



**Registered Charity No. 1107795**

## **Equal Rights for Men and Women**

*Patrons:*

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Mr Mark Brooks

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### **PARITY News Briefing - February 2018**

This is the fifth News Briefing to be collated in lieu of UPDATE, since we have yet to find a volunteer to edit this. This issue has been prepared by volunteer Trustees. Needless to say, responses and contributions from members will be most welcome. Please address these to the Honorary Secretary, Chandra Vaghela.

We welcome on board co-opted Trustees with website design expertise – **Mr Ketan Shah**. We are recruiting Chair of Board of PARITY Trustees, so if you know someone who may be a suitable candidate, please contact Hon. Secretary for further information.

We are pleased to announce that our AGM has been scheduled on **2<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 at 12:00** noon at the Union Jack Club.

The **Fourth International Conference on Men's Issues** organised by the campaign party 'Justice For Men and Boys' (J4MB) will take place in London from 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018. The venue will be disclosed shortly before the event. This follows on from the successful 2014 (US), 2016 (UK), 2017 (Australia) conferences.

As with the previous events, there will be a host of international speakers over the three days addressing a few hundred international delegates. Paul Elam (of the leading website: <https://www.avoiceformen.com>) will be the keynote speaker.

Participants enjoy the speeches and the issues raised and also get the opportunity to network with like-minded people.

Tickets will only available up to **31<sup>st</sup> March 2018**. For further information about the conference and reserving your tickets:

<https://icmi18.wordpress.com/2017/12/01/the-fourth-international-conference-on-mens-issues-icmi18-is-on/>

A march in London was organised by The Liberty Belles (a group of women who speak out for Men's Rights) and various activists on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in support of **International Men's Day 2017**. Around a hundred in total progressed from Trafalgar Square along the Strand to the Royal Courts of Justice, along the Embankment to Parliament Square and back to the starting point. Impromptu speeches were given in support of Men's Rights which attracted a lot of attention and support from the public.

International Women's Day is a well-known and established event taking place on the 8th March annually, with known aims. However, many will be unaware of the International Men's Day event that was set up a few years ago and takes place on 19th November annually. Its goal is to promote awareness of Men's Issues. We wonder whether it will get the publicity of its female equivalent.

On the same evening as the march in London, at a Soho venue, a conference was hosted where ten different speakers gave talks on this subject matter. Notable speakers included Fidelbogen (screened direct from the U.S.A.), Belinda Brown (Conservative Woman website), Neil Lyndon (activist and author of 'No more sex war') and Mark Pearson (wrongly accused of fondling a woman at Waterloo station). Sadly Dr Joanna Williams (author of 'Women versus feminism: Why we all need liberating from the gender wars') couldn't make it. More information on International Men's Day can be found at:

<http://ukmensday.org.uk/> or with a simple Google search.

## Great Victory for Families Need Fathers (FNF) in Wales

*The Western Mail* 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017 clip is shown below.



### Helpline's 'discriminatory' policy against males changed

A POLICY that discriminated against male victims of domestic abuse when they called helplines has been changed following a campaign by a Welsh grandmother.

Before the change, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) said it was essential to "screen" male callers to determine whether they were "genuine".

Female callers would not be screened in this way because "women comprise the overwhelming majority of victims of domestic abuse".

That view was unacceptable to Cardiff equalities campaigner and grandmother Anne O'Regan.

The retired nurse and trade union equalities officer took her concerns to her local AM Mark Drakeford, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, and asked him to intervene.

Women have always been the majority of victims of abuse, but the number of men who recognise that they too are victims has been rising dramatically in recent years. Ten years ago the British Crime Survey

said that 15% of survivors were men. Today that figure has more than doubled to 36%.

"Mark has been hugely supportive, said Mrs O'Regan.

"He wrote on my behalf to the EHRC in Wales to raise my concerns and ask them to review their position."

After careful consideration and reference to external legal opinion the EHRC has reversed its stance.

The EHRC's policy reversal was warmly welcomed by Mrs O'Regan, who said: "As a woman, gender equality has always been very important for me - but it's not a one way street.

"Men are disadvantaged in a number of areas, such as accidents at work, the much higher suicide rate and when it comes to domestic abuse.

