Equal Rights for Men and Women
Patrons:
Mr Mark Brooks OBE
Dr Richard A.W. Bradford
Email: secretary@parity-uk.org
Website: https://parity.charity/

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DOMESTIC ABUSE EXPERT SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT

BY EDWARD CRABTREE

It was back to the Union Jack Club in London SE1 for the Annual PARITY General Meeting in June 2026. This time members had the privilege of benefiting from the expertise of a specialist in domestic abuse as it applies to men. Doctor Elizabeth Bates, Associate Professor of Family Violence and Abuse from the University of Cumbria was a guest speaker.

Her lecture, given online, constituted a `whistle stop tour` of what is currently known about the prevalence and impact of domestic violence directed at men in the UK.

Backed up by sourced facts, the delivery was calm and authoritative. It made use of many slides. (It would be too cumbersome to repeat all the statistics on them here.

Should I have got any of these wrong or omitted important ones – please note that the mistake is my responsibility and not that of the speaker).

Bates opened with the statistic from the Office of National Statistics from this year that states that 1.5 million men in the UK have experienced some form domestic violence and the makes for 40% of the overall figures. She added that these facts tend to elicit `an element of surprise` even though she regarded them as an underestimate.

In fact, many men do not identify themselves as victims of domestic abuse, seeing this as an allotted female role. Yet the organization **Mankind** has set up a helpline on this issue which attracts significant take up. 70% of these come from men who only did so because it offered them anonymity.

Varieties of abuse.

Bates went on to isolate and itemise the forms of abuse that men can face.

Physical abuse is perhaps the most recognized kind. It can include hitting, scratching, biting and pelting and the use of weapons is a common tactic among female abusers. This is demonstrated in an anecdote from one of the more lurid cases:

`The worst example was at night when she doused the bed in paraffin, set fire to it with me asleep, turned the power off and waited by the switch with a hammer` (Bates, 2020).

Then there is **sexual abuse**.28% of respondents in a survey reported having met with `severe sexual aggression` from their partners.

Even though legislation in the UK does not allow for women to rape men, nevertheless a man can be coerced into penetration whilst, for example inebriated or on medication. Another form sexual abuse can take is, for instance, when a woman comes off the pill without informing her partner.

Not all abuse is physical though. **Psychological and emotional abuse** received the next mention. This entails

prolonged putting down and belittling of men. Also, 'Gaslighting' falls under this category. This was studied by Bates in 2020 and it may take the form of ensuring a person is isolated from family and friends the better to ensure that only the victimiser's take on things gets heard. The victim may even come to doubt their own perceptions and insights.

Like much abuse this kind can be, and is directed at both sexes, but a form of abuse labelled **Legal and Administrative Aggression** seems to be more particular to men. In short this is where a female partner takes recourse to the threat of legal sanctions that would be to men's disadvantage (such as loss of child custody) to exert control.

The final one affects LGBTQ+ men for the most part and represents **Identity abuse**. This can involve such ploys as demeaning or doubting someone's identity or threatening to `out` someone who has not chosen to do so. However, CIS men can also be prey to this strategy. An example was provided where a man over sixty was pressured into believing that he had Alzheimer's in order for him to accede control of a legal process over to others.

Loss and its consequences.

What is the emotional fallout of these kinds of abuse? Bates pointed out that it was much similar as to that of their female counterparts. Long term stress can result which then can trigger a deterioration in physical and mental well- being.

There even exists a recent study which seems to suggest a causal link between such abuse and men who take, or attempt to take, their own lives *(Suicidal Behaviour Among Male Victims. Curran et al 2026).*

One of Bate's slides at this point featured a rather poignant quotation which should speak to many in this position:

`It felt terrible, but I just thought it was something wrong with me. Like I wasn't good enough. I still haven't told anyone all of what happened as it is embarrassing and shameful`

Available Help and the Barriers to it.

When considering what can be done to encourage such men to seek help we need to understand why it is that men all too often suffer in silence. Many worry – and they are not always wrong to do so -that they will be disbelieved or subject to ridicule should they go to the authorities – or even end up being framed as the instigators. Men are the `stigmatised gender` and are apt to get blamed for their own victimhood.

