

PARITY News Briefing - March 2017

This is the third 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 David Yarwood. Needless to say, responses and contributions from members will be most welcome. Please address these to the Honorary Secretary, Chandra Vaghela.

We welcome Mr Keith Richardson FCCA, who has recently joined us as Honorary Treasurer in place of David Yarwood, who remains as a Trustee.

It is with sadness and great regret that we report the death of Arun Bhat on the 2 February. Arun has been a loyal supporter of PARITY for many years and a Trustee since 2010. We shall miss him and his support greatly.

News Items

- Equality statistics
- New Domestic Violence and Abuse Act
- Britain's boy crisis
- CPS feminisation
- Gender pay gap
- The Justice Gender Gap
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Equality statistics

The way that so-called 'equality' statistics are manipulated to disfavour males, was well illustrated by a letter from a Dr Steven Field published in the *Daily Telegraph* in October 2016.

'Being equal in Britain'.

Sir, Those shocked by Britain's place in the Global Gender Equality Index (report, October 26), which puts us 26th - below countries such as Rwanda - may like to consider the way in which the index is calculated.

In its statement on methodology the Index admits that it ignores any cases where women "out-perform" men. In top-of-the-table-Iceland, for example, only 37 per cent of students in tertiary education are male, but this does not count as a gender gap. If it were the other way round, it would count as a huge gap.

The Index also assumes that women are entitled to have healthy lives at least 6 per cent longer than those of men. In the UK, the difference in life expectancy is only 4 per cent, and this therefore counts as a gender gap disadvantaging women.

Some inequalities, such as male-only compulsory military service or an earlier pension age for women, are ignored completely. The Index may serve a purpose in that it indicates areas where women are disadvantaged, but it is certainly not an even-handed measure of equality.

New Domestic Violence and Abuse Act

It was reported in the news on the 18 February 17 that the Prime Minister pledges to bring in tougher new laws on 'abhorrent' domestic abuse. Is this to be a genuine attempt to give all victims, male and female, better and more responsive treatment, which would be welcome, or is it to be a further marginalisation of male victims? Indeed, is it really intended to be a 'violence against women and girls' initiative in disguise, so yearned for by the women's refuge movement and radical feminists?

About one in five victims reporting domestic abuse to the police is male, but this probably reflects the more serious cases, since annual national surveys of domestic violence and abuse reveal that no less than one in three victims is male, and also that about one in five victims of chronic or repeated violence abuse is male. The British Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that in year 2015/16 there were 716 thousand male and 1,272 thousand female victims of all forms of domestic abuse including sexual and stalking. The estimates for domestic threats or force were 353 thousand male and 640 thousand female victims, and for domestic force specifically were 207 thousand male and 364 thousand female victims. Despite this scale of violence or abuse suffered by male victims, support systems for them are woefully under-funded and inadequate, both nationally and geographically.

During year 2013, some 78,155 men reported domestic violence or abuse against them to police forces in England and Wales, about 22 % of total persons reporting. However, such proportion is not reflected in those prosecuted. In year 2014/15, 85,687 men and 7,013 women were prosecuted for domestic violence in England and Wales, with 63,675 men and 4,866 women being convicted (just 7% of women).

Some facts from the charity ManKind Initiative

Only 23 organisations in the UK offer refuge or safe house provision for male victims - a total of 110 spaces, of which only 34 are dedicated to male victims (the rest being for victims of either gender). This reflects a small increase since February 2016, the figures then being 18 organisations with about 70 spaces, of which 24 were dedicated to male DV victims only. There are no refuges or safe houses for male victims in London.

There are no precise figures for provisions for female victims, albeit an estimate in 2010 was that there were then nearly 400 specialist domestic violence organisations providing refuge accommodation for women in the UK with about 4,000 spaces for over 7,000 women and children.

On at least 120 occasions in 2010, a male caller to our helpline decided not to consider a refuge or safe house because, being so few geographically, they were mostly too far away and would mean having to completely uproot their lives, often having to leave their children and their job behind.

In year 2013/14, on average high-risk victims lived with domestic abuse for 2.6 years before getting help. 80% of the men who call the ManKind Initiative helpline have never spoken to anyone before about the abuse they are suffering.

Men don't leave abusive relationships for various reasons - the top reasons being: concern about the children (89%), marriage for life (81%), love (71%), the fear of never seeing their children again (68%), a belief she will change (56%), not enough money (53%), nowhere to go (52%), embarrassment (52%), not wanting to take kids away from their mother (46%), threats that she will kill herself (28%) and fears she will kill him (24%).

So is the Prime Minister really intending to seriously help male victims too, in the interests of 'equality'? We must wait and see. Meanwhile, if you are keen to help male victims, please do lobby your own MP's to ensure any new Act does this.

Meanwhile, the immediate reaction by the ManKind Initiative was:

"We welcome the news that the Prime Minister has decided to make ending domestic abuse a real priority as we need to hasten changes in the support given to victims and in helping them become survivors with successfully rebuilt lives. "It is vital though that there is a real step change in supporting and recognising men, who make up one in three of all victims, if this policy and law is going to keep all those affected by domestic abuse safe.

This also includes men fleeing domestic abuse who also need to escape with their children.”

“Male victims currently suffer from a lack of recognition and acceptance in Government policy which then leads to a lack of services and funding at a local level, and, a failure to change public attitudes. This has to change. We need the principles of fairness, inclusion and equality to apply to men, as well as women escaping from domestic abuse.”

“A clear example of where things have to change is where it is current Government policy to record and class a crime of domestic abuse against a man as being a crime against ‘women and girls’. This effectively treats men as second class victims and renders them invisible. This marginalisation of male victims cannot continue, so we call on the Government to make sure the new policy and law is fully inclusive and equal.”

Britain’s boy crisis

Britain’s boys do seem to be having an increasingly poor time of it. Poorer academic achievement than girls, more neurological problems, tacit suppression of emotional problems, increasing mental health problems, lack of a positive male role models in many families and classrooms, and for the lowest ranking - a poor future. One consequence is that there are now 65,000 more unemployed male NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) than female⁽¹⁾.

White working class children now consistently achieve lower academic results than other comparable socio-economic or ethnic groups, with boys significantly poorer than girls. Fewer boys proceed to sixth form level, with girls now taking significantly more A-level exam subjects.

In higher education, overall girls now out-number boys. Teenage girls are now outperforming their male rivals in securing places at Oxford and Cambridge universities⁽²⁾. Young women received the same number of offers as men to study at Oxford this coming academic year, even though fewer women applied. At Cambridge, women received 30 fewer offers than men even though 900 fewer applied. At other Russell Group universities, for example King’s College, London, and the Universities of Leeds, Edinburgh, and Cardiff, the ratio of female to male students is now about 65 to 35.

Mary Curnock Cook, head of the CAS admissions service, has warned⁽³⁾ that being male could be a new form of disadvantage, saying that “On current trends, the gap between rich and poor will be eclipsed by the gap between males and females within a decade”. Ms Cook says that she is “instinctively convinced that the fall in the proportion of male students is connected to the increasing gender imbalance in the schools workforce. Until the early 1990s, most secondary schoolteachers were male. This has now completely reversed, with the teaching profession becoming increasingly female”.

What is incontrovertible is that women have taken the greatest advantage of the rapid expansion in university numbers in the 1990s. In 1990, there were 34,000 women graduating from the UK universities, compared with 43,000 men. Last year, there were almost 300,000 more women in higher education than men. The change from diploma to degree level for nursing and teacher training, resulting in a large female-dominated group entering higher education, will have contributed to this numerical predominance⁽⁴⁾.

Even the Equality and