"I'm a volunteer and a trustee for the charity FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru, and I see men who are victims of terrible abuse and injustice at our support meetings in Cardiff and Bridgend."

It has been reported that a company **Cordell and Cordell** has been posturing itself as - **a partner men can count on!** and its advertisement on mainstream television mentioned the consequences of divorce and its adverse effects on men in terms of losing kids, home and financial costs, etc. This is indeed an "official" recognition by society that men are getting a raw deal! The company website: <https://cordellcordell.co.uk> shows that it specialises in helping men in divorce cases.

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### **Domestic Violence Issues - The ManKind Initiative Conference**

A conference was held by The Mankind Initiative (a charity for male victims of domestic violence) on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017 entitled **"Surviving Domestic Abuse; Experiences, Services and Solutions"**. Here is a report by PARITY member David Hyatt:

Mark Brooks needs no introduction. The leading figure in the movement to raise awareness and provide support for male victims of domestic violence, his efforts over many years have started to bear fruit, despite the complete absence of government funding. Mark is a public policy, marketing and communications specialist, but he now devotes his life to this cause and the conference, held at Kings Cross on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017 is further proof of how much progress has been made.

The Mankind Initiative has been active in providing training and presentations to a huge number of bodies and organisations in the UK. To give only a few examples; The Home Office, Manchester Police, Belmarsh Prison, Somerset NHS, Croydon Independent Girls School, Lincolnshire County Council, Unison, Oxford University.

Speaking as a survivor of domestic violence myself (I was beaten black and blue for nearly a year by my spouse, knowing that if I hit back - and I could have knocked her unconscious with a single punch - I would probably have been arrested) I have known Mark for about 8 years. He gave me encouragement at a time when I was still dealing with the psychological fallout from what was a horrendous ordeal. But this was my first visit to his annual conference and I was very impressed by the care, attention to detail and sheer professionalism that had gone into it. There were over 80 delegates, mostly women, and they were attentive and receptive throughout a long day of fascinating and compelling presentations.

Dr Elizabeth Bates, senior lecturer in Applied Psychology at the University of Cumbria, set the tone for the day with a thoughtful and impassioned plea for male victims of domestic abuse to be taken seriously, despite the establishment feminist view that

male victims are peripheral (or non-existent!) and not worthy of serious attention. Academic studies show repeatedly that males comprise at the very least one third of all the victims of domestic violence and domestic abuse in the UK.

This was followed by a talk from Dr Ben Hine, lecturer in Psychology at the University of West London. Addressing the issue of the barriers male victims face, he described the full range of difficulties, from men's initial reluctance to come forward, the ingrained scepticism of the police (though the situation is improving) to the shameful insistence of some domestic violence helplines on "screening" male callers, on the grounds that any male victim of domestic violence is likely to be a perpetrator himself!

The next session involved talks by 3 male survivors of domestic violence. They were all distressing and shocking, but the case of Ian McNicholl was particularly horrifying. Between September 2006 and May 2008 Ian went from being a home-owner, a successful businessman and financially comfortable - to a permanently-scarred, registered disabled, homeless benefit claimant. The catalogue of vicious abuse included one incident where his female perpetrator poured a kettle of boiling water over Ian, and while he was writhing in agony, she boiled the kettle again and repeated the operation. At least this female sadist was sent to prison, unlike the majority of female perpetrators. She got 7 years for grievous bodily harm with intent. But to add insult to injury (literally) Ian had to spend 18 months in a Salvation Army hostel for the homeless. A decade ago there were virtually no refuge places for male victims in the country, and even today there isn't a single male refuge place in Greater London.

Over lunch I took the chance to chat to other delegates, who came from an impressively wide range of backgrounds and organisations. To list a few, Hertsmere Borough Council, Bedfordshire police, Citizens Advice Stevenage, Manchester City Council, Abused Men In Scotland, Office for National Statistics, Lloyds Banking Group, University of Essex. But it was troubling that there was very little representation from London, for some reason.

Among the impressive afternoon speakers was Jane Stephens, of the Domestic Abuse Service in North Powys, Wales. They were the first organisation in the UK to provide refuge spaces with support for male victims of domestic abuse and their children. While this is the good news, it's depressing that male provision elsewhere is so inadequate that other councils tried to send to North Powys their own male victims (together with their children) from up to 150 miles away. It's a sad reminder that refuge places for male victims represent only a tiny fraction of the number of places for female victims. True equality has a long way to go.