The question then arises as to how to put in place a more inclusive domestic abuse sector in this country.

Of course, the question of resources and their allocation was at the top of the list here, with availability being something of a `postcode lottery`. In this regard men find themselves locked into something of a vicious circle. The sector declines to allocate resources to male victims because so few of them step forward to use it; men do not step forward to use it because the sector does not allocate resources to them….

Then a degree of `toxicity` was noted in the sector in terms of behaviours and attitudes which are off putting to men seeking help. Of course, these are the very obstacles that this talk was seeking to redress.

Male roles and signs of progress.

The talk, described by the host as `enlightening and powerful`, was then opened up to the floor.

In response to a query concerning the age and ethnicity of male domestic abuse victims Bates replied that the 16 to 25 age group was the one at most risk and that most studies have centred around white men with more needing to be done to widen this sample.

Much discussion revolved around how men are perceived as `weak` when they open up about being recipients of violence and control. To overcome the stereotype of men as always the victimisers and never the victims, one person proposed an

overhaul of the kind of language we employ to speak about these things.

Bates brought the talk to a close by adopting a more upbeat note. She noted that in her undergraduate years – 15 years back, when she had set off on her current trajectory – she encountered little resistance from her fellow undergraduates, male or female, to the claim that women could be abusers. Furthermore, since that time she has been witness to a `massive positive shift` in the domestic abuse sector in terms of a willingness to reach out to men. As things stand this shows up for the most part at the grassroots level rather than further up the hierarchy. It is, however, a start.

EDGY INTERVENTION FROM A VETERAN MEN'S EQUALITY SPOKESMAN

BY EDWARD CRABTREE

Wayne Opie, to some of you, will already be known under his other pseudonym of Swayne O'Pie. He has been using this moniker for a decades long stint drawing people's attention to areas of male inequality.

No stranger to egalitarian causes, this man was the sole male member of the Women's Liberation Society at Aberystwyth University in 1973 and he has also served as an Equal Opportunities Officer at the University of Bath.

This June he came to London from his home in the Cotswolds to deliver a talk. After the (much needed) academic circumspection of Doctor Bates's fine talk his impassioned rhetoric came as a welcome contrast.

His address concerned the cultural bias against British men in a society where this has been compounded by the formation of centres of female power. This in turn is leading to regrettable misogyny among young men. He got this across without visual aids but plenty of references to recent journalistic writings.

Wrong target?

Opie kicked off by referring to Gareth Southgate (the former football manager) who was fronting a BBC show last spring lamenting the underachievement of boys in Britain. The problem with Southgate's approach is that it focuses on education and employment and how to get men involved in them.

Instead, said Opie, the real blame should be the culture of society. This has: `…blamed, shamed, disrespected and discriminated against the male sex`

In short, boys are treated badly and just improving their educational and employment prospects will not, by itself, solve anything.

He then cited some telling quotations from boys that appeared in the book *What About Men? (2023)* by the feminist author Caitlin Moran. One said, for example:

`A lot are too scared to talk to girls now. You don't know how it's going to be portrayed later`.

Moran points out that one consistent complaint from young men is that their specific issues get overlooked. Southgate and his ilk, though, fail to raise these kinds of injustices.

Perhaps that is why a YouGov poll, conducted in 2023, found that a third of young men in the U.K feel that they are unfairly treated and forgotten by society.

Opie then went on to reference Catherine Wheeler, the political editor of *The Sunday Times*. In a piece on 25th May of this year she warned that the climate of self-censorship and despondency about the future among these young men is driving them into the arms of populists.

David versus Ms Goliath.

The current way that political policies are made came next under Opie's fire. He conceded that there are a greater number of men in British politics than women, but stressed that `male biology does not equal male power`.

Pressure groups play a significant role in representative democracies. According to Opie there are some 32,000 such pressure groups campaigning for women in the UK and these are funded by government and big business for the most part. In the me men's corner there are 12 – twelve! -such pressure groups and these are generally self-funded.

