

A Letter from Disability Studies Researcher Mo Stewart to the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies

Note:

Mo Stewart is a medically retired healthcare professional, a disabled veteran of the (W)RAF medical branch and, for the past ten years, has worked as an independent disability studies researcher who has been challenging the establishment and the government on the disintegration of Britain's under-siege welfare state, as described in searing detail in her celebrated book *Cash Not Care: The Planned Demolition of the UK Welfare State* (2016). Here, we are honoured to reproduce just a couple of examples of Mo's literary challenges to those in positions of power in and around the welfare state. These are great examples of the kind of essential expertise and persistence that is needed in these modern struggles for justice and ethical government policy-making. See also Mo's interview in issue 1 and her article in issue 2 of this magazine.

In my view, Mo Stewart's work is essential reading for counsellors, therapists and for anyone working with mental health and well-being – because of the huge numbers of our citizens who have been, are being and will be subjected to this de-humanizing, often traumatizing neoliberal state-benefits regime.
[Editor]

Commentary from Mo Stewart

Unsurprisingly, there was no acknowledgement and no reply to my letter of 3 May 2019, and on 17 June, I contacted the office of the Chief Medical Officer, only to be told by a staff member that the letter had not been received.

This was followed up with a personal email to Professor Dame Sally Davies to attach a copy of the letter, invite her to respond, and to share the content with the Chief Medical Officers for Scotland, Wales and Ireland and with the Professor's replacement, viz. Professor Chris Whitty. Professor Whitty is currently the Chief Scientific Adviser for the Department for Health and Social Care, and is also an NHS Consultant Physician in acute medicine and infectious diseases at University College London Hospitals. He will replace Professor Dame Sally Davies as the Chief Medical Officer for England in October 2019, but there appears to be no reason to believe that communication will improve, as the Department disregards contact which asks difficult questions, and identifies ongoing government activities that can't possibly be justified.

Letter to Katherine Fuller, Joint Cross Government Working Group on Health

19 July 2019

Hello Katherine & colleagues,

Re: <http://cohpa.co.uk/news-events/hse-useful-contact-for-cohpa-members/> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y24wbo3d>]

Please excuse this unsolicited contact as the COHPA website lists you as the contact for the Joint Cross Government Working Group on Health (the Group), and I apologise as this will, of necessity, be a lengthy email to offer as much detailed evidence as possible.

As an introduction, please be advised that I am a former healthcare professional and the lead researcher in the UK who, over the past ten years, has identified the American corporate influence with UK social policy reforms resulting in a catastrophic human impact that appears to be unknown to the Department for Health, as the UK continue to adopt American social and labour market policies which were destined to create preventable harm. See ‘*State Crime by Proxy*’, attached.

The attached evidence will demonstrate the limitations of the 2017 paper ‘*Improving Lives, the future of work, health and disability*’ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663400/print-ready-improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability.pdf [= <https://tinyurl.com/yybt568t>]

It remains unclear how there can be ‘*an inclusive and understanding society*’ regarding the needs of chronically ill and disabled people (Improving Lives, p. 5) when the coalition government spent five years successfully demonising those in greatest need, with the tabloid press claiming that 75% of people on sickness benefits were faking, then sat back and watched as disability hate crimes climbed by 213%.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/261337/Sick-benefits-75-are-faking>
[= <https://tinyurl.com/y3dz5lvu>]

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/551327/EXCLUSIVE-Hate-crimes-on-disabled-rise-by-213> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y2arz5ah>]

The difficulty is that Departments tend not to talk to each other, and the negative human impact of the ‘welfare reforms’ which are the responsibility of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are negatively impacting on health, and especially on mental health, hence this contact. My research has been quoted during welfare debates in the HOC and the HOL since 2011, and I made a contribution to the damning UN report which exposed the harm created by the British government to those in greatest need.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/nov/16/uk-austerity-has-inflicted-great-misery-on-citizens-un-says> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y3xm6ttw>]

This email will be very detailed, as there is a great deal of evidence and relevant information as yet still unknown to the Group, not least the fact that social policy reforms and additional austerity measures are linked to preventable harm and many deaths, when using *discredited* DWP commissioned research to adopt a fatally flawed assessment model to limit access to long-term out-of-work disability benefit.

