



Equal Rights for Men and Women

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INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

If it is true that "a week is a long time in politics", then in gender politics a couple of years is a lifetime. Attending the last International Men's Day events in central London on November 18th, I couldn't help remembering the pitifully inadequate event (or rather non-event) in 2016 when I joined Mike Buchanan and half a dozen others for a brief gathering with placards in a rainy Parliament Square. Even the ever indefatigable Mike, founder of the political party J4MB, couldn't prevent the whole thing from being a bit of an embarrassment.

Fast forward to 2018 and it's unrecognisable. Partly because it was held on a Sunday, whereas in 2016 it was on a weekday. Literally hundreds took part in a triumphant day-long extravaganza, celebrating the achievements of males in the teeth of decades of misandry and militant feminism. It was good to see so many ladies in attendance!

We started off in Trafalgar Square before marching to the Strand where speeches were made outside the Royal Court of Justice. This was a symbolic protest against the shameless injustices of the Family Court with its institutional bias against fathers. After an hour we set off again with a dignified procession along the Embankment. Unlike the miserable weather in Parliament Square 2 years before, this time the sun was blazing down as we again assembled opposite the mother of parliaments. And this time we made our presence felt, attracting a lot of sympathetic interest among passersby. Next stop was Soho, where a venue above a pub in Wardour Street. was packed out to see a very impressive line-up of speakers, mostly serious but also a couple of original and inventive comedians who incredibly managed to extract laughs from the rather depressing subject of gender politics and injustice.

These speeches are now thankfully on Youtube under "Messages for Men" and I urge you to watch. Overall an extremely professional and impressive evening. The organisers deserve special credit and in particular the magnificent Elizabeth Hobson whose passion for gender equality and fairness knows no bounds and who has recently joined J4MB as Communications Director.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEN'S ISSUES (ICMI 2018)

The fourth International Conference on Men's Issues (ICMI 2018) took place in London at the Excel Centre from 20-22nd July 2018 (originally it was to be held at Birmingham football ground but this fell through). This followed on from the 2014 (US), 2016 (UK), 2017 (Australia) conferences. It was organised, as before, by the UK party 'Justice 4 Men and Boys' (J4MB).

Nineteen speakers from many different countries gave speeches over three days to a conference of roughly over a hundred international delegates. They spoke on a wide variety of issues that will all be familiar to anyone concerned with men and boys' rights and the discrimination/issues they face - for example domestic violence against men and the institutional and social prejudices they encounter; unequal child custody for fathers after separation; unequal prison sentencing that disadvantages men/privileges women; lack of appreciation of men and their demonisation; misandry in general: many other related topics.

Further information on the conference can be found at the website: <http://icmi2018.icmi.info/> or via a link from the J4MB website: <https://j4mb.org.uk>. The conference was also filmed thereby preserving the excellent speeches for everyone to watch. To view go to Youtube and simply type in 'icmi 2018' or follow the links from the J4MB website again. Previous conference speeches are also online and can be found in the same way.

The next International Conference on Men's Issues (ICMI 2019) will be held later this year in Chicago, August 16-18 2019. It should be an excellent event. For those who can't make it at least it will be recorded again to be viewed online as before.

There was a general feeling among delegates that there is a gradual, growing awareness of our issues and that people are speaking out. More and more people online are speaking their mind and adding their voice. However, there is probably still a long way to go before this subject becomes mainstream and it becomes politically fashionable to talk about the issues, discrimination and demonisation affecting men and boys.

THE DRAFT DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL

The above was published on 21st January 2019 and will be transforming response to this crime and ensuring the millions of victims across the country receive the support they need and perpetrators are targeted.

Key facts: Measures will include:

- The first ever statutory definition of Domestic Abuse to recognise that abuse is not just physical, but can take many different forms – including psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional;
- Establishing the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to stand up for victims, monitor the provision of domestic abuse services, and hold the government to account;
- Better support for victims when in court and new protection orders to force perpetrators to attend rehabilitation programmes where substance abuse is a factor in abuse;
- Banning the cross examination of victims in the family court by litigants in person;
- A suite of non-legislative action including further work to support children affected by domestic abuse and additional funding for disabled, elderly, male, and LGBTQ victims of domestic abuse.

It is estimated that around two million adults experience domestic abuse each year, almost 6 per cent of all adults. We know, from the harrowing experiences of these victims and their families, that there is still more to do to stamp out this life-shattering crime and the Domestic Abuse Bill will lead the way in bringing about the changes needed to achieve this.

