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# PRIVATE EYE

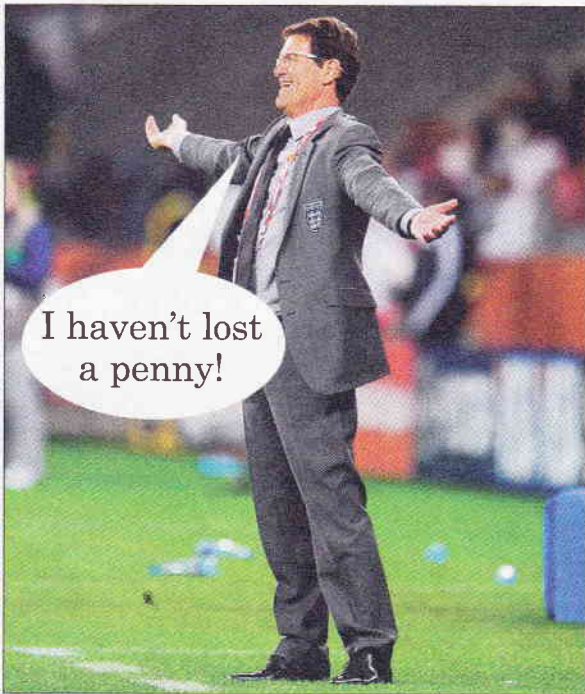


## SUMMER SPECIAL



**WORLD CUP WINNER**

**CHARLES BUILDING ROW**



I haven't lost a penny!



I'm not interfering, am I?

**CHEAPER HOLIDAY FLIGHTS**

**RUSSIAN SPY DRAMA**



It's the last time I fly Ryanair



It's the cold phwoarr!



## DISABLED CARE

## Wheels of misfortune

**WHERE are vulnerable and disabled people to live when even charities and social landlords treat them with callous disregard and wrongfully try to oust them from their homes?**

The *Eye* has learned of two shocking cases where wheelchair users have been threatened with eviction because Lambeth council and Leonard Cheshire Disability respectively have failed them miserably.

It was only thanks to an 11th-hour protest by an MP and the *Eye* that Paul Atherton, a 42-year-old television producer, was not ejected on to the streets last week from the Brixton hostel that had been his home since last September. He had been living in the temporary accommodation since his discharge from three months in hospital suffering chronic and debilitating myalgic encephalomyelitis, which has left him in a wheelchair. He had been given just seven days' notice amid claims that he was £1,377 in rent arrears and that "Mr Atherton alone is responsible for these arrears".

In fact he was not and never had been responsible for the arrears. He had been battling in vain to secure more than £3,200 in benefits he was owed by the Department for Work and Pensions, without which he had been struggling to feed and clothe himself. He had been passed from pillar to post – from the DWP to Lambeth's hostel services, via lost benefit offices, social services and various voluntary groups – and got precisely nowhere.

The reaction of Sharon Johnson, Lambeth's hostel service manager, was to criticise Mr

Atherton's "attitude toward paying his rent" and said he had "chosen to ignore" the council's letters. It was only after the *Eye* raised Mr Atherton's case with Lambeth and his MP, Chuka Umunna, obtained a letter from the DWP in which it admitted that it owed him £3,270.80 in disability living allowance "due to an error by the department", that Ms Johnson halted eviction proceedings. There has been no hint of an apology from either the DWP or the local authority for the anxiety caused.

The *Eye* asked why Lambeth had not bothered to establish the truth behind Mr Atherton's difficulties before trying to send him out on the streets. It said: "Clearly this is an unfortunate situation, the root cause of which has been an error at the DWP in not paying Mr Atherton's disability living allowance." It added: "But of course we regret the distress this has obviously caused him. We will be looking carefully at any lessons that can be learned from the case."

Over at Leonard Cheshire Disability, meanwhile, lessons are not being learned. Doug Pauley, who suffers a degenerative neurological disorder, faces being forced out of the charity-run Wharfedale House care home in Wetherby where he has lived for nine years because he has become a thorn in the charity's side.

A passionate campaigner to improve the lot of disabled people, he has taken the charity to task for overcharging residents hundreds of pounds for travel, for breaching confidentiality, for failing



to provide holidays and for its "inadequate" food allowances of £21 a week.

He first came to the *Eye*'s attention in 2006, when he criticised his landlords for "grabbing cheap headlines" when it teamed up with Barclays Bank to launch a £3m scheme to help disabled people start their own businesses. Laudable as it might have been, none of the 2,000-plus people living in Leonard Cheshire homes could take advantage of it because they were caught in the benefit trap.

Clearly some at Leonard Cheshire have taken exception to Mr Pauley, who has obtained internal emails in which he is described as, among other things, a "pain", a "git" and a "plonker". There was a suggestion that the charity put up bureaucratic obstacles in the way of his attempts to secure a holiday.

Colin Young, Leonard Cheshire's UK director of operations, found that "Mr Pauley's complaints had all been legitimate issues relating to non-compliance by staff". But despite this it suddenly sought to end its contract for him with the local authority. In April an independent adult safeguarding investigation concluded the charity's treatment of him amounted to "institutional abuse". At the safeguarding meeting Mr Pauley agreed it might be better to live elsewhere, but has since resolved to stay in the home near his friends and family.

But it seems Leonard Cheshire would rather not try to accommodate him. It said in a statement to the *Eye*: "Very occasionally we conclude that despite our best efforts, the needs of an individual service user cannot be met. We are working closely with the authority charged with Mr Pauley's care to find an appropriate solution to meet his specific needs and requests." Mr Pauley has other ideas, however, and will continue to fight, through the courts if necessary.