<https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk>
[= <https://tinyurl.com/yy6nd545>]

That being the case, I have forwarded to the Group an email sent to the CMO for England, and attached a redacted copy of a letter sent to Dame Sally [see below – ed.], which her office unexpectedly claimed they had not received.... The ‘missing’ letter was again forwarded to Dame Sally’s office on 17th June, attached to an email, and I await an acknowledgement and a response, as do many other people. The redacted copy of the letter is attached to this email for the attention, please, of the Group.

The identified preventable harm created by the American corporate influence with British social policies has been well documented, and my book is now recommended reading for social policy students in the UK and Australian universities, and has been added to university libraries. It would benefit the Group if they read the book to access detailed evidence as to the preventable harm

created by the American corporate influence since 1992 with UK social policy reforms.

See: 'Cash Not Care: The Planned Demolition of the UK Welfare State',

<https://www.newgeneration-publishing.com/books/reference/cash-not-care-the-planned-demolition-of-the-uk-welfare-state-3/> [=

<https://tinyurl.com/y39mobum>]

The 'Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability' paper was presented to Parliament in November 2017.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663399/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability.PDF [=

<https://tinyurl.com/y3qpsy6x>]

The Ministerial foreword was still claiming that the government ambition is to 'see one million more disabled people in work over the next ten years' (p. 3), yet that one million figure was created after it was established that one million people claiming Incapacity Benefit had a mental health problem (Rutherford 2007).

https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/sites/default/files/s36_04rutherford.pdf [=

<https://tinyurl.com/yy3qfamc>]

This figure was established by 2005 discredited 'policy-based' DWP-commissioned research, which recommended the Waddell–Aylward BPS model of assessment to resist funding long-term sickness and disability benefit, yet the Waddell and Aylward's BPS model of assessment **has failed all academic scrutiny**. It's unwise to rely on discredited commissioned policy-based research to make policy decisions that will negatively impact on millions of lives. <https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/58235/>

The former DWP CMO and co-author of the 2005 DWP commissioned report 'The Scientific and Conceptual Basis of Incapacity Benefits', Professor Sir Mansel Aylward, is now the Chair of the Bevan Committee. The Professor admitted in 2012 that the biopsychosocial (BPS) model of assessment, as recommended in his 2005 commissioned report and used to limit access to sickness and disability benefit via the fatally flawed Work Capability Assessment (WCA), is 'unsatisfactory', and

claimed the BPS model 'no longer addresses the real needs of disabled people and the exclusion of disabled people from society'.

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/former-dwp-medical-boss-makes-wca-pledge-to-protesters-2/> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y5teh987>]

Yet, the Waddell–Aylward BPS model of assessment continues to be used by the DWP for the flawed WCA, to resist funding long-term out-of-work disability income for those in greatest need, and those in greatest need now **live in fear** of the DWP, which is increasing the mental health problems in the UK, which is negatively impacting on Public Health and Public Mental Health. <https://jech.bmj.com/content/70/4/339> [= <https://tinyurl.com/yyt3kuoe>]

See: 'Fear of the brown envelope: exploring welfare reform with long-term sickness benefit recipients' by Dr Kayleigh Garthwaite – <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/spol.12049> [= <https://tinyurl.com/yyj5jrc6>]

Published in December 2018, my article in the *British Journal of General Practice* (BJGP) is now one of the most read articles in the journal. It demonstrates the flaws of the DWP-commissioned research, which permitted the WCA to be adopted by the DWP, whilst DWP Ministers spent five years in the Coalition government demonising claimants to demolish the public psychological security of the once-great welfare state, then watched as disability hate crimes increased by 213%. <https://bjgp.org/content/68/677/579>

I suggest members of the Group read the *BJGP* article to educate themselves as to this ongoing government-enforced psychological tyranny masquerading as 'welfare reforms', as identified in the attached article 'State crime by proxy', which was also published in December 2018 in the *Journal of Critical Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy* (JCPCP) (attached). <https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/JCPCP-18-4-M-Stewartarticle.pdf> [= <https://tinyurl.com/yxjc8end>].

Another flawed yet influential commissioned report is commonly known as the 'Freud Report'. Published in 2007, 'Reducing dependency,

increasing opportunity: options for the future of welfare to work' was produced by former City banker David Freud in only six weeks, and made many claims. However, what is not widely known is that the 'Freud Report' *failed academic scrutiny* as Professor Danny Dorling, when writing for the *Journal of Public Mental Health* in 2007, identified the fact that Freud 'had got his numbers wrong', as he had misinterpreted his own references.

http://www.dannydorling.org/wp-content/files/dannydorling_publication_id0514.pdf [= <https://tinyurl.com/y6sxx3ek>].