### **Domestic Violence Issues - The ManKind Initiative Achievements**

The ManKind Initiative issued a statement to its supporters at the end of 2017 outlining their work and achievements through the year. Here is a summary:

Fundraising efforts have enabled the helpline to continue in 2017 and ensured it will operate in 2018. The service is invaluable for its help and advice both for the men that call and for those on their behalf. The challenge will be to increase its capacity as it can sometimes take a few attempts before getting through.

They had another successful conference (detailed above); over 60,000 visits to the website; good take-up of their CPD accredited one day training course; a successful IDVA drop-in service for Somerset (funded by Taunton Women's Aid); more appearances on TV/radio/press than ever before; invitations to attend statutory-led meetings.

2017 has seen an increase in the number of services for men at local level (now around 175) albeit many are at risk (there has been a reduction in the number of refuge/safe house places available for men – now under 100).

There has also been more support from film and documentary makers and a greater interest from the media, policy-makers and politicians. The biggest success in this area is the statement on male victims made by the Crown Prosecution Service on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (detailed in PARITY's last news briefing, October 2017) a first for any prosecuting authority in the world. They are hoping all statutory organisations will use this as a core statement of principles.

ManKind will be involved in a forthcoming consultation on a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Act. They have had meetings with the Home Office and Department of Health to ensure male victims will be included, based on the policy areas that can be found here: <http://www.mankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Domestic-Violence-and-Abuse-Act-10-Recommendations-for-Change-ManKind-Initiative.pdf>

They are greatly encouraged in the inclusive direction the Government is taking as set out on the Telegraph website here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/finally-policy-makers-waking-plaint-male-domestic-abuse-victims/>

Dr Liz Bates (who gave a talk at the conference mentioned above of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017) has joined the Trustees and has produced a ground breaking video entitled '20 Voices' which can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSyT3UV0D9I&t=43s>

### **Domestic Violence Issues - Experiment**

Another experiment has been done highlighting the difference in public attitudes regarding female to male violence compared to the reverse. The article is entitled '*I abused a man in public and no one cared*' and demonstrates the prejudices men face when experiencing assault by a woman. It can be found here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/5d33c36d-cd41-4351-97ed-4516962d5c44>

This follows on from The ManKind Initiative Youtube video '*Violence is Violence*' published 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 which essentially proves the same thing. The URL for this is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3PqH86OyEM>

Although the issues raised are concerning it is at least good that these prejudices are beginning to be highlighted and challenged.

### **Parental Alienation Syndrome**

On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017 the front page of *The Guardian* ran an article entitled '*Parents at war could risk losing children: Plans to fight 'alienation' where child is turned against mother or father*'. Hopefully it is a sign that this phenomena is starting to be taken seriously, (although things can have a habit of being acknowledged officially in order to appease activists, but often this doesn't translate into proper action, especially in men's issues).

The article is written in gender neutral language, which is fair enough as mothers can be victims as well. However it should be noted that the majority of victims are fathers (as well as the children involved). Here is an overview:

Parental alienation is internationally recognised as a distinctive form of parental psychological abuse and family violence, undermining fundamental principles of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' and the 'UN convention on the rights of the child'.

In the US and Canada, "parenting coordinators" are appointed and supervised by courts to help restore relationships between parents and children, if it is believed alienation has occurred. In Mexico and Brazil, alienating a child from a parent is a criminal act.

Until now, cases in the UK have relied on CAFCASS workers (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) recognising incidents on a case-by-case basis. Many parents, however, say their experiences of alienation have been missed or compounded by the social work and family court system, often leading to permanent estrangement from their child.

