# Mother awaits justice as second inquest into disabled daughter’s death and DWP failings begins



The mother of Jodey Whiting, a housebound disabled woman whose death by suicide has raised serious questions about the actions of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), has described her protracted struggle for justice as the second inquest into her daughter’s death looms. Since Jodey’s tragic passing in February 2017, Joy Dove has faced significant hurdles in advocating for a deeper investigation into the circumstances surrounding the cut to her daughter’s disability benefits, a decision that came shortly after Jodey missed a work capability assessment.

Jodey Whiting, aged 42 and from Stockton-on-Tees, was under considerable psychological strain when her benefits were abruptly halted. Following the initial inquest, which lasted a mere 37 minutes and provided no exploration of the DWP's role, Ms Dove sought a new inquiry to evaluate the potential impact of the benefit cessation on her daughter’s mental health. She has articulated her longing for closure, stating, “It’s been such a long wait. It’s now come back to where it all began.” The upcoming inquest at Teesside Magistrates’ Court will be pivotal; Ms Dove is expected to provide testimony and has expressed hope that the proceedings will bring clarity to her family and contribute to systemic improvements in how vulnerable individuals are treated by the DWP.

The backdrop of this case not only accentuates the tragic personal ramifications of bureaucracy but highlights a broader issue regarding the DWP’s treatment of vulnerable claimants. Findings from an independent examination revealed serious systemic failures on the part of the DWP in handling Ms Whiting’s case, which primarily focused on an incorrect assumption regarding her fitness for work. Compounding the situation, it was revealed that Jodey had informed the DWP of her suicidal thoughts and requested a home visit due to her physical limitations and overwhelming anxiety. Her mother recollects the painful moment her daughter confronted the implications of her benefits termination, saying: “She looked at me and said ‘Mam, what am I going to do? I can’t walk out the door, I can’t breathe, I can’t sign on.’” Tragically, the DWP’s decision to discontinue her benefits was overturned only five weeks after her death, bringing little comfort to the family.

In recent proceedings, judges ruled that a fresh inquest is necessary not only to determine the specific connection between Jodey’s death and the cessation of her benefits but also to ensure transparency regarding the DWP’s actions. This acknowledgement by the courts reflects a growing recognition of the public’s right to scrutinise how governmental decisions can inadvertently contribute to the deaths of vulnerable individuals. The Court of Appeal remarked on the importance of this inquiry, noting that it serves the interests of justice and public accountability.

Joy Dove’s relentless pursuit of justice underscores a troubling narrative of the experiences of many families navigating the welfare system under significant duress. The tragic case of Jodey Whiting has elicited broader discussions regarding the policies of social support and the potential hardships faced by those dependent on disability benefits. As the inquest approaches, many hope it will not only honour Jodey’s memory but also catalyse necessary reforms in the DWP's handling of critical support services for disabled individuals.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/mothers-long-wait-for-justice-over-daughters-death-ahead-of-second-inquest-GR3UB3WBEZOWTBFTXWGEVSSSDU/), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tees-57570295)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/mothers-long-wait-for-justice-over-daughters-death-ahead-of-second-inquest-GR3UB3WBEZOWTBFTXWGEVSSSDU/), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/17/disabled-woman-jodey-whiting-new-inquest), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tees-64988475)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/2021-09-17/mother-of-woman-who-killed-herself-after-benefits-stopped-loses-new-inquest-bid), [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-57570295)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/mothers-long-wait-for-justice-over-daughters-death-ahead-of-second-inquest-GR3UB3WBEZOWTBFTXWGEVSSSDU/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tees-57570295> - In 2017, Jodey Whiting, a disabled woman from Stockton-on-Tees, died by suicide shortly after her disability benefits were halted due to missing a work capability assessment. Her mother, Joy Dove, sought a new inquest to examine the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) role in her death. The High Court heard that Whiting had informed the DWP of her suicidal thoughts and requested a home visit due to her severe anxiety and housebound condition. The DWP's decision to terminate her benefits was overturned five weeks after her death, with an independent inquiry finding multiple breaches of department policy and significant errors by staff. The case highlights concerns about the DWP's handling of vulnerable claimants and the potential link between benefit cuts and suicides. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tees-57570295?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/17/disabled-woman-jodey-whiting-new-inquest> - Joy Dove, mother of Jodey Whiting, won an appeal for a fresh inquest into her daughter's death. Whiting, 42, died in 2017 after her disability benefits were stopped when she missed a work capability assessment. The original inquest lasted 37 minutes and did not consider the DWP's role. The Court of Appeal ruled that a new inquest was 'desirable in the interests of justice', acknowledging the public's legitimate interest in understanding whether Whiting's death was connected to the abrupt cessation of her benefits. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/17/disabled-woman-jodey-whiting-new-inquest?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tees-64988475> - The Court of Appeal granted a new inquest into the death of Jodey Whiting, a disabled woman who died by suicide after her benefits were cut. Whiting, 42, from Stockton, died in February 2017, days after her disability benefits were stopped by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The original inquest recorded a verdict of suicide, but her mother, Joy Dove, sought a new inquest to examine the DWP's impact. The Court of Appeal ruled that a new inquest was 'desirable in the interests of justice', acknowledging the public's legitimate interest in understanding whether Whiting's death was connected to the abrupt cessation of her benefits. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tees-64988475?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/2021-09-17/mother-of-woman-who-killed-herself-after-benefits-stopped-loses-new-inquest-bid> - Joy Dove, mother of Jodey Whiting, lost a High Court bid for a fresh inquest into her daughter's death. Whiting, 42, died in February 2017 after her disability benefits were stopped when she missed a work capability assessment. The original inquest lasted 37 minutes and recorded a verdict of suicide. Dove sought a new inquest to investigate the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) role in her daughter's death. The High Court dismissed the claim, finding the original inquest was sufficient. Dove expressed disappointment but vowed to continue her fight for justice. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/2021-09-17/mother-of-woman-who-killed-herself-after-benefits-stopped-loses-new-inquest-bid?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-57570295> - A disabled woman's suicide was 'a direct result' of having her benefits cut, the High Court has been told. Jodey Whiting, 42, from Stockton-on-Tees, died in 2017, days after her payments were halted because she missed a work capability assessment. Her mother, Joy Dove, wants a new inquest to examine the role of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in her death. Ms Whiting's original inquest lasted just 37 minutes. It concluded she had taken her own life but Ms Dove's lawyers argued there were 'multiple, significant failings' by the DWP that were not considered. Teesside and Hartlepool Coroner's Service is responding to the claim, with the government department allowed to make limited arguments after it made a last-minute bid to join the case. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-57570295?utm_source=openai))