

10<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Dear Sir,

I write to express my concern with the ongoing 'Austerity' programme and the impact of 'Brexit' (Exiting the European Union). I also raise issue with the 'hostile environment' intentionally created since 2010 onwards.

### **Austerity**

The concern in respect of the 'principle' of austerity is that it does not assist the average person, or the country and, in fact, contributes to an increase in homelessness, poverty, children's poverty and disharmony with significant socioeconomic effects.

It is suspected that those who are mostly harmed by the policy are those people who are already suffering financially, but there is also concern that those who will be most affected are women and people of colour, or vulnerable people (for example, children).

Alongside this policy is the DWP 'Universal Credit Scheme' which has caused, whether one argues directly or indirectly, deaths of human beings in a 'wealthy' country. I raise issue with a country which is financially rich but chooses not to ensure its citizens have a minimum standard of living being described as 'wealthy', when the true notion of wealth is that no matter what the resources, all citizens have a minimum standard of living, because those who govern do so humanely.

*The conclusion is that the current manner of government is discriminatory to:*

- (a) People with disabilities (including mental health issues)*
- (b) People of colour*
- (c) Women*
- (d) People who originate from EU countries, from outside the EU, who reside in the UK.*

*Further, there is also significant harm being caused to people on benefits. The manner in which they are reportedly treated is inhumane, inappropriate and, for want of better words, disgraceful.*

### **Implementation**

As a result of the banking crisis, which was not the fault of the ordinary citizen, the government introduced fiscal policy to reduce public spending, in around late 2008. David Cameron, then Conservative leader and Prime Minister, referred to 'age of austerity' as though it were a means of moving the country forwards in terms of

socioeconomics. My observation is that as a result of the banking crisis, which was no fault of the 'people', the 'people' are the ones who have had to suffer the consequences. A proportion of this was the change of the welfare state in the United Kingdom.

However, we have witnessed police cuts, education cuts, and cuts to the NHS. The cuts to the police and the NHS place an increased pressure on the staff that remain employed (query the health and safety of the staff themselves, and the negative impact upon their health and wellbeing), and place the public in harm's way both directly and indirectly.

The impending 'Hard Brexit', which the current Conservative government appear determined to achieve, is highly likely to lead to further cuts (continuing austerity) and most likely to impact upon women and people of colour.

However, one has to start querying if the policies being introduced by the government are intended to create a negative environment for anyone is not white British, because there has been an open intention to create a 'hostile environment' in the UK, and the policies that have been introduced damage those people who are not white British (and male) more than those who are.

### **Effect of Austerity**

#### **NHS**

Real terms per capita spending is set to grow by an average of just 0.4 per cent a year between 2010-11 and 2019-20, down from an average of 5.9 per cent a year in the preceding decade<sup>1</sup>.

Because of austerity, the NHS has staff shortages and that, in turn, leads to stress on the NHS staff (which can be a danger to their health), but also causes difficulty in providing a good standard of care to patients<sup>2</sup>.

#### **The 'Poorest' are the most affected**

With Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at US \$2.94 trillion (2014), the UK has the fifth largest economy in the world after Germany and Japan. It also suffers from acute income and wealth inequality and, according to Oxfam, "one in five [or 20%] of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2018/06/Healthy-Finances.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/austerity-measures-damaging-patient-care-warn-nhs-workers/>

population live below our official poverty line, meaning that they experience life as a daily struggle.<sup>3</sup>”

### Public Sector workers

Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice have experienced approximately 40% reductions in funding.

I can attest to witnessing staff who work for the courts being overworked and stressed. One told me he could not cope and had to start early and finish late due to cuts, was on anti-depressants and suicidal. I offered to help him run the various lists and courts he had to cover once I finished my case, because I was that concerned for him. Another told me they were all over-stretched and stressed. I am aware that the time it takes for clients to get appointments at court is longer than it has ever been, that they wait longer to hear about cases, that they feel let down by the justice system. The UK justice system used to be one of the most respected in the world. It is now broken. Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done, and done so within a reasonable time.

