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Date: 10 October 2025

The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP
Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Private & Confidential

PRIORITY ATTENTION
via email

Dear Minister

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

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

I write in my capacity as the research lead for the Preventable Harm Project,² ongoing since 2009, to alert you to the public alarm generated by the latest government threat to the health, wellbeing and survival of the chronically ill and disabled community who are unable to work.³

It is my understanding that the Prime Minister constantly demonstrates that he is not fully briefed as to the reality of the identified government-induced public health crisis generated by successive neoliberal administrations,¹ whose social policy reforms were adopted using a fiscal priority and were always destined to cause preventable harm to those in greatest need with no one held to account.⁴ Understand me please when I advise that the often dangerous and, certainly, shameful commentary by government ministers⁵ to the detriment of the chronically ill and disabled community who are unable to work is directly linked to a deterioration in population mental health.^{6,7} Successive administrations have disregarded all evidence of this preventable harm, with unacceptable and misleading public commentary by successive Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions which cause fear in the disabled community linked to a public health crisis that the administration continue to disregard.

¹ [The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms in: Justice, Power & Resistance 6\(2\): 217-228](#)

² [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

³ [Streetering orders probe of mental illness overdiagnosis - News - Patient Safety Learning - the hub](#)

⁴ [Preventable harm: creating a mental health crisis, Journal of Public Mental Health 18\(4\): 224-230](#)

⁵ [Letter to Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 30 September 2025](#)

⁶ ['First do no harm': are disability assessments associated with adverse trends in mental health? Journal of Epidemiol Community Health 2016; 70: 339-345 doi: 10.1136/jech-2015-206209](#)

⁷ [Burden and benefits-related suicides: 'misperception' or state crafted reality? Journal of Public Mental Health 21\(1\): 46-56](#)



The latest reported claims by both the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions⁵ and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care⁸ are not only incorrect but are dangerously misleading, with no one accepting responsibility for the identified public health crisis such comments invariably generate.^{1,4} It should be cause for very serious concern to learn that various coroners' Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) reports have been largely disregarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who fail to learn from the many identified tragic cases of government-induced preventable harm using the fatally flawed Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to limit access to the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) long-term disability benefit.^{9,10} Hence the need for successive administrations to continue to make disturbing claims against disability benefit claimants, which are based on fiction, as successive neoliberal administrations continue to manipulate the British public and the British Parliament.

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% 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. ...

Introduced in late 2019 with the first virtual meeting held on 19 March 2020, the DWP Serious Case Panel promised a lot but failed to deliver. ...

Clearly, by failing to access published peer-reviewed research by a multitude of academics accessed via the Preventable Harm Project, and detailed evidence from significant professional organisations such as Rethink Mental Illness, the Panel and by extension the DWP are resisting access to detailed evidence demonstrating the government-induced public health crisis. This is generated by successive social policy reforms and is negatively impacting on the health, wellbeing and survival of those in greatest need, with a refusal to admit that the WCA is demonstrably dangerous and unfit for purpose when disregarding clinical need.¹⁰

Published by NHS Digital in September 2016, figures demonstrated that almost half of all ESA disability benefit claimants had attempted suicide at some point, yet this information was never reported by the media as identified in November 2017 by the *Disability News Service*.¹¹

¹ [The public health crisis created by UK social policy reforms in: *Justice, Power & Resistance* 6\(2\): 217-228](#)

⁴ [Preventable harm: creating a mental health crisis, *Journal of Public Mental Health* 18\(4\): 224-230](#)

⁵ [Letter to Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 30 September 2025](#)

⁸ [Letter to Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 6 October 2025](#)

⁹ [Tip of the Iceberg? Rethink Mental Illness](#)

¹⁰ [An independent Advisory Panel on DWP-Related Deaths](#)

¹¹ ['Shocking' NHS stats show nearly half ESA claimants have attempted suicide.](#)



Such disturbing figures should have alerted the administration to a crisis with the ESA benefit, but the DWP disregarded this information and carried on permitting many more people in greatest need to live in fear of the next disability assessment, often for a permanent condition that can't ever improve.

Chief Secretary, you have been copied into recent letters to both the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions⁵ and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care,⁸ which both listed references demonstrating what is a government-induced public health crisis impacting on those in greatest need. Both senior politicians demonstrate that they are very poorly informed regarding need and, given the recently published '*Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants*'¹² report by the Work and Pensions Select Committee, I strongly suggest that the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions should be educated as a matter of urgency as to the required '*culture change*' needed by all DWP staff, especially Ministers, with reference to the chronically ill and disabled service-users, and the disturbing contempt the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions demonstrates towards them should cease immediately.

Yours sincerely

Mo Stewart

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"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Martin Luther-King Jr

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

Editor [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

Researcher [Influences and Consequences](#)

Copied to: The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP – Minister for Social Security & Disability

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP – Constituency MP

Dr China Mills – Healing Justice Head of Research

Dr Gail Allsopp – DWP Chief Medical Advisor

Kamran Mallick, CEO Disability Rights UK

Debbie Abrahams MP – Chair, Work & Pensions Select Committee

⁵ [Letter to Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 30 September 2025](#)

⁸ [Letter to Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 6 October 2025](#)

¹² [Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants](#)