Then there are the Ministers – women appointed to represent their sex. Britain boasts seven of these and they include:

The Minister for Justice for Women, Women's Health Minister, a Minister to Safeguard Against Violence Against Women and Girls, and, of course, Bridget Philipson as the Minister for Women and Equality.

Even though boys are more likely to be expelled from school, to become homeless, to commit suicide, go to prison, be the victims of violence and, later, lose custody of their own children there are few calls for a Minster for Men and Boys (Ex MP Nick Fletcher being the shining exception). Where, indeed, are all the commissions and reports on these kinds of issues?

Many female MPs – and they now make up 40% of MPs in the U.K – consider it to be their mission to promote the interests of their own sex. In so doing they can erase the needs of fifty per cent of the population. Opie quoted Jess Philips in her 2022 book *The Life of an MP* where she said of her own role (as someone voted in by both sexes) that it was `to ensure women have a common voice`.

So, the political scene doubles down on the `orthodoxy that only women and girls have problem` and anything that helps men is viewed as anti-women. We have ended up with `political as well as cultural repression`.

Two demands.

Opie rounded up by offering two `take-aways` in the form of demands. He made a plea for the recruitment of the `low hanging fruit` of disenchanted young men. These, he said,

should be encouraged to channel their discontent into `active gender politics`.

He then renewed his call to unite around the aim of implementing a Minister for Men and Boys.

His next proposal courted controversy. To break the impasse Opie forwarded the idea of inaugurating an `Anti-Marriage League`. This would discourage young men from getting wed and having children. The point of this would be to shock society out of its complacency and to start taking action to address the areas where men get a raw deal.

Robust discussion.

As is right and proper, this talk lead to a sometimes heated debate. There was talk of how many men collude in their second-class citizenship (`I'm ashamed to be a man`) and how it might help if we could get more women into our ranks.

It was, however, the `Anti-Marriage League` proposal that generated most of the pushback. Some pointed out that young men are already abandoning dating and marriage without needing any extra prompting.

A 94-year-old great grandfather argued that Opie had `gone too far` and that, instead of such gimmicks, we need simply be a part of a `gradual evolution` to gender parity which will occur through people's common sense.

Opie had a dignified riposte to these remarks. He reminded us of just how little progress has been made for men and boys over the last forty years and hence we need to try a fresh approach.

WOMAN DECEIVED EX-PARTNER THAT SHE HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO HIS BABIES, JUDGE RULES

BY HELENA WILKINSON, NEWS CORRESPONDENT AND HENRY MOORE PUBLISHED 3 OCTOBER 2026

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq073egz324zo

A woman deceived her former partner into believing they had two children, in what a High Court judge described as an "extraordinary" and "elaborate campaign of deceit".

The man, referred to as John, believed he was the father after receiving ultrasound images, baby photographs and messages claiming the children had been born. The woman also sent voice notes of a baby crying to his mother. Over two years, he paid her around £30,000.

The woman later admitted that she had fabricated both pregnancies for revenge, alleging that the man had abused her. She also claimed to have sold the children for £500, but the court concluded that the evidence strongly suggested the children had never existed.

The judge, Mrs Justice Judd, said the deception had cruelly affected the man, his mother and his closest friend. Although financial fraud was considered a possible motive, the judge could not establish the woman's reasons and noted that her complex mental health problems may have contributed to her behaviour.

NEW DATA SHOWS MORE MEN ARE LIVING LONGER WITH INCURABLE PROSTATE CANCER THANKS TO TREATMENT BREAKTHROUGHS

08 OCT 2026

https://shorturl.at/a9Hjr

The National Prostate Cancer Audit's latest report shows more men with advanced prostate cancer are now living beyond three years after diagnosis, as advances in treatment continue to change the outlook for this disease. But with the number of

diagnoses continuing to rise, there's still an urgent need to find new ways to treat prostate cancer.

2026 Risk of Death Dropped 24% Stat

Advanced prostate cancer

Being told that your cancer cannot be cured is devastating, but new data brings a glimmer of hope as it shows that new treatments are helping extend lives.

his encouraging news was shared by the National Prostate Cancer Audit (NPCA) in their latest report, where they found significantly fewer men diagnosed with incurable advanced prostate cancer in 2022 were dying within three years of diagnosis, than men diagnosed a decade ago.

