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Mr David Cameron  
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Dear Mr Cameron,

I am a mentally ill transgender woman with a severe anxiety disorder and a dollop of agoraphobia. I am unable to leave the house without a chaperone, and even then only on a good day.

Some days are better than others.

Today is not one of them.

This afternoon I received a phone call from the Department of Work and Pensions declaring me fit for work, and that my Employment and Support Allowance has been officially terminated.

Following this call, I made another call to the DWP asking what can be done about this and they told me to apply for Jobseeker's allowance and wait until I'm in a better position to appeal my case.

I am not in the habit of committing fraud, Mr Cameron, and so to apply for Jobseeker's allowance knowing full well that I will certainly not be seeking a job, I don't feel like I am entitled to the benefit.

I am sure you agree - and the DWP certainly will, as they will terminate my benefits once I prove unable to "sign on" (because, as I mentioned, I am an agoraphobe).

In fact, I was told that in order to apply at all I would need to attend an interview *at* the Jobcenter, which I am equally unable to do. When I expressed this, I was scolded by the callcenter employee for being difficult.

"Something must be done" is an understatement; benefits reform is causing deaths by the thousands and I am now more at risk of becoming a statistic than I already was as a trans woman.

With all due respect, Mr Cameron, I refuse to be reduced to a number on the front page of a search engine and I expect that you will be able to resolve this issue by having the word of

certified medical professionals - such as my GP, who understands my disorders far better than the one-off interviewer that determines whether or not I am able to afford food and medication - carry some weight in the assessment process.

From what I understand, there is a "points" system, and I did not fulfil the criteria. I am unsure as to how "being completely unable to sleep for fear of having a debilitating panic attack upon waking, and thus leaving me in a state all day where I am unable to actually function as a lucid human being" means I don't fulfil some arbitrary criteria ostensibly devised by a committee of people who think being mentally ill is "just all in [my] head" and that I'll "get over it".

Mental illness is, for sure, all in our heads. That is the whole problem.

"Invisible" illnesses are systematically erased from common discourse, because apparently it's more significant to lose a leg than consistently lose sleep due to severe existential dread and being unable to leave the house without a close friend to support oneself. Oh, and it's not just when trying to sleep; my panic attacks happen at odd and even hours throughout the day - I'm unfortunately unable to schedule these for whenever my break would be at any job I happen to get. I suppose customers will just have to deal with me having a violent panic attack. I wonder how long it would take me to get fired...

Despite what the DWP have said, I am *not* fit for work and to penalise me for not being "ill enough" is a gross and horrifying misstep for your government to take. Without my ESA, I will be unable to pay my phone bill. I will be unable to pay my landlord. I will be unable to pay for bread, and food *et al*.

Do me a favour, Mr Cameron: type "declared fit to work" into Google, and see what comes up. This is what your government has reduced our country to - the disabled are seen as expendable because we can't "contribute" to a society you have perpetuated.

Ask yourself: if your society results in this kind of hardship for genuine human beings, whom does it truly serve?

Yours sincerely,  
Kaolin Maia Cash