dark times and are afraid of the DWP which, historically, was created to help people during times of greatest need. The DWP Chief Medical Advisor, Dr Gail Allsopp, recently gave evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee advising that she felt that PFD reports were the most significant evidence demonstrating that 'something had gone wrong'. However, given the above evidence demonstrating that successive administrations routinely disregard the concerns identified by PFD reports, those in greatest need will continue to live in fear of the DWP for the foreseeable future.

I trust this information is cause for concern, and I thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Stewart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mo Stewart

Fellow, Centre for Welfare Reform
Research Lead, Preventable Harm Project

Copied to: Debbie Abrahams MP – Chair, Work and Pensions Committee
Layla Moran MP – Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
Andy Slaughter MP – Chair, Justice Committee
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP – Chair, Public Accounts Committee

³ [The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms](#)

⁴ [Killed By The State? Social Policy Abused](#)