DOUBLE STANDARDS BEING RECOGNISED

In *The Metro* newspaper of 21st January 2019 there was a piece entitled: Sex assault soldier 'let off because she's female' (p11). The paper revealed that 'A female soldier who rubbed her body against a male colleague and tried to kiss him has been disciplined for sex assault. Trooper Corrie-Alice Holmes, 25, a private in the Household Cavalry, molested a younger soldier on guard duty near Windsor Castle after a night out'. It said that 'A source at Combermere Barracks, Windsor, told the Mail on Sunday: "The male soldier was lying on a bed in the guard room. She leant over him, placing her arms either side of his head, basically pinning him down. He asked her to leave him alone but she carried on. They then went outside and she was seen rubbing herself against him and trying to kiss him. He called out "Help me!" Eventually the guard commander pulled her away".

The paper said that the regiment's leaders 'warned that she would be kicked out if there was any further misconduct'. It also said that 'outraged male colleagues tipped off the military police because they thought she had been let off too lightly. They claimed any male soldier who did the same to a female colleague would have been sent to military prison and booted out of the service'. As an example, the year before, a private groped a female officer in a nightclub when they were both drunk, was jailed for nine months and dismissed by a military court.

This case highlights a disturbing but all too common gender double standard. However, there are also some encouraging signs here. Firstly that the male colleagues understood this and that they complained (it is often hard for men to speak out, for fear of being laughed at or being labelled unchivalrous). Secondly, that this was reported as such - the media recognised that this was unfair and the whole tone of the article was to that effect. This can only be a welcome development.

TOP ISSUES OF MALE INEQUALITY

In July 2010, [e.b. sarver](#) listed what he viewed as the **Top Ten** issues of disparity for men in the USA (and the same issues apply in many modern, industrialized western nations). These issues relate to sexual inequality and particularly discrimination and hatred of men, especially as relates to the lies of feminism. The list below gives the **Top 8**.

Nearly a decade later, we note that not much has changed, except they have become harsher. **Why do you think men are still banging their heads against a brick wall? What needs to be done to make progress?**

Begin the work needed to address institutionalized misandry. While institutionalized misogyny has been of great concern, and people around the world have worked hard to combat it, almost nothing has been done to address misandry. Currently, I could point to various forms of institutionalized misandry...in essence, everything on this list could be an item on the list of institutionalized misandry.

Repeal VAWA, the sexist "Violence Against Women Act," which ignores the hundreds of thousands of male victims, and unfairly paints men as an abuser class. Work to end the sexist discrimination of the "domestic violence" industry, which is frequently built upon feminist lies and disinformation...misandry. The VAWA is a giant piece of codified legal sexism, and should be gotten rid of or replaced with something that at least *pretends* to be egalitarian.

Create parity in spending on medical research. Female-only or female-predominant issues receive far more government and private funding than male-only or male-predominant issues. Breast cancer and prostate cancer kill similar numbers of people every year, and yet there is no national campaign against prostate cancer, there are no men wearing little blue ribbons, etc. This is just one example, there are hundreds.

End sexist discrimination in the criminal courts. Men receive the short end of the stick at every post along the road of the legal system, and women receive the benefit of the doubt. End discriminatory legal fictions such as the notion that a woman killing a man in his sleep can be self defense. We don't accept that from men, and shouldn't accept it from women. This is just one example. There are many others.

End sexist discrimination in the child and family law courts. Men lose their kids in 80% of contested cases. Mostly men fail to pay support, and mostly women deny visitation to ex-spouses. Yet the legal system spends \$10 to chase down every "deadbeat dad" who has not paid compared to the \$1 it spends to chase down every woman who denied her ex-husband visitation. In other words, if you're a man, you'll be reamed, but if you're a woman, you'll be allowed to get away with your crime unchallenged. This is only one example. The issues extend to alimony, child support, child custody, separation of property in a divorce, paternity fraud, and many other issues.

Work to reverse the loss of boys and young men in the educational system. Men are dropping out of school and failing to get degrees at higher and higher rates. Boys are falling way behind girls statistically. Nothing has been done to address the high and rising levels of inequality of the sexes in school, and schools and the overall educational system still tend to treat *girls* as the "underprivileged" class at school, despite the fact that the statistics tell the opposite story. This is already causing ripples in the workforce that will only worsen if the issue is left unaddressed, or worse, continues to be left in the hands of feminists who will hear nothing of men's concerns.

Provide equal reproductive rights to both sexes. At present, the reproductive rights of women are not specifically guaranteed, and men have no reproductive rights whatsoever...anywhere...of any kind. Men's and women's rights should be made *equal* in this area...either we *both* have the same rights, or *neither* of us has those rights. Any other solution is a sexist legal fiction and institutionalized sexism.

