



# Mo Stewart Research

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

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Date: 2 September 2025

Ashley Dalton MP  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

Private & Confidential  
via email

Dear Minister

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

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

I write in my capacity as the research lead for the Preventable Harm Project<sup>1,2</sup> to alert you to an identified and ongoing government-induced public health crisis<sup>3</sup> which is as yet disregarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), whose hostile culture impacting on chronically ill and disabled benefit claimants is identified as being directly linked to the cause of the problem.<sup>4</sup>

The prevalent intimidation of chronically ill and disabled people by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is a public health concern, not least because of the relationship between physical and mental health and the fact that a deteriorating mental health can accelerate a deterioration in physical health (Doherty & Gaughran, 2014). ...

The distress created for disability benefit claimants by repeated WCAs for serious health conditions, particularly those that cannot improve, created a negative impact on public mental health. These adverse trends in public mental health associated with the WCA were identified in 2015 by Dr Ben Barr and colleagues (Barr et al, 2015) and were reported by Lewis Elward. ...

The constant threat of sanctions led to fear and a significant rise in suicides of ESA claimants (DNS 2017 a, b; Ryan, 2015), and the endless public humiliation of disability benefit claimants by DWP Ministers was negatively impacting on mental health service users.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms. \*Justice, Power & Resistance\*](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Preventable harm: creating a mental health crisis. \*Journal of Public Mental Health\*](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants – Work & Pensions Committee](#)



Please be advised that there are volumes of published academic papers, research reports, articles and books demonstrating the ongoing government-induced public health crisis.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, I believe that the reason this public health crisis is disregarded is that the DWP Serious Case Panel do not consider any evidence from outside the Department,<sup>5</sup> as advised by the Minister for Social Security and Disability, the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP.

Please be advised that those in greatest need who are often chronically ill live in fear of the institutional violence<sup>6,7</sup> generated by the DWP, and I believe that the DHSC should be alerted to what is a growing government-induced public health crisis with no one held to account.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Stewart', written in a cursive style.

**Mo Stewart**

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

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

Editor [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

Researcher [Influences and Consequences](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

<sup>5</sup> [An independent advisory panel on DWP-related deaths](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Influences and Consequences: the conclusion to the Preventable Harm Project](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Weaponising time in the war on welfare: Slow violence and deaths of disabled people within the UK's social security system. Critical Social Policy 44 \(1\), February 2024: 129-149](#)

Copied to:

The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP – DWP Minister for Social Security and Disability.

Baroness Merron – Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Patient Safety, Women's Health and Mental Health, DHSC

Debbie Abrahams MP – Chair, Work & Pensions Committee

Layla Moran MP – Chair, Health & Social Care Committee

Stephen Kinnock MP – Minister of State for Care, DHSC

Karin Smyth – Minister of State for Health, DHSC

Professor Lucy Chappell DHSC

Dr Gail Marzetti DHSC

Dr Gail Allsopp DWP

Stephen Barclay MP

Jonathan Simpson NICE

Sam Roberts NICE

Nick Baillie NICE

Dr Jed Boardman

Dr Jay Watts