## DEEPCUT DEATHS

## About turn

**WHAT a difference carrying a ministerial briefcase makes for the Liberal Democrats.**



In opposition they promised a public inquiry into the fatal shootings of four young recruits at Deepcut barracks, seemingly accepting that Sir Nicholas Blake's "review" of the deaths raised more questions than it answered (see *Eyes passim*).

Indeed, shortly before the general election Des James, father of 18-year-old Cheryl, the second recruit to die at the army training centre in Surrey in 1995, received a reassuring letter from Nick Clegg's office. "It is more than unsatisfactory that the present government has continued and continues to dodge the calls for an inquiry," it said. The Lib Dems' then shadow armed forces minister, Nick Harvey, also criticised the Labour government for failing to "take action to ensure we get to the bottom of these tragic events".

But now Harvey is the actual armed forces minister, he has suddenly changed his tune. "It is clear officials have looked into this issue in depth," he says. "Given the extensive investigations that have already taken place, there is no public or service interest in pursuing a public inquiry."

Mr James is writing to ask what Harvey has now discovered that has made him change his mind. After all, as the *Eye*'s Deepcut report, *A Shot in the Dark*, made clear, the £1m Blake review seemed designed merely to silence criticism. No new witnesses were interviewed, let alone cross-examined; and gaping anomalies and inconsistencies in the circumstances surrounding the deaths remain. The review relied almost unquestioningly on a re-investigation by the same police forces which had made the fundamental errors after the bodies were first found.

Evidence gathered by them remains secret from public scrutiny. But as the *Eye* recently revealed, that evidence included previously undisclosed interviews with the camp's medic at the time who was called to the scene when Cheryl's body was

found with a bullet wound to the head. Dr Alexandra McClenahan said she came under pressure from commanding officers to suggest that Cheryl must have committed suicide. But the position of her body, the weapon and the accuracy of the shot, coupled with the fact that women rarely use weapons to commit suicide, suggested to her that Cheryl's death could have been murder. Contrary to usual practice, she was then excluded from the post mortem examination, where bullet fragments recovered from Cheryl's skull went missing. Blake did not even interview Dr McClenahan.

It is known that at the time of the four deaths Deepcut was out of control, with vulnerable young trainees exposed to bullying NCOs and sexual predators. Lawyers for the bereaved families believe that none of the police inquiries, inquests, or the Commons defence committee investigation or Blake's review meets the standard required by the European Convention on Human Rights when someone who is under the care of the state dies. If the new coalition won't order an independent inquiry, perhaps the high court will.

## POVERTY RELIEF

## The real CDC

**SO what did Britain's international development fund CDC, formerly the Common-wealth Development Corporation, have to say at last month's launch of its "development review" once the *Eye* had got past its foul-mouthed communications manager? (For the full "fuck off you little piece of shit" story, see the last *Eye* or [www.private-eye.co.uk](http://www.private-eye.co.uk).)**

Wine glasses full, guests were first treated to an uplifting film about a day in the life of a small business in post-conflict Rwanda. When mainstream banks refused a local entrepreneur money to set up a paper bag making firm, he turned to a CDC-backed lender dedicated to small business in Africa. His company now employs 50 people, giving a real boost to the local economy.

CDC chief executive Richard Laing was at pains to concentrate on this credible picture of investment relieving poverty. The only snag is that such "small and medium-sized enterprise" investments form just 7 percent of CDC's investment – far less than is placed in banks of the sort that wouldn't lend the Rwandan entrepreneur his money in the first place!

Investments in large companies for which there is no shortage of private investors dominate CDC's portfolio and generate statistics that sound impressive but bear no scrutiny.

CDC's development headlines are 733,000 employees in investee companies and \$2.8bn paid in taxes last year. But these figures come almost entirely from large banks, mines and consumer product companies in which CDC holds relatively tiny investments. The tax statistic is especially misleading. For example, \$120m was paid by Nigeria's biggest mobile phone company, part of South Africa's £30bn MTN group (which as a \$65m "global sponsor" sees its name adorn World Cup hoardings). CDC has held a £4m investment in MTN for 10 years, generating little development benefit but some fat statistics.

The truth on tax is vastly different. When CDC invests it lobbies developing economies for "tax incentives". MTN Nigeria has only just emerged from a five-year tax holiday, while the development review smallprint reveals that the Accra Mall shopping centre in Ghana, 50 percent owned by the British taxpayer through CDC's \$16m investment, is tax exempt for a similar period. Regular *Eye* readers will know only too well that more outrageous tax avoidance tricks are perpetrated by other companies in which CDC is the largest investor.

CDC no longer uses its old tag line – "investing where others are generally unwilling to do so" – since it is primarily aimed at simply making money, which explains why even though CDC recognises that agriculture is of "immense developmental value", it has reduced its investments in this sector from 23 percent to 5 percent in the last 10 years (and from 50 percent in the last 20 years). Not that guests at CDC's launch will suspect this as they brew up using the Tanzanian tea from their goodie bags.

Since 2004 CDC has tried to maximize profits by handing its money to private equity managers, a controversial form of investment in developed economies but prone to gross excesses in less well-regulated developing ones. The *Eye* has reported how one such manager, US-based Emerging Capital Partners, has put millions of pounds of taxpayers' money in privatised companies run by cronies of a corrupt Nigerian governor, which the most cursory due diligence would have identified.

But as with tax avoidance, none of this makes it into the development review. The most informative comment comes instead from the consultants, KPMG, giving "independent assurance" on the report: "As CDC is one step removed from the companies which ultimately receive its funds, CDC is inherently limited in its ability to perform compliance checks of these companies' performance..."