Protect the genitals of males. Female genitals are protected by law in numerous nations, but male genitals are not protected. This is sexist discrimination, and the male genital mutilation (circumcision) of boys must be put to a stop.

<http://opinion.ebsarver.com/2010/07/20/top-10-issues-of-male-inequality/>

'POOR WHITE BOYS' ARE FALLING BEHIND IN EDUCATION, SAYS SOCIAL MOBILITY EXPERT

In December 2016, Daily Express published an article with the above title.

A social mobility expert revealed white boys from poor backgrounds are falling behind in education. The research by the Government's Social Mobility Commission found that white boys from disadvantaged backgrounds perform badly throughout the education system, with the worst results at both primary and secondary level. However, when it comes to the workplace, the report said ethnic minority groups experience higher rates of unemployment than their white counterparts. It identified what it described as a "broken social mobility promise" for young people from Asian Muslim communities, particularly women. Children from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are more likely to do well in schools

It is deeply concerning that poor white British boys are doing so badly in education - Alan Milburn, Social Mobility Commission

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/748013/Poor-white-boys-failing-education-Social-Mobility-Commission>

'THE LOST BOYS OF THE NORTH EAST': WHY DO THE REGION'S YOUNG MEN TRAIL FURTHER BEHIND GIRLS AT SCHOOL?

Stephen Lambert, Director of Education4Democracy and a Newcastle City Councillor published a paper **in February 2018** with above title.

THIRTY years ago boys did better at school than girls. Now, it's the boys who are the under-achievers across the North East. In Newcastle in 2016 almost half of white young men failed to achieve 5 or more 'good' GCSEs including English and Maths compared to 40% of young women.

The number of British Minority Ethnic (BME) youngsters from both genders achieving five GCSE's at A-C (58%) is higher than those who are non-BME. Only four out of 10 men go to university today. In 1978 it was seven out of 10. Alarming, male truancy rates in the region are well above the national average, and exclusions rates at secondary schools are at an all time high. In the de-industrialised town of Middlesbrough 4,802 pupils (mostly boys) were permanently excluded from school while in nearby Redcar the figure is 2,594.

The inspection body, OFSTED, notes it's the white working class in our city, towns and coastal communities who are the cause for concern which has profound implications for their 'life-chances'. Is this a moral panic or a case of moral realism? Educationists are divided as to the reason why young white working class men are doing less well at every stage in the school system whilst young women are doing better than ever.

One, there's some evidence that teachers are not as strict with boys. They are more likely to extend deadlines for written work, to have lower expectations of boys, and tend to be more tolerant of low level anti-social behaviour in the classroom.

Young men are more disruptive than young women. Four of five permanent exclusions are boys!

Two, there appears to be a growing 'lad', anti-school culture amongst some working class boys in several of our urban schools. This was noted some years ago by Paul Willis in his book '[Learning to Labour](#)'.

By 1998 this was rediscovered by former Tyneside MP Steve Byers, the schools minister, who said: "We must challenge the laddish, anti-learning culture which has been allowed to develop and should not simply accept with a shrug of the shoulders that boys will be boys."

A decade later Becky Francis, a Department of Education advisor, re-affirmed this view that boys achieved more peer group 'macho' status by resisting being taught, rejecting the values of the school through bad behaviour like messing about in class.

Increasingly primary school teaching has become 'feminised' with a lack of male role models. Even at secondary level 75% of all teachers are female. Learning for many boys at an early age has become a 'girly' activity and contributes to a negative attitude to schooling.

For sociologist Ken Brown, one key explanation is the sharp decline in traditional male jobs.

The region's coal mines have gone and heavy industries that took on thousands of young men in the 1970s have virtually disappeared. Given these huge changes in the labour market some young men have given up, become NEETS (not in education, employment or training), lacking motivation and ambition.

Working class white men are going through an '[identity crisis](#)' with loss of role, low self-esteem and self-image. Unskilled jobs are declining compounded by automation. Youth male unemployment is high.

There's mounting evidence that girls work harder at school and are better motivated.

Coursework at GCSE and BTEC seems to suit them rather than end-of-year exams. Boys put less energy into written work and spend less time completing homework. By 16 young men are less mature than girls by two years. Put simply, girls are likely to view exams in a more responsible way.

Research from government advisor, Michael Barber, reveals that "more boys than girls think they are able, and fewer boys than girls think they are below average".

Yet GCSE results published last month shows this view to be quite opposite to the truth. Barber's work is fast coming to the conclusion that the gender attainment gap is due to the differing ways in which the sexes behave and spend leisure time.