'The data highlights' the positive impact of research in helping drive innovation and improvement in treatment – progress that's been greatly helped by the £50m we've invested into research to save and extend the lives of men with advanced disease.

New treatments are giving men more years

The latest figures show a fall in the number of men dying from advanced prostate cancer three-years post diagnosis, a trend that has emerged alongside major advances in how the disease is treated.

NPCA 2026 Report Lower Risk Of Death

The proportion of men with incurable advanced prostate cancer who die within three years of diagnosis has fallen from 56% in 2015 to 47% in 2022, according to an analysis of more than 45,000 men. This significant improvement reflects advances in research, treatment and access to NHS care.

Treatments such as docetaxel, abiraterone and enzalutamide have helped extend lives, following research investment and campaigning to make them available to patients. Experts

expect survival rates to improve further as new treatments are developed.

Personal stories demonstrate the impact. Kevin Webber, diagnosed 12 years ago and initially given around two years to live, has completed the Marathon des Sables five times and raised over £1 million for Prostate Cancer UK. Another patient, Kevin Mortimer, was diagnosed with cancer that had spread to his bones and lungs. Following innovative triplet therapy, his cancer became undetectable nearly three years later.

However, significant challenges remain. More than 60,800 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in England in 2025, a 7% increase in one year, including over 6,300 whose cancer had already spread beyond the prostate.

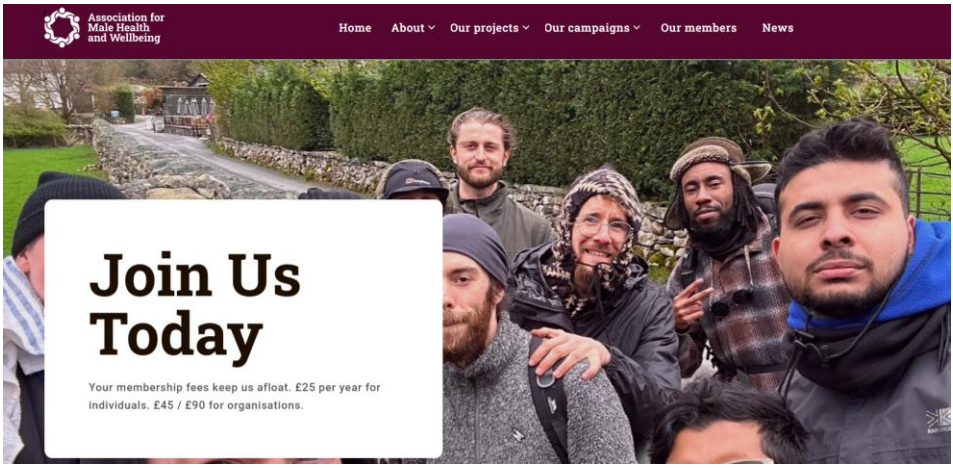
Prostate Cancer UK continues to call for greater investment in research, earlier diagnosis and personalised treatments that extend lives, improve quality of life and reduce side effects. Although progress has brought renewed hope, the ultimate goal is for long-term survival to become the expectation for every man diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer.

The organisation encourages donations through its VENTURE programme, inviting supporters to contribute £10 monthly towards pioneering research that could improve, extend and save lives.

TO JOIN VENTURE AND HELP FUND LIFESAVING RESEARCH
https://shorturl.at/bKWrQ

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ASSOCIATION FOR MALE HEALTH AND WELLBEING.



https://www.amhw.org.uk/join

Hq@amhw.org.uk

Our vision and mission.

Men's health matters, not just for individuals, but for families, workplaces, and communities. We believe that when men are supported to live healthier, happier lives, everyone benefits. Our vision and mission guide everything we do to build stronger networks, raise awareness, and create lasting positive change for men across the UK.

Contact

Association for Male Health and Wellbeing. Flook House, Belevedere Road, TAUNTON.
TA1 1BT.

hq@amhw.org.uk