With all this in mind CAFCASS will trial new guidelines from Spring 2018. Divorcing parents could be denied contact with their children if they try to turn them against their former partner under a "ground-breaking" process. Offending parents will be given the chance to change their behaviour via therapy. Those who do not stop it will not be allowed to have their children live with them. In addition, contact between the parent and child could be restricted or refused for a few months. If necessary the alienating parent will be permanently banned from any contact with their child.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The subject of sexual harassment of women by men has been very prominent in the news recently. It seemed to begin last autumn when multiple allegations of misconduct and abuse by film director Harvey Weinstein emerged. The nature and number of terrible things complainants say he has done has effectively ensured people have assumed him to be guilty before even being tried and convicted. He may very well have done all of this but we must still remember that as of now he continues to protest his innocence. At this stage shouldn't we all retain an open mind and let the due process of justice decide the official outcome?

This had a knock-on effect worldwide: There was said to be a crisis at Westminster and certain female MPs said they had experienced sexual harassment. This dominated headlines and emergency meetings ensued about a toxic culture among male MPs and how to tackle it; The hashtag #metoo then emerged online where women could discuss how they had been mistreated sexually by men - this went viral; Actresses wore black at award ceremonies like the Golden Globes and Emmys to signify their solidarity with women victims and highlight the issue; In January 'The President's Club' hosted a gala for men in London (in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital) where they were served by scantily clad waitresses and allegations of groping occurred by undercover reporters.

Genuine sexual harassment is, of course, totally unacceptable. However, some are beginning to speak out against what they see as an exaggeration of the level of it really going on and the demonising of men. They say we are confusing flirting with abuse and are all too ready to see women as 'victims' over something quite innocent. They say this in turn patronises women and undermines real sexual assault: Sarah Vine in her column wrote '*A clumsy pass over dinner is NOT sex harassment*' (*Daily Mail* 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017); Jan Moir said the same thing in her piece '*Men are not the enemy*' (*Daily Mail* 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017); Actress Catherine Deneuve defended men's 'right' to chat up women saying "*rape is a crime, attempting to seduce is not*"

(<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5250867/Catherine-Deneuve-defends-mens-right-chat-women.html>); Actress Anna Friel said 'I hope we can still allow for flirtation' (Daily Telegraph 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018).

There is also the danger that, as with domestic violence, society overlooks the fact that men can be subjects and women perpetrators: In her article '*Madness of this war against men*' (Daily Mail 27<sup>th</sup> January 2018) Sarah Vine (in response to 'The President's Club' affair and speaking out against the witch hunt against men) also pointed out that "*Women pawing male strippers at hen nights provokes guffaws - not outrage*"; Entertainer Jimmy Tarbuck said "*If we want to tackle bad behaviour, start looking at hen parties*" (Daily Mail 27<sup>th</sup> January 2018); The online article '*Strictly Unacceptable, the harassment of male celebrities is embarrassing*' spoke of how men on the popular dance show have lewd comments made about their bodies and get touched up by women presenters without widespread condemnation - another double standard - see: [https://uk.style.yahoo.com/apos-strictly-apos-unacceptable-harassment-080926491.html?soc\\_src=mail&soc\\_trk=ma](https://uk.style.yahoo.com/apos-strictly-apos-unacceptable-harassment-080926491.html?soc_src=mail&soc_trk=ma); Equally women can harass other women - Sarah Vine's article '*A clumsy pass over dinner is NOT sex harassment*' (Daily Mail 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017) revealed how at a swimming pool changing room "*a naked woman entered my cubicle with amorous intent*".

### **Male Victims of Stalking**

Within the movement to raise awareness of men's issues, we rightly hear a lot about the plight of male victims of domestic violence but relatively not that much about the stalking of men. The subject, however, was covered by a 'BBC 5 live investigates' programme on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018 entitled '*Male Stalking Victims*'.

An article on the BBC's website reported on its findings and revealed that there were 1,800 stalking crimes against men recorded over four years between 2014 and 2017, with the real number affected thought to be much higher. It said 47% of the perpetrators were actually other men (meaning 53% must have been women).

It went through some examples of men who had experienced this and how appalling their cases were. It spoke of the prejudices male victims face and how they tend not to get taken seriously by people. However, Sharon Stratton, from the College of Policing, said "*I understand stalking is under-reported generally, and men report less than women. We must ensure that we encourage people to come forward*". An acknowledgement, at least, that men can be subjected to this particular behaviour as well as women.

The article can be found at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42582820>

### **Rape Issues**

The subject of incorrect handling of rape cases by the system to the detriment of the accused has emerged recently and been given decent media exposure.