Boys are obsessed with computers and don't like reading books. Girls are more likely to read, stand around in groups talking: even if it's chatting about the heartthrob in the local sixth form!

The educationalist, Peter Douglas, argues that school is a linguistic experience and most subjects and jobs require good levels of comprehension and writing skills. Unlike girls, boys view it as "sissy". That's why young women are being recruited in large numbers to university and service and knowledge based careers.

In last decade or so the educational performance of both genders has increased. Girls outperform boys in most subjects. However, as Christine Skelton notes in '[Brains before Beauty](#)', to portray all girls as achievers and all boys as under-performers is too simplistic a view.

It's the improvement in performance of girls from more middle-class backgrounds that accounts for the rise in girls' performance overall.

Middle-class boys from the leafy suburbs continue to do well. Boys and girls from the lower socio-economic groups continue to under-achieve compared to their affluent peers.

Yet the fact remains that white working-class young men are the worst performers of all genders and ethnicities in the North East of England.

Thousands of the 'lost boys' from the region have left school unofficially from 14+ on. The vast majority don't show up in further education or apprenticeships at 16+. It's virtually impossible to track them down with the abandonment of the careers service.

Two out 10 young men aged 19 to 24-years are NEETS according to Policy North, the independent think tank. Unless government, educational leaders and business act, we're in danger of creating a disengaged male white 'under-class' in our post-industrial society.

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/16276-the-lost-boys-of-the-north-east-why-the-region-s-young-men-trail-further-behind-girls-at-school>

WORKING CLASS YOUNGSTERS STILL 'STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS'

In August 2018, BBC published an article with above title. Alan Milburn argues divisions by income and social class remain "entrenched. The Social Mobility Commission's former chairman said youngsters from a working-class background will struggle to achieve the same success he did. Alan Milburn grew up in Newcastle's West End and said he believed class had become "the forgotten cousin in the equal opportunity family". The Labour ex-MP left the commission in December citing a lack of progress.

The government said it is closing the attainment gap and more disadvantaged pupils are going to university. As part of his trip to Newcastle he visited the West End Women and Girls Centre. Co-ordinator Andrea Huftika Reah said: "We've got kids who are told from a very early age 'you're not going to achieve anything, therefore you're no good'. "The only careers then open to them are shoplifting and drug dealing. What hope is there?" However, Mr Milburn also said that during his Newcastle visit he had met a lot of youngsters "fighting against the odds" which gave him hope. "Change is more likely to come through the bottom up than the top down", he said. The government has said it is closing the attainment gap, providing more free childcare for disadvantaged families, and increasing choice after the age of 16. It has also pointed to record numbers of young people in education or training and more disadvantaged pupils going to university.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-45277161>

TACKLING THE EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT OF BOYS AND YOUNG MEN – CONFERENCE LINE UP ANNOUNCED

To coincide with International Men's Day, a panel of Britain's leading experts in the field of boys' education published an unprecedented 14-point plan to address the extensive and growing gap in educational attainment between boys and girls. The document was launched in Westminster at the first national conference called by the Men and Boys Coalition, entitled Creating Positive Futures for Boys and Young Men. Experts appearing at the conference and contributing to the action plan include **Mary Curnock-Cook OBE**, formerly CEO of the universities admission service UCAS; mental health campaigner and former government champion on children's mental health, **Natasha Devon MBE**; and **Professor Gijbert Stoet** of Leeds Beckett University. The conference was opened by a keynote address from **Robert Halfon MP**, Chair of the Education Select Committee.

The agreed **14 point action plan** include demands for increased emphasis on literacy and attainment in school, a call for positive role models (not least in the teaching workforce), specific male mentoring schemes, approaches to male wellbeing and mental ill-health, awareness of colour blindness and a 'take your son to university' day. Perhaps most eye-catching is the call for the creation of a multidisciplinary national 'Centre for Men, Policy and Praxis' to provide an authoritative academic voice for research and practical work with men and boys.

Creating a More Positive Future for Boys and Young Men Fourteen Point Plan 19.11.2018

In introducing the report, Mary Curnock-Cook says: "Everyone in the Men and Boys' Coalition would support the welcome initiatives we see across education, employment, careers and other areas to support women to fulfil their potential. But it has become harder and harder to ignore the parallel challenges for boys and men. Ridiculing or sometimes toxifying masculinity and ignoring male issues is not the way forward. All of us want both men and women to play their role in a tolerant, successful and inclusive society." Ally Fogg, a co-founder of the Men and Boys Coalition adds: "For many years now, the persistent underachievement of boys and young men in education has been acknowledged as a social and economic crisis by educationalists, academics and politicians from across the spectrum. However their expressions of concern have never translated into government action. It is scandalous that to this day, the Department for Education has yet to fund one single initiative designed specifically to address boys' educational underachievement. The Men and Boys Coalition is very proud to support and work alongside a wide range of charities, teaching bodies and academics who can offer countless examples of good practice, and to have commissioned this practical, solutions-based response to the crisis. We hope that the proposals it contains will be considered and adopted by all political parties at the earliest opportunity."