By 2015 the amount of public sector staff had been reduced to the lowest since WWII<sup>4</sup>. Note that while public sector workers had their pay rises capped at 1%, MP’s enjoyed a salary increase of 1.4%. This has been reportedly altered in 2018.

### Women (gender bias)

Women are disproportionately affected by austerity<sup>5</sup>. **Feminist Fightback** identify the effects upon women due to austerity<sup>6</sup>

We, as a society, should seek to achieve equality for everybody, regardless of gender, race, religion or origin, or sexual preferences. The government should ensure that progress is not reversed. The fact that the government could contentedly embark upon such a damaging track is either due to incompetence, ignorance or because they do not care about the consequences upon vulnerable or minority groups<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/graham-peeble/austerity-and-rise-of-poverty-in-britain> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/jun/04/poor-victims-coalition-austerity> ;

<https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-true-cost-austerity-inequality-uk-120913-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Sarah O'Connor (25 November 2015). "Public sector austerity drive gathers pace in Autumn Statement". *Financial Times*.;

<http://www.publicsectorexecutive.com/Public-Sector-News/public-sector-workers-face-real-pay-cut-of-93-by-2020>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/may/28/women-austerity-charities-cuts-gender-inequality>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article\\_comments/cuts\\_are\\_a\\_feminist\\_issue](http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/cuts_are_a_feminist_issue)

<sup>7</sup> <https://weaedi.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/the-impact-of-austerity-on-women-19th-march-2012.pdf>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/28/toxic-concoction-women-colour-pay-highest-price-austerity>

### Disproportionate effect upon the young

There is a disproportionate effect upon the young as a result of austerity<sup>8</sup>. 'The Institute of Fiscal Studies expect expects relative child poverty to increase from 18.8 per cent in 2014/15 to 26.6 per cent in 2021/22 before housing costs'<sup>9</sup>.

### Disproportionate effect upon People of Colour

People in minority groups or who are already vulnerable are the people who are the most likely to be impacted upon when there is a recession, 'austerity' policy, or Brexit<sup>10</sup>.

### Disproportionate effect upon People with Disabilities

People who are already vulnerable have increased vulnerability as a direct result of the austerity policy (and universal credit)<sup>11</sup>.

The impact is not only because of the manner in which people are treated, but also benefits cuts, and the impact upon social care<sup>12</sup>.

Cuts have had an impact on access to services to support people with mental health issues<sup>13</sup>. There are also continuing cuts to mental health support by the government.

### Increase in Homelessness

While it is appreciated that this is partly caused by a reduction in social housing, there is no escape from the causal link to austerity<sup>14</sup>.

The amount of rough sleepers has risen by 30%. It is clearly visible that there are more people sleeping on the streets than ever<sup>15</sup>. Communities and Local Government Select Committee called for a 'renewed strategy'.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.if.org.uk/2015/11/23/new-research-shows-austerity-is-favouring-older-voters-at-the-expense-of-the-young/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/children-austerity>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.dannydorling.org/wp-content/files/dannydorling\\_publication\\_id5831.pdf](http://www.dannydorling.org/wp-content/files/dannydorling_publication_id5831.pdf) ;<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44089309>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bacdis.org.uk/policy/documents/ImpactofAusterityMeasuresonfamilieswithDisabledChildren16Jan2015.pdf>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/17/women-and-disabled-austerity-report-tax-benefits-reforms>;

<https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-true-cost-austerity-inequality-uk-120913-en.pdf>;

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/11/25/austerity-measures-are-harming-the-lgbt-communitys-mental-health/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/11/On-line-Catalogue219293.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.psychchange.org/uploads/9/7/9/7/97971280/paa-briefing-paper.pdf>;<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-37657954>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.themeteor.org/2017/11/23/austerity-the-false-economy-increasing-homelessness-part-two/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/homelessness-austerity-government-to-blame-for-30-rise-in-homelessness-says-parliamentary-committee-a7195981.html>

## Increase in use of Food Banks

The demand and use of food banks has increased significantly during the period of austerity<sup>16</sup>. The suggestion by some politicians that this is acceptable in a developed society is abhorrent, and their disdain and lack of empathy is appalling. The fact that there have been reports of nurses and police having to access food banks illustrates the level of apparent poverty in the UK<sup>17</sup>.