The headline of *The Times* on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2017 read '*Rape Case Scandal is just Tip of The Iceberg*'. It revealed how police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) repeatedly failed to hand over crucial evidence to the defence team which would have improved their chances of acquitting their clients. In many cases the CPS simply should not have gone through with prosecutions, as the accused was clearly innocent.

The new figures, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, reveal the total number of people whose trials have ended or the charges against them dropped due to a failure to disclose evidence:

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2013-14: 583 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2014-15: 537 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2015-16: 732 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2016-17: 916 |

Over those four years, the number of completed prosecutions fell by almost 150,000 cases - from more than 736,000 in 2013-14 to just over 588,000 in 2016-17.

A CPS spokesperson said the number of dropped cases due to evidence disclosure failures represented just 0.15% of the total number of prosecutions. Angela Rafferty QC, chair of the Criminal Bar Association, said *"That is still too many, however, and we are clear that there are systemic disclosure issues across the criminal justice system which will require a collective effort in order to bring about improvement"*. *"Getting this right is a priority, and along with the police and other criminal justice partners we are working to improve how we fulfil these vital disclosure obligations."* She further blamed issues on a *"lack of investment, training and attention to the criminal justice system"*.

In one example Liam Allen, 22, spent nearly two years on bail for a series of alleged rapes against one woman. However, hundreds of messages from her phone showed that she was actually obsessively in love and had in fact pestered *him* for sex. She maliciously then tried to paint the opposite picture by falsely crying rape. None of this was disclosed to the defence team until the last moment (after independent new counsel for the prosecution, Jerry Hayes, spotted the flagrant breach) and the case rightfully collapsed before going to trial. It is a disgrace it ever got that far with the subsequent anguish for Mr Allen that ensued. Angela Rafferty, QC and chairwoman of the Criminal Bar Association warned that the failure was *"not an isolated incident"* and said that police and the CPS may be *"unconsciously"* biased towards people who report sex offences.

Other recent cases that fell apart included George Owen, 21, when a jury took just two hours to find that he had not forced himself on a 19 year old student as they left a Manchester bar; Bartolomeo Joly de Lotbiniere was reported to police a whole 14 months after having sex with his accuser and Joshua Lines was accused by a fellow student who had invited *him* into her bed – in both cases they said sex was consensual and were found not guilty, prompting questions as to why they ended up in court.

Journalist Alison Pearson then wrote a devastating attack in the *Daily Telegraph* on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Heavily criticising Alison Saunders, the head of the CPS, her piece was entitled *'Saunders has poisoned the justice system, she must go'*. Referring to the Allen case she said *"Under Alison Saunders, the CPS has become so obsessed with pursuing the VAGW (Violence Against Girls and Women) agenda that the 'victim' is always to be believed and men like 22 year old Liam must take their chances"*.

Pearson went on to say that *"I was contacted a few days ago by someone who had attended a CPS rape training day. She said she was disturbed that prosecutors appeared 'indoctrinated', spouting 'gender studies platitudes'. Another woman spoke of a 'cult' mentality in which police, lawyers and judges are guided by advocates of 'trauma theory'. One expert apparently argues that the more incoherent and changeable an accuser's account, the more believable it is"*. She also commented on other relevant wider issues by saying *"Remember Innocent? Well, I'd hang on to it if I were you. The concept of innocent until proven guilty is fast disappearing in a #metoo"*

*age, where a woman's memory of being made to feel 'uncomfortable' can wreck a man's entire career".*

*She finished her article by going back to the Allen case - "Liam's shocking ordeal can be traced to Ms Saunders and her brand of vengeful gender politics. He wasn't believed because the bias against believing him was too great. It is not fair. It is not just. It is not what we want in our Director of Public Prosecutions. Resign"*

One cannot help feeling that were such corruption uncovered in any other area of public life, it would have led to an instant resignation or sacking. However, in today's anti-male climate, she still remains in her job!

BBC articles on this subject and further follow-ups can be found at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-42365521>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42417553>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42795058>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42841346>

A woman who falsely accused men of rape received a ten year prison sentence. The case was reported in *The Metro* paper of 25<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Jemma Beale's victims were wrongly convicted and spent nearly three years in prison. Police spent more than £250,000 and 6,500 hours investigating her claims. Jurors heard how the 25 year old had deliberately lied about being raped by nine men and sexually assaulted by six in four encounters over three years. She did this to get sympathy from her girlfriend, Southwark crown court heard. However, police noticed flaws in her allegations and began investigating her.