Attainment statistics

In 2018 62.3% of boys received A*-C grades whilst 71.4% of women received the same – the equivalent of 261,522 more A-C grades being awarded to girls than boys. More young women than men sat A-levels in 2018 and more achieved A*-C grades than men (78.7% grades compared to 75.1%), which meant that female students received 76,891 more A*-C grades in total than male students.

In 2008, the gender gap between British men and women attending British universities was 48,000 (a percentage point gap of 12). By 2017 it had risen to 65,000. Over the decade 520,000 fewer British men had taken places at British universities (a 14 percentage point gap).

[sources Joint Council for Qualifications / UCAS]

[HTTP://WWW.MENANDBOYSCOALITION.ORG.UK/NEWSEVENTS/TACKLING-THE-EDUCATIONAL-UNDERACHIEVEMENT-OF-BOYS-AND-YOUNG-MEN-CONFERENCE-LINE-UP-ANNOUNCED/](http://www.menandboyscoalition.org.uk/newsevents/tackling-the-educational-underachievement-of-boys-and-young-men-conference-line-up-announced/)

Academic Interventions recommended

- 1) **Set a policy goal and targets to raise GCSE attainment/achievement for boys to that of girls** In 2018, 18-year-old women were a startling 37% more likely to enter higher education than men and 38,000 men were 'missing' from starting university this autumn (UCAS).
- 2) **Increased emphasis on literacy skills** One of the largest gaps in educational achievement is in reading and writing. These are the key skills that are important for all children and impact on educational attainment across subject areas. Currently, in the UK, 19 per cent of 15-year-old boys, compared to 13 per cent of girls, have insufficient reading skills to participate effectively and productively in life.
- 3) **Gender-inclusive learning resources** At GCSE, boys fall behind in most school subjects except for Mathematics and Physics. While we wholeheartedly support the focus on girls' education in regard to these subjects, it is crucial that this important additional support for girls should not come at the cost of boys who are drawn to studying non-organic STEM subjects (Maths, Computer Science and Engineering). Similarly, we believe that it is crucial to create the same opportunities for boys to benefit from additional teaching resources in subjects where boys are under-represented, as are provided for encouraging girls into STEM, while at the same time not taking away from girls' academic attainment in subjects such as Medicine, Veterinary Science, Teaching, Law, Psychology and English.
- 4) **Train teachers in how to identify and support pupils with colour blindness** Statistically speaking, colour blindness (colour vision deficiency, CVD) affects 1 in 12 (8%) boys and 1 in 200 girls (0.5%).
- 5) **Re-introduction of colour vision screening at school entry** Despite the fact it is likely there will be at least one child with CVD in every co-educated, maintained school classroom, parents, teachers (and often the pupils themselves) have no idea which children have CVD.
- 6) **Actively promote careers in teaching to men**, especially for primary and early years Just 24 per cent of the state funded teaching workforce are men and it's only 14 per cent for state-funded primary schools and 7 per cent for Early Years (DfE). One in four primary schools have no male teachers and 80 per cent have fewer than three. Three million children live in single parent families, which is 22 per cent of all children in families; 90 per cent of these families are headed by single mothers. We could estimate therefore that some 2.7m children are growing up in

fatherless families. These children are also being educated in an overwhelmingly female-dominated education system. The lack of male role models for all children, and especially for boys, is unhealthy and is a contributing factor in boys' underachievement in education.

7) **An accredited national peer mentoring initiative**, training young male mentors in secondary schools as peer mentors for boys in their last year in primary education. The transition from primary to secondary education is problematic for all young people. For boys, loss of motivation, disruptive behaviours, and problems with literacy are potential features of transition; the majority of school suspensions are of boys. Mentoring offers an evidence-based approach to addressing concerns related to problematic behaviours in schools and improving school performance.

8) **Launch a nation-wide 'Take Your Son into University Day'** campaign. The disparity in male and female entry to university is big and getting bigger. As the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) showed in their 2016 report *Boys to Men*, compared to male students, there are more female part-time students, more female full-time students, more female undergraduate students and more female postgraduate students. Hundreds of millions of pounds are spent on widening participation initiatives each year, but they are sometimes poorly targeted and often under-evaluated. One idea worth piloting is a 'Take Your Son To University Day', explicitly modelled on 'Take Your Daughter To Work Day', which started in 1993 as a way to inform girls about the full range of careers.