So, that's another government commissioned report, which impacted on the UK welfare reforms, which has failed academic scrutiny.

<https://www.abcorg.net/item/1450-cash-not-care> [= <https://tinyurl.com/yxz25xam>].

In his first interview, Freud claimed he 'couldn't believe' anyone had been awarded a disability benefit 'for life' – demonstrating his failure to comprehend that chronic illness and disabilities can and do last a lifetime. Even a former City banker should be able to comprehend that simple fact. Freud claimed, in a speech in the House of Lords, that disabled people should only be paid £2 *per hour*, as they were physically incapable of producing the same amount of work as able-bodied workers – then wondered why there was a strong negative reaction to his comments, and he was forced to apologise. This from the unelected, appointed former DWP Minister who recommended using the unaccountable private sector for disability assessments, at a cost to the public purse now in excess of £570 million per annum, at a time when the Coalition government claimed there was no spare cash for disabled people – clearly there was cash to pay corporate giants.

<https://www.twinfm.com/article/maximum-outcry-at-maximus-figures> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y5hqoxmr>].

It's time to stop terrorising those in greatest need, demonising chronically ill people who are then [killed by the state](#) [<https://tinyurl.com/yyqw5mmd>], and hiding the fact that disability benefit fraud was never more than 0.7% of the welfare budget, with DWP errors

invariably 200% higher; so why continue with the shameful suggestions that many chronically ill and disabled people are 'skivers' and 'scroungers', for which there is very little evidence apart from the bogus and shameful commentary by various DWP Ministers.

<http://www.welfareconditionality.ac.uk/2017/07/demonising-disabled-people-public-behaviour-and-attitudes-during-welfare-reforms/> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y63q5ovq>] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/27/death-britains-benefits-system-fit-for-work-safety-net> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y9pdzv34>]

The austerity measures adopted in 2010 were ideologically motivated and not financially justified, and were adopted without ethical approval. The deaths, despair and preventable harm created by these welfare reforms and austerity measures, together with the use of a fatally flawed assessment model and the adoption of two flawed government commissioned reports, means that many of those in greatest need now starve to death, kill themselves or live in fear of the DWP and is a 'scandal of scarcely imaginable proportions'. It's time more people of influence were much better informed before thousands more people die when, quite literally, 'killed by the state'. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/feb/04/dwp-apologise-for-telling-seriously-ill-man-to-find-a-job> [= <https://tinyurl.com/y9qtbvvc>] <https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Self-Society-journal-interview.pdf> [= <https://tinyurl.com/yyuvj9m9>].

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope the Group will now be much better informed.

Sincerely
Mo Stewart

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

Martin Luther-King Jr

Mo Stewart
Independent Disability Studies Researcher
Author of '*Cash Not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state*'. New Generation Publishing 2016
<https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk>
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mo_Stewart/publications

Here is the link to the letter to Dame Sally Davies, redacted for public access:

<https://www.mostewartresearch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Redacted-letter-Prof-Dame-Sally-Davies-3rd-MAY-2019.pdf> [= <https://tinyurl.com/yykypv38>]

And here is my follow-up:

From: Mo Stewart
Sent: 17 June 2019 12:37
To: Sally Davies...
Subject: missing letter
Importance: High

Dear Dame Sally

Re: Missing letter

It is with considerable concern that I learned today, via your Office Manager, that a detailed letter sent to you on 1st May 2019 has apparently not been received.

This is somewhat difficult to believe, but perhaps is unsurprising given the detailed and disturbing content of the letter, which is now attached to this email for your urgent personal attention, please. It will be interesting to learn if the CMOs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland now claim

they didn't received the letter which was sent to them as an attachment via email....

The academics who co-signed the letter are copied into this email so they are kept up to date.

Together with various academics and disability support groups, there are approximately 1500 healthcare professionals awaiting your reply to the attached letter, which is now copied to my MP to alert him to the content, and to the ability of the Department to lose what is a very significant letter with disturbing content.

I look forward to a reply, please, at your earliest opportunity, and may I humbly suggest that this email doesn't also manage to get lost....

Sincerely

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