Beale was convicted of four counts of perjury and four of perverting the course of justice.

### **Speaking Up For Men**

Television dramas often tend to depict the male sex in a bad light, reflecting attitudes in society where men have been completely demonised in recent decades through political correctness. When this happens it is at least heartening to see journalists speak out against it.

Amanda Platell, writing in the *Daily Mail* of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017, penned an article titled 'Why Must TV Dramas Demonise All Men?' She referred to the recent drama "Liar" in which a woman (Laura) and a man (Andrew) sleep with each other after drinking. The next morning she goes to the police to say she has been raped. He protests his innocence. The script enticed the viewer to debate which one was lying before revealing the answer – predictably it was the man. He spiked her drink before raping her after having done the same to his wife's best friend.

*Platell commented "The message couldn't be clearer and is, of course, straight out of the feminist handbook – all men are rapists...no one can be trusted. How much more interesting it would have been if Laura had been the liar. If she had falsely cried rape and put an innocent man in the dock. At least that would have had the virtue of reflecting the growing problem facing British justice".*

She went on to say "Top barrister Cathy McCulloch wrote in the *Mail* this week that more men's lives are being ruined by disputes over consent. Her advice to any young

*man is not to sleep with a woman who's even had one drink". Platell said "Whatever the rights and wrongs of all this, hers is a sad comment on modern dating".*

*She finished her piece by saying "But one thing is certain: modern TV dramas don't paint men as victims. From Little Big Lies to Broadchurch, Doctor Foster to Fearless, I can't think of a single successful recent drama where the man is not cast as a psycho, a killer, a sadist, an adulterer or a wife beater. I am not in any way diminishing the horror and seriousness of rape, but how disappointing that a drama with such potential descended into yet another male-hating diatribe. Men deserve better than that"*

### **Men's Health - Male Infertility**

The issue of male infertility care is often insensitive and one-sided according to charity Fertility Network UK after surveying men having difficulty becoming fathers. Many felt marginalised and excluded, with female partners being the main focus of attention in clinics, it found.

*One man said: "The whole experience has been focused towards my wife... even consultants' letters about my genitalia are addressed to my wife. There seems to be no equality." Another said: "I now know what it feels like to be identified on official documentation... as an appendage to one's spouse."*

They said little is known about how men cope with their infertility because they are often reluctant to talk about it and share their experiences. Nearly all of the men said it made them feel worthless and "less of a man". A lack of emotional support was highlighted. We regularly hear from women in the media who have difficulty conceiving, but not from men for fear of ridicule. It is therefore something men tend to suffer in silence.

Susan Seenan, chief executive of Fertility Network UK, urged men to speak out and said clinics should pay extra attention to the care needs of the men they see and treat. *"Men are half of the fertility equation; when they cannot create the family they long for without medical help, they suffer and struggle physically and mentally just as women do".*

Causes of male infertility vary but the most common is poor quality semen, a low sperm count, abnormal sperm or sperm not moving properly. Damaged genitals, ejaculation disorders and low levels of testosterone also contribute. About 25%, however, of infertility cases are unexplained in the U.K.

The information for this piece was taken from the *Health section of the BBC website* of the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 and can be found at:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-41820347>

### **Men's Health - Prostate Cancer**

Prostate cancer has been in the news recently. On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017 the *Daily Mail* ran an article entitled '*Prostate diagnosis shame*'. It revealed that an audit showed men wait four times as long for results as women with breast cancer symptoms in the U.K. - 56 days compared to 14 days. This is largely down to the absence of an equivalent national screening program. Also, tests for prostate cancer are unreliable - this could be greatly improved with a lot more research, which again is comparatively underfunded.

The *Daily Mail* followed this up on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 with the front page headline '*Is this a case of bias against men?*' It described how official statistics revealed it is now a bigger killer than breast cancer (more than 11,800 men compared to 11,400 women) but only gets half the research funding. Treatments for the disease are also trailing at least a decade behind. Prostate cancer is now the third biggest cancer killer in Britain behind only lung and bowel cancers.