9) **Targeted male-friendly sources of information on universities and courses**. When universities recognise a need to recruit more men, they tend to pick up the phone to a local well-known sports club. This can lead to media-friendly widening participation schemes run jointly with famous football teams aimed at encouraging more men to enter higher education. There are doubtless some people who have entered higher education solely as a result of such schemes.

10) **Understanding that behavioural and emotional issues usually have the same root cause**. Evidence shows a quarter of girls will be labelled as having an emotional issue and a quarter of boys as having a behavioural one. However, there is a lack of understanding that these are likely to be the same. Owing to the way boys and girls are socialised differently, girls often internalise distress, whereas boys are more likely to lash out in anger. When boys behave in ways which are perceived to be 'disruptive' or 'naughty' it is incumbent upon us to understand they are likely distressed and need the same amount of emotional support as their female peers. To avoid punishing vulnerable boys, we recommend ensuring educators are aware of the differing ways in which boys and girls express emotional distress.

11) **More training in mental health support** for male role models. Research has shown that boys and young men are less likely to engage with any mental health interventions theoretically available to them than girls. For example, they are less likely to see the school counsellor, or to book an appointment to see their GP, if they suspect they have mental health issues. However, it is a myth that they do not talk at all. In fact, they often confide in male sports coaches, their favourite male teacher or other male role model. We recommend these men be trained in Mental Health First Aid so that the conversations can happen in the most productive way. We need to bring help to boys, rather than expecting them to seek help.

12) **Create spaces where boys feel emotionally supported without talking**. Research indicates that boys and young men gain catharsis from activities like sport, music, drama and art, which allow them to explore and exorcise difficult feelings without necessarily having to put them into words. At the same time, sport, art, music and drama are being systematically squeezed out of the curriculum owing to a lack of funding and changing academic priorities.

When asked, teenage boys often say their greatest emotional support came simply from spending time with people who did not judge them, doing something they enjoyed. We need to safeguard space in the school week for activities which support mental well-being.

13) **Establish a UK-wide 'Mindsets Scholars Network'** across higher education, schools and youth organisations. The lower HE participation rates of boys from less privileged backgrounds mirrors their attainment rates in the education system generally. But universities must own the solution too and help make our education system more equitable. Universities across the UK spend almost a £billion in outreach programmes from their Fair Access and Participation strategies. A slight rebalance and pooling of contributions amongst collaborating HEIs could support a national collaboration with partner schools and youth organisations to explore the impact of positive mindsets in resilience and learning development. This must start with a focus on boys and young men where the problem is most acute and long standing. This is how Ulster University funds its Taking Boys Seriously programme and network across Northern Ireland.

14) The creation of a multidisciplinary national '**Centre for Men, Policy and Praxis**'. With the closure of the Centre for Men's Health at Leeds Beckett University in 2017, there is no substantive research base for work around male health and related issues, including boys' educational attainment. A national 'Centre for Men, Policy and Praxis' would provide an authoritative academic voice for research and practical work with men and boys, serving as a hub of innovative thinking and good practice. This would be a powerful resource for establishing what works, not just in terms of improving boys' education, but also for addressing the range of related issues that disproportionately affect men and boys, such as homelessness, suicide and imprisonment.

An update on next steps as below was provided to a PARITY Trustee:

"Our aim is to build on the extensive interest and momentum generated by the conference by engaging with key organisations and individuals within the education and policy sector, including with the Education Select Committee. The expert recommendations that make up the 14-point plan will form a central plank of these discussions." And "In addition to this policy work, the coalition steering group are also putting together a number of practical initiatives and resources to support boys' education and the well-being of male university students."

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/men-boys-and-educational-attainment/>

IF WE BELIEVE IN TRUE EQUALITY WE MUST HELP BOYS, SAYS MARTIN DAUBNEY

Martin Daubney – Men & Boys Coalition published in *Sunday Express* of 13 January 2019 a contender for the "Least Politically Correct Study of 2019 Award" - a powerful research paper that has completely flipped the telescope on gender inequality.

HARD WORK: Getting some young lads to reach their full potential is far from easy these days. Called "A simplified approach to measuring national gender inequality" it dared ask the forbidden question: might it be men and boys who are at the bottom? And, sensationally, it has concluded that in 68 per cent of countries, that is precisely the case. The study arrived at such a contra-narrative conclusion by devising a new - and more egalitarian - way of measuring equality than is the accepted norm.

