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Layla Moran MP
Chair
Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Private & Confidential

via email

Dear Chair,

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

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

As an introduction, please be advised that I write in my capacity as the research lead for the Preventable Harm Project¹ to offer access to the above peer-reviewed published paper² and to alert you, as the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee (the Committee), to the identified government induced public health crisis generated by social policy reforms of successive administrations and imposed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

I am aware of the identified responsibility of the Committee 'to scrutinise the work of the Department of Health and Social Care and its associated public bodies.' However, given the identified public health crisis² generated by the impact of the discredited Work Capability Assessment (WCA), as initially adopted in 2008 to limit access to long-term disability benefit, I have in the recent past copied you into various letters to people of significance to alert you to the ongoing government induced preventable harm of those in greatest need.¹

There has been a multitude of published papers, articles and books exposing the public health crisis impacting on the most vulnerable due to the hostility of the DWP,²⁻⁵ with every letter to claimants containing relentless threats and intimidation, with no-one held to account.⁶

¹ [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

² [The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms](#)

³ ['First, do no harm': are disability assessments associated with adverse trends in mental health?](#)

⁴ [Dismantling the social safety net: social security reforms, disability and mental health conditions](#)

⁵ [The Department: How a Violent Government Bureaucracy Killed Hundreds and Hid the Evidence](#)

⁶ [Fear of Brown Envelope: Exploring Welfare Reform with Long-Term Sickness Benefits Recipients](#)



‘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.’²

My letter to Dr Gail Allsopp,⁷ the DWP Chief Medical Advisor, was copied to you and identified the deaths, despair and preventable harm created by the continued use of the WCA, which always was a dangerous assessment model as it totally disregards all clinical need. What is cause for concern is the reply from Dr Allsopp, via email, advising that she would not reply to my letter claiming that my correspondence with the Minister for Social Security and Disability, the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms,⁸ negated her response. So, the Chief Medical Advisor will not respond to the identified public health crisis generated by the hostility and intimidation of the DWP when using a fatally flawed disability assessment.⁹ My response to the Minister¹⁰ reminded him that the last Labour administration adopted the fatally flawed WCA in 2008 in an effort to limit access to the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) long-term disability benefit, and is now used to limit access to the health component of Universal Credit (UC), which is also negatively impacting on public mental health, as identified by Dr Mandy Cheetham and colleagues in the *British Medical Journal* in 2019.¹¹

‘The findings add considerable detail to emerging evidence of the deleterious effects of UC on vulnerable claimants’ health and wellbeing. Our evidence suggests that UC is undermining vulnerable claimants’ mental health, increasing the risk of poverty, hardship, destitution and suicidality. Major, evidence-informed revisions are required to improve the design and implementation of UC to prevent further adverse effects before large numbers of people move on to UC, as planned by the UK government.’¹¹

Unfortunately, the DWP tend not to access published peer-reviewed academic papers, and

² [The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms](#)

⁷ [Letter to Dr Gail Allsopp, DWP Chief Medical Advisor, 13th January 2025](#)

⁸ [Letter to the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP – Minister of State for Social Security and Disability](#)

⁹ [Preventable harm: creating a mental health crisis](#)

¹⁰ [Response to the DWP Minister, the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP, September 2024](#)

¹¹ [Impact of Universal Credit in North East England: a qualitative study of claimants and support staff](#)



all evidence used to justify the adoption of increasingly harsh social policy reforms rely on inhouse research and findings from an influential extreme right-leaning think tank.¹² Hence, the vast amount of published evidence demonstrating the increasing public health crisis linked to the DWP disability assessments are totally disregarded at the expense of the health, wellbeing and, often, the survival of those in greatest need.

Consequently, given that the DWP Serious Case Panel has failed in its remit, there is now a proposal for an Independent Advisory Panel on DWP-Related Deaths,¹³ which is urgently needed.

'The deaths, despair and preventable harm linked to the WCA increased following the adoption of increasingly harsh sanctions endorsed by the Coalition administration (2010-15), which successive Conservative administrations disregarded, despite some claimants being starved to death by the DWP. The recently elected Labour government (2024) appear to be following the same path by intimidating those in greatest need, with Liz Kendall appointed as the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announcing in her first speech that she is motivated to continue with the previous administration's ambitions to reach an 80 percent employment rate, regardless of human consequences which can be fatal for many. In order to support the ultimate political ambition, the DWP were exposed as manipulating investigations, destroying incriminating records and failing to share crucial evidence.'¹³

There is an ongoing government induced public health crisis in the UK, created due to social policy reforms adopted using a fiscal priority whilst disregarding health and wellbeing. Thousands have died. The last time the mortality totals were published to include those who died after being refused access to the ESA identified that, on average, a total of 90 people per month were dying linked to the fatally flawed WCA.¹⁴ This is a government induced public health crisis and I believe that the Committee should be alerted to it.

Yours sincerely

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

Mo Stewart

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Author ['Cash Not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state'](#)

Editor [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

Researcher [Influences and Consequences](#)

¹² [It is now clear Iain Duncan Smith is influencing Labour's DWP policies. Here's why.](#)

¹³ [Proposal for an Independent Advisory Panel on DWP-Related Deaths](#)

¹⁴ [Thousands have died after being found fit for work, DWP figures show](#)