


# Man with cancer dies before he could appeal DWP ruling he was 'fit to work'

 independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/dwp-benefits-man-cancer-dies-before-appeal-ruling-fit-to-work-government-phillip-balderson-lake-a8098871.html  
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A man with terminal cancer died before he was able to appeal a ruling by the Department for Work and Pensions which stated he was “fit to work”.

Phillip Balderson, 46, had been working at a hotel in the Lake District but was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in 2013.

He also had psoriatic arthritis and a number of mental health problems, including anxiety and OCD.

Despite this, the DWP summoned Mr Balderson to a health assessment in February and ruled he was no longer eligible for Employment Support Allowance.

Mr Balderson, from Burnley, was told he had to look for work.

He began to appeal the decision but died on 5 June before he could see the process through.

His partner, Rachel Stockley, 49, said: “He was getting Employment Support Allowance, that was all fine, but then his dad died and his mental health got worse. Phillip just went downhill from there.



Phillip Balderson was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer and also had a number of mental health problems (Cascade)

“Then he got a letter to say he had to go for an assessment and he was worried.

“He was being judged by someone who was meeting him for the first time and that was that.

“He was complaining about pains in his liver before he had to go to his job centre appointment, and got worse before his assessment.

“I’m doing this for Phillip really because he was gutted. I think it’s disgusting, it’s terrible the way they treat people.”

His daughter Chloe Balderson, 23, said: “He had terminal cancer and they were trying to send him to work. The people at the job centre were disgusted.”

Mr Balderson’s family, with support from Citizens Advice, will appeal the decision at South Cumbria Magistrates Court in Barrow on 14 December.

If it rules in their favour, any benefit payments will go towards the funeral.

Ms Stockley said Mr Balderson was “frightened” by his diagnosis and rarely spoke about it, adding authorities need to show “more concern” towards people’s needs.

A spokesman for the DWP said: “Our thoughts are with Mr Balderson’s family at this

time.

“We are contacting Mr Balderson next of kin to ensure they're paid any benefits owed at the time of his death.

“The amount paid will be dependent on the result of the Work Capability appeal that is currently at tribunal.”