Called the Basic Index of Gender Inequality (BIGI), the paper analysed three "primary factors" common to all men and women: educational opportunities, healthy life expectancy and overall life satisfaction.

Written by Gijsbert Stoet, of the University of Essex (who has 10 years' expertise in the field of gendered differences in psychology), and the University of Missouri's David C Geary, it has sparked a global debate that's raged for the past week.

That's because Stoet's BIGI scores for 134 nations (6.8 billion people) concluded that men are, on average, more disadvantaged in 91 countries, compared with just 43 for women.

Stoet measured primary issues that affect everybody, as opposed to secondary issues which affect only a small number, such as disproportionately high male suicide rates or jail (men inmates make up 75 percent of suicides and 95 percent of prisoners), or how many women MPs or CEOs there are (32 percent of British MPs are female and there are only six female bosses in the FTSE 100).

'Today's boys start at the bottom in education and never catch up'

The good news is that the world's most developed nations come closest to achieving equality (women slightly in front) and the bad news is that in the least developed countries, women nearly always fall behind men - largely because they have fewer opportunities to get a good education. The brilliant news is, Britain comes second in the world for overall gender equality, with women slightly ahead.

Men are ahead of women in only one country in the top 20 – Israel and globally, Bahrain was top and Chad bottom. Stoet included inequalities faced by males by ditching the commonly used Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), the standard to measure inequality since 2006. At primary school, 68 percent of girls reach Key stage 2 SATs compared to 60 percent of boys

The GGGI focuses on areas where women are known to be behind, such as economic participation, earnings and political empowerment. Stoet believes its methodology is skewed towards boosting inequalities suffered by women and girls, downplaying those endured by men and boys. There has been a backlash to Stoet's work but he is resolute, telling me: "This shouldn't be a gender war. It's simply admitting that boys and girls have different problems and need different support. In Africa, we should be helping girls get a better education. In the UK, we should be helping boys get the same. Both genders deserve our full attention." That's hard to disagree with, if you believe in true equality for society's neediest, irrespective of gender, as I do.

In November 2016 I co-founded the Men & Boys Coalition in Parliament (Stoet is a member) to shine a light on the areas the study dared highlight. But what is driving these inequalities and what can we do to address them? Firstly, men typically die younger, as they are more likely to abuse alcohol, smoke, go to war, have dangerous jobs or die in accidents. Much of this is preventable through awareness yet while Britain has a women's health strategy, there is none for men. Perhaps the UK should emulate Ireland and Australia, which have pioneering men's health policies.

Girls born today are 75 percent more likely to attend university than boys

But the greatest need is helping boys in education. Currently, for every socio-economic and ethnic background, British boys are behind. At primary school, 68 percent of girls reach Key stage 2 SATs compared to 60 percent of boys. At GCSE last year 17.1 percent of boys in England attained an A or 7 and above, compared with 23.4 percent of girls, and that gap persists at A-level. There are now 65,000 more women in British universities than men and that gender gap is widening. Girls born today are 75 percent more likely to attend university than boys.

Both genders deserve our full attention

At the bottom of the stack are white working-class boys. In fact those who speak English as a second language - both girls and boys - outperform white working-class boys. As Conservative chairman of the education select committee Robert Halfon told the Men & Boys Coalition conference in November: "The plight of white disadvantaged boys is a stain on all our consciences." Today's boys start at the bottom and never catch up. Thirty years ago I was the

first lad in my family to get to university. Would I make it today? Boys like me are now least likely to go to university. It moves me to tears when I ponder how many working-class boys will never fulfil their potential.

Many working-class boys will never fulfil their potential

As Stoet puts it: "The real scandal about boys failing in education is that it isn't a scandal." In late 2017, I co-wrote Harry's Masculinity Report, the UK's biggest study into men's wellbeing. It proved that the biggest indicator of wellbeing is a fulfilling job. To help men achieve that, we must give boys the education they deserve. Post-Brexit, we desperately need cross-party action on boys' education, and the Men & Boys Coalition is demanding that.

On average, men are more disadvantaged in 91 countries, compared with just 43 for women

Boys at the bottom of education's stack, directionless and often fatherless, are the most likely to be groomed into gangs, peddle drugs and drive knife and gun crime. They are the most likely to kill or be killed. As well as fighting gangs with tough policing and community action, why don't we offer hope (and an escape) via targeted, boy-specific education? Politically homeless, undereducated, underemployed, jobless, jailed or a likely victim of violent crime, these are an abandoned generation, left to scrap it out, sometimes literally to the death. The burning question remains: is anybody in our corridors of power prepared to put political correctness to one side, put their principles first and step up to help rescue them?

