



Mo Stewart Research

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

Phone: xxxxx xxxxxx

Text: xxxxxxxxxxxx

Email: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Date: 29 September 2025

The Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Private & Confidential

via email

Dear Sir Ed Davey

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, which identified the government-induced public health crisis initially generated by the adoption of a fatally flawed assessment model by the Brown 'New Labour' administration (2007-10) to restrict access to long-term disability benefit.¹ The adoption of a fiscal priority for social policy reforms, whilst disregarding health and wellbeing, guaranteed a catastrophic impact on those in greatest need with all evidence of the identified government-induced public health crisis created by successive neoliberal administrations routinely disregarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).³⁻⁵

It is therefore with considerable regret that I learn of your reported hostile commentary regarding exaggerated claims of an increase in 'fraud' by disability benefit claimants,⁶ for which there is no evidence other than political propaganda which the Liberal Democrats originally adopted during the Coalition government with the Conservatives (2010-15). It is disturbing to learn that at a time when the Liberal Democrats celebrate the largest number of MPs in Parliament in its history, their Leader should continue with this dangerous political propaganda which, during the Coalition government, was linked to a 213% increase in prosecuted disability hate crimes.⁷

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

² [The Preventable Harm Project](#)

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

⁴ [Burden and benefits-related suicides: 'misperception' or state crafted reality?](#)

⁵ [Preventable harm: creating a mental health crisis](#)

⁶ [Davey stirs up hostility towards disabled claimants, as Lib Dem spokesperson links similar attacks to far right](#)

⁷ [Exclusive: Hate crimes on disabled up by 213%](#)



Given the detailed published evidence of government-induced preventable harm^{5,8} generated by the adoption of the fatally flawed Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to limit access to disability benefit, and the fact that your colleague Steve Darling identified the suffering of those in greatest need linked to the actions of the far-right,⁶ I suggest that you are being very poorly briefed regarding a subject of vast public concern and identified government-induced public health crisis,¹ with **no evidence** of vast amounts of disability benefit fraud.

At the time of your disturbing claims, the DWP identified fraud levels of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) was only 0.4%,⁶ meaning that 99.6% of all PIP claims were genuine. This dangerous political propaganda has been ongoing now for a very long time, which has guaranteed the suffering of the chronically ill and disabled community who are unable to work. Every administration continues to mislead the public with claims that have no foundation, other than a justification for the relentless political threats impacting on anyone who claims disability benefit. Sadly, this appears to apply to opposition leaders too:

DWP Ministers insisted that they were helping chronically sick and disabled people to take responsibility for their own financial future by searching for employment. In reality, various reforms to social policies allowed preventable harm by the State to creep into disabled people's lives. The flawed Waddell-Aylward biopsychosocial (BPS) model of assessment was used by the DWP to justify the use of the WCA, and the excessive use of sanctions against ESA claimants are known to cause identified preventable harm, including starvation, for those least able to protest.

The previous psychological security of the welfare state, which had guaranteed an income for chronically ill and disabled people who are unable to work, has been totally demolished. It has been replaced by psychological tyranny, which escalated since the coalition government adopted austerity measures alongside the ongoing reforms to social security benefits. ...

Guided by the 2001 Malingering and Illness Deception Conference, there is a strong ideological resistance within the DWP as to the reality of the lives of chronically ill and disabled people who are not in paid employment. Influenced by the American corporate giant Unum (Provident) Insurance since 1992, future social policies would create fear within the disabled community, with an NHS report advising that 50% of ESA claimants had attempted suicide at some point. The Waddell-Aylward BPS model of assessment disregards diagnosis, prognosis, past medical history and prescribed medicines. So does the WCA.⁸

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

⁵ [Preventable harm: creating a mental health crisis](#)

⁶ [Davey stirs up hostility towards disabled claimants, as Lib Dem spokesperson links similar attacks to far right](#)

⁸ [Psychological tyranny prescribed by the DWP: preventable harm is government policy](#)



There is no evidence of there being *'quite a lot of fraud'*⁶ in PIP claims, but there is a lot of evidence of relentless political propaganda that continues to intimidate those in greatest need, which you seem happy to employ when dismissing detailed published evidence.⁸

Of course, it's rhetoric that makes the headlines and feeds into disability hate crimes, including your recent claims of *'spiralling'* inactivity among disabled people; which is another misdirection. *'But the new government figures show instead that economic inactivity among working-age disabled people in England has – apart from the pandemic years – been falling since 2015.'*⁹ Detailed academic research advises that *'the root of the problem here are the figures produced by the DWP – if they can't find a way of presenting them clearly, then they just need to be pulled. ...'*¹⁰

It was the Thatcher administration, in 1982, who advised using the *'politics of fear'* to discredit the welfare state and the people who need to use it, on route to the eventual adoption of healthcare insurance to replace social security income for chronically ill and disabled people. It's a great pity that, under your leadership, you will help her ambition to be achieved.

Yours sincerely

Mo Stewart

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



"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*](#)

⁶ [Davey stirs up hostility towards disabled claimants, as Lib Dem spokesperson links similar attacks to far right](#)

⁸ [Psychological tyranny prescribed by the DWP: preventable harm is government policy](#)

⁹ [Government report casts doubt on political rhetoric over 'spiralling' inactivity among disabled people](#)

¹⁰ [Are out-of-work benefit claims at a record high?](#)

Copied to: Steve Darling MP

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP - Constituency MP

Dr Gail Allsopp, DWP Chief Medical Advisor

Kamran Mallick, CEO Disability Rights UK

Baroness Caroline Pidgeon MBE