## 120,000 Deaths linked to Austerity

One would be forgiven for interpreting the government's austerity policy as involuntary euthanasia of the poor and vulnerable.

We have no excuse for watching our fellow citizens die. It is something for which we can never apologise enough or be forgiven for. Perhaps our excuse is despondency, a lack of knowledge as to how to react or change the situation. However, the government are fully informed as to the consequences of their actions and they should stop the policy now, ensure people are adequately protected, and compensate the victims of their policies (and the 120,000 families who have lost a loved one).

It is clear that deaths have been linked to austerity<sup>18</sup>. A study has found the number to be around 120,000 deaths, with that number expected to increase to 200,000 people by 2020<sup>19</sup>.

Rough Sleeper deaths have reportedly doubled in 5 years<sup>20</sup>.

The manner in which people, often people with disabilities, are being treated is inhumane. Reportedly, the ill treatment is by the DWP and Atos.

The following is a list of reports publicly available linked to benefit cuts and austerity:

Report in the Mirror newspaper 2 December 2016 – Blind man's benefits axed due to being unable to read DWP letter.

Report in the Independent newspaper 13 April 2017 - DWP asked disability claimant why she had not killed herself.

Report in the Independent newspaper 9 November 2017 – woman found dead after Universal Credit cut because she was too ill to attend a meeting.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h1775>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/01/tories-have-avoided-the-truth-over-austerity-and-food-banks;>  
<https://www.trusselltrust.org/2017/04/25/uk-foodbank-use-continues-rise/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/17/health-cuts-most-likely-cause-major-rise-mortality-study-claims>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/tory-austerity-deaths-study-report-people-die-social-care-government-policy-a8057306.html>; <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/11/e017722>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-40608256>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.rt.com/uk/423786-homelessness-deaths-tory-cuts/>

Report by BBC 31 August 2017 – Valerie Grant walked in front of a train on 23 April after her son (with a disability) could not access benefits.

Report in Huffington post 2 September 2018 – committed suicide after benefits cut.

Liverpool Echo 5 September 2018 Liverpool Community Centre reportedly sent invitations from Cllr Woodhouse to Esther McVey which have been ignored. That centre has been helping parents get school uniforms for their children.

Anne Savage – who was terminally ill – had her care services cut by the council in Portsmouth on 10 December 2017 and died on December 21.

There is a photograph of a list of names on Twitter (@Cornish\_Damo) as follows:

Stephanie Bottril, 53 – bedroom tax – suicide

John Walker, 57 – bedroom tax – suicide

Charles Barden, 74 – bedroom tax – suicide

Dennis Johns, 58 – bedroom tax – suicide

Richard Sanderson, 44 – bedroom tax – suicide

Julian Little, 47 – bedroom tax, died

Ann Thompson, 61 – bedroom tax – murdered

**Please see the photo.**

### County Councils

There has been a reduction in funding for county councils. Northamptonshire County Council is insolvent. National Audit Office reports that up to 15 councils are at risk of insolvency. Clearly, if councils face cuts so too do the public. This, in turn, will result in more deaths because of the causal link to austerity.

### Brexit

If there is a 'hard Brexit', it will undoubtedly result in less public funds being available, for anything up to 10 years (if one cross refers to reports on the economic prospects of the UK following Brexit). That, in turn, means those who are already vulnerable will be exposed to greater risk, including death.

Philip Hammond had identified that austerity would end around 2020, but following the EU referendum, this was no longer possible<sup>21</sup>. My observation is that the government appear to be dedicated to the notion of implementing Brexit regardless of the lives that it will destroy.