<https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1071445/gender-inequality-men-boys-education-comment-martin-daubney>

"HALF OF UNIVERSITIES HAVE FEWER THAN 5% POOR WHITE STUDENTS"

On 14 February 2019, Sean Coughlan *BBC News* education and family correspondent reported the above.

More than half of England's universities have fewer than 5% of poor white students in their intakes, says an analysis of admissions figures. The report, from the National Education Opportunities Network (Neon), shows low numbers of white students from deprived areas in many top universities. There are 3% at the University of Oxford, compared with 28% at Teesside. The study says too few universities have clear targets to recruit white working-class students. Education Secretary Damian Hinds has warned of the risk of communities feeling "left behind". Labour says tackling the recruitment problem revealed by this report must be a "priority". Justine Greening, the first Conservative education secretary to have gone to a comprehensive school, says this is a "wake-up call" which "shows we need new ideas including on student finance to make sure more white working class students have a fair chance to get into university". The study, from an organisation promoting wider access into higher education, calls for a "national initiative" to tackle the educational underachievement of disadvantaged white youngsters across schools, colleges and universities. The university figures show the problem in recruiting white students from poorer backgrounds - and how many universities have very low proportions of them.

Missing 10,000 students

Researchers warn that fewer than a fifth of universities have targets for admitting more poor white students - and that there are only "variable" efforts to improve participation. Even if a target of 5% of poor white students were to be set across universities, it would mean another 10,000 students going to university, says the research. The study looks at white students from so-called "low-participation neighbourhoods" - areas where few people usually go to university. In total numbers, white students, of all social backgrounds, are the biggest group going to university, show figures from the UCAS admissions service. But in terms of a proportion of the population, white youngsters are less likely to go to university than Asian or black teenagers. The report calls for a much wider definition of what it means to improve access to university. The latest application figures, for courses in the autumn, show that applications from white

students are declining, while they are increasing for Asian and black youngsters. Cutting across this is a widening gender divide - with women much more likely than men to apply to university. When these factors combine, it means that white, working-class men become among the most under-represented groups in university. The study says projects to widen entry into university might need to be "redefined".

Wide divide

The report shows a starkly divided picture in where poor white students are likely to attend. They are particularly likely to take higher education courses in local further education colleges. Among those going to university, 70% go to new universities, with low numbers going to some high-ranking institutions. Cambridge has 2%, Warwick and Bristol 3%, Durham 4%. At University of Sunderland, 27% of acceptances are from white students from deprived areas and the figure is 22% in Staffordshire University. The numbers are particularly low in London universities - many of them 1% or 2%. But these figures might be affected by the high overall levels of young people in London going to university - much higher than elsewhere in England.

'Left behind'

Because of such high entry rates, even from deprived youngsters, there are relatively few "low-participation neighbourhoods" in London, or young people who would fall into this category. The high cost of living in London could also deter some poorer students from elsewhere from coming to study in the capital. Graeme Atherton, report co-author and director of Neon, warned of "big variability" in the chances of different groups to get to university. "We need to know more about why this variability exists and do more to eliminate it," he said. The director for fair access at the Office for Students, Chris Millward, said the study reveals "the scale of work to be done". The higher education regulator said universities will have to "set out the work they will do to reduce the gaps in higher education participation and attainment between the most and least advantaged". Universities and other higher education providers registered with the Office for Students must set out the work they will do to reduce the gaps in higher education participation and attainment between the most and least advantaged. A spokeswoman for Universities UK said that universities were "committed to widening access to higher education and ensuring the success of all their students, regardless of their background". The spokeswoman for the universities' organisation said that "18-year-olds from the most disadvantaged areas in England are more likely to go to university than ever before" - and that this could be further helped if the government restored "maintenance grants for those most in need". Labour's shadow universities minister, Gordon Marsden, said the "government and the Office for Students must work with universities on this as a priority". "This important study shows we must improve poor access to universities for disadvantaged young white children and especially boys," said Mr Marsden. Justine Greening, the former education secretary who has launched a social mobility project, says "Britain can't afford talent going to waste" and calls for "ambitious and bold" moves to widen access to university. The education secretary highlighted the importance of supporting education in communities that might feel "left behind". "White British disadvantaged boys are the least likely of any large ethnic group to go to university," said Mr Hinds. "We need to ask ourselves why that is and challenge government, universities and the wider system to change that. "It's vital that we do this to make sure that no part of our country feels as though it has been left behind."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47227157>

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