Between 1999 and 2015 breast cancer deaths fell by 1500, whereas prostate cancer deaths increased by 2400, figures from The Office for National Statistics show. This can be partly explained by the fact that people are living longer – with older men more at risk. Equally, men are more likely to ignore symptoms and not want to talk about it.

Although deaths from prostate cancer have been rising over the past 10 years or so, the mortality rate or the proportion of men dying from the disease has fallen - by 6% - between 2010 and 2015. For breast cancer the mortality rate has come down by 10%, meaning deaths in women are declining more quickly.

However, experts say the gulf in research funding is also driving the disparity. Prostate cancer has had £227million of government and charity funds since 2002, less than half the £529million for breast cancer. Also, 9,300 prostate research papers were published globally last year, compared with 21,000 for breast cancer. Angela Culhane, of Prostate Cancer UK, which released the figures, said: "*With half the investment and half the research it's not surprising progress in prostate cancer is lagging behind ... the good news is many of these developments (referring to encouraging advances in breast cancer care) could be applied to prostate cancer and we're confident, with the right funding, we can dramatically reduce deaths within the next decade*".

Again, as well as reducing waiting times for diagnosis a regular national screening programme for cancer of the prostate to match that of the breast and more reliable, accurate tests would also help to reduce deaths.

The *Daily Mail* 'comment' section for 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 summed it up perfectly by describing it as a '*deadly inequality*'.

This particular newspaper has been campaigning for nearly twenty years to raise the profile of prostate cancer. In 1999 it launched its '*Dying of Embarrassment*' campaign to raise awareness among men, society and politicians of the disease. It has helped to have some success, but there is still a long way to go.

The BBC also covered this subject with its online health section and can be found at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-42890405>

### **Dr. Joanna Williams' new book - '*Women vs. Feminism: Why We All Need Liberating from the Gender Wars*'**

There's never been a better time to be a woman. Thanks to those feminists who fought for liberation, young women today have freedom and opportunities their grandmothers could barely have imagined. Girls do better at school than boys and are more likely to go to university. As a result, women are taking more of the top jobs and the gender pay gap has all but disappeared. Yet rather than encouraging women to seize the new possibilities open to them, contemporary feminism tells them they are still oppressed. This book challenges this stance, unpicking the statistics from the horror stories to explore the reality of women's lives. It argues that today's feminism is obsessed with trivial issues - skinny models, badly phrased jokes and misplaced compliments - and

focuses on the regulation of male behaviour, rather than female empowerment, pitching men and women against each other in a never-ending gender war that benefits no-one.

In the interview with the *Telegraph*, Williams said that women and girls were once the disadvantaged sex, but have now become the privileged one in terms of opportunities, education, etc.

The book is varied in interest; it is in 3 parts. Parts 1 and 2 (*'Women's Lives Today' and 'Private Relationships, Public Concerns'* respectively) are interesting and relevant. Part 3 *'Feminism Then and Now'* is fine for anyone deeply studying Feminism as an academic subject – quite esoteric, but for those who simply want to discover new thoughts and ideas on the actual daily application of gender politics then this part was not it. Her essential message was positive (from a male perspective)). She argues that Feminism today is still *'victim-orientated'* ... promoting all women as *'victims'* - of men.

Her main thrust is that as women have successfully gained equality of opportunity, equal rights, equal respect, and treatment, Feminism has had to look for other areas where it can be claimed that women are still oppressed. This idea seems to have been taken from Swayne O'Pie's book (*'Why Britain hates Men: Exposing Feminism'*) in which it is explained that Feminism will never *'go away'*, that it will always have to find new inequalities, new discriminations, new oppressions in order to justify its perpetual existence. O'Pie calls this *'Forever Feminism'*.

### **PARITY legacies?**

PARITY's work and effectiveness depends largely on the funds we have available. In this respect, we are grateful to all those who have made donations in the past. Funds for our work could also be helped, of course, with legacies. Perhaps members who are able to would like to consider remembering us also in this way when writing or amending their will.

Thank you.



**David Yarwood, standing centre, and Cyril Richardson, just below, the successful applicant in the 1995 European Court of Justice for men to get parity on prescription charges**