Brexit will no doubt cause more poverty, in particular child poverty which is 'expected to spike to 30%'<sup>22</sup>. There will be more homelessness, greater use of food banks and, highly likely, more deaths<sup>23</sup>. The government are aware of this and yet continue, presumably because none of them will be affected personally, which is not the role of government.

### Unemployment

Contrary to the manner in which employment figures are now reported, to paint a positive picture, the reality is that people are suffering even if they are recorded as 'employed'<sup>24</sup>. There are also 'zero hours contracts' which are on the increase<sup>25</sup>, and a perfect method of covering up discrimination<sup>26</sup>.

### Hostile Environment

Theresa May is key to the ill treatment of immigrant and of the 'Windrush' generation<sup>27</sup>.

The government ought to have had a clear immigration policy which they followed, and applied fairly. Instead, they have actively treated any individual who is an immigrant differently to those who are not, and that is discrimination, particularly because the treatment occurs during their 'settled' status. When the government seek to justify it as their intention was to single out illegal immigrants, it fails as an excuse because of the manner the Windrush generation have been treated<sup>28</sup>. The government should be deeply ashamed (and pay damages to) the people they have mistreated and abused because the government itself (Theresa May herself) was responsible for the destruction of the documents which proved the Windrush generation had a right to remain, and they are our citizens, our friends and our loved ones. The government had no right to mistreat any one of them and the government continue to mistreat them

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<sup>21</sup> <https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/philip-hammond-no-deal-brexit-austerity-cuts-public-spending/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://missionsbox.org/news/child-poverty-rate-expected-rise-brexit/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://truepublica.org.uk/united-kingdom/will-brexit-drag-millions-more-into-poverty/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/news/real-level-unemployment-almost-35million-new-report;>

<https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/real-level-of-unemployment-2012.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/01/huge-increase-workers-zero-hours-contracts>

<sup>26</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/contractsthatdonotquaranteeaminimumnumberofhours/april2018>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/theresa-mays-hostile-environment-immigration-policy-compared-to-nazi-germany-by-her-own-ministers/19/04/> ; <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2018-0064/LLN-2018-0064.pdf> ;

<https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/sites/default/files/HE%20web.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/22/government-aware-for-years-that-hostile-environment-hurt-windrush-generation>

[<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/uk-government-response-windrush-generation-debacle-woefully-inadequate><sup>29</sup>.

Further, the way the government are acting towards EU Citizens appears to illustrate that the government have a deep-rooted issue with anyone who is non-white or non-British in origin, which is discriminatory<sup>30</sup>. Combine this with how certain members of the government speak<sup>31</sup>, and the failure by the Conservative Party to investigate Islamophobia in the party<sup>32</sup>, and the picture is bleak.

### UK citizens resident outside the UK in the EU

'Expats' within the EU were denied a right to vote in the EU referendum and have been in limbo, alongside EU citizens who do not originate from the UK, since 2016, which has caused stress (some people report anxiety disorder and depression), as well as causing some families to uproot through fear of not being able to access medical treatment or having their rights unilaterally withdrawn. This is inhumane treatment. It is foreseeable and the government have attempted to use the EU citizens as a bargaining chip in negotiations, which neglects to consider the impact upon them. Further, the threat of 'hard brexit' is arguably breaching freedom of movement under The Treaty of Rome (Art 7) and a breach of Article 8 Human Rights Act 1996<sup>33</sup>. The fact that they have to 'apply,' pay and then face the fear of being treated as the Windrush generation were is significant.

### Hate Crime

There has been a rise in hate crime since the EU referendum<sup>34</sup>. It is submitted that with the amount of offensive comments by various people engaged in politics and the consistent misinformation by the media, this will only get worse. Brexit will create a

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/yes-minister-it-human-rights-issue/seventy-years-after-windrush> ; <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/yes-minister-it-human-rights-issue/windrush-scandal-just-tip-iceberg> ; <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/windrush-generation-evidence-17-19/>; [https://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/human-rights/correspondence/2017-19/180516\\_Chair\\_to\\_Rt\\_Hon\\_Sajid\\_Javid\\_MP.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/human-rights/correspondence/2017-19/180516_Chair_to_Rt_Hon_Sajid_Javid_MP.pdf); [https://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/human-rights/correspondence/2017-19/180516\\_Chair\\_to\\_Rt\\_Hon\\_Sajid\\_Javid\\_MP.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/human-rights/correspondence/2017-19/180516_Chair_to_Rt_Hon_Sajid_Javid_MP.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <http://uk.businessinsider.com/brexit-causing-3-million-eu-citizens-to-be-discriminated-against-for-jobs-and-housing-2017-8?op=1>; <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-eu-nationals-denied-mortgages-patricia-connell-article-50-a7657941.html> ; <https://www.business-reporter.co.uk/2017/08/03/government-urged-tackle-discrimination-eu-citizens/#gsc.tab=0> ; <https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/Brexit/EU27-citizens-discriminated-against-in-UK> ; <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/eu-citizens-in-brexit-britain/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45130532>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tory-muslims-accuse-party-of-islamophobia-vp8nnrtj0>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/882843/brexit-news-european-court-justice-jurisdiction-eu-citizens-britain>; <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/windrush-brexit-eu-citizens-deport-right-stay-immigration-status-guy-verhofstadt-a8306951.html> ; <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/sajid-javid-no-automatic-right-for-eu-citizens-to-work-post-brexit/>

<sup>34</sup><http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/03/19/hate-crime-did-spike-after-the-referendum-even-allowing-for-other-factors/> ;

<http://civitas.org.uk/content/files/hatecrimethefactsbehindtheheadlines.pdf>



negative environment for anyone who is of non-British origin, and likely to include non-white British people.

### Lost files, lost rights

A further concern is the pattern for losing documentation by the government, which is an abuse of human rights. We would also highlight that it is understood that government departments usually had a 'back up' system and we are unsure how the files could have been 'lost':

- Windrush<sup>35</sup>
- Abuse victims<sup>36</sup>
- Refugees<sup>37</sup>
- BAE Systems investigation<sup>38</sup>
- Human Rights<sup>39</sup>

Human beings deserve to be treated humanely. They have a right to a fair hearing. They have a right to expect that their documents will not be lost or destroyed. They have a right to their lives being treated with respect and dignity. The UK constantly fail to do that.

***This letter is dedicated to the memory of the estimated 120,000 people who have died as a result of the government's austerity policy, and those who have been treated less favourably by the government on the basis of their origin.***

Yours faithfully,

A.M.Nanhoo-Robinson

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-who-destroyed-the-windrush-landing-cards> ; <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/government-defends-truly-shocking-decision-to-destroy-windrush-landing-cards-a3816616.html>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jul/05/lost-child-abuse-files-home-office>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2685293/Home-Office-shredded-abuse-files-Whistleblower-says-senior-politicians-military-figures-people-links-Royals-members.html> <https://www.rt.com/uk/318844-sex-abuse-testimonies-deleted/> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11224065/Theresa-May-Home-Office-could-have-covered-up-paedophile-claims.html>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/feb/01/refugees-asylum>

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.transparency.org/files/content/pressrelease/TI-UK\\_Note\\_BAE\\_Corruption\\_Cases\\_settlements\\_Final\\_11-2-10.pdf](https://www.transparency.org/files/content/pressrelease/TI-UK_Note_BAE_Corruption_Cases_settlements_Final_11-2-10.pdf) ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/06/us-investigation-into-bae-saudi-arms-deal-watered-down-leaked-memo-suggests> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23622364> [Note Philip May's company, the Husband of the Prime Minister, has shares in BAE Systems <https://www.rt.com/uk/424392-may-husbands-capital-group/>]

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/26/uk-government-urged-to-search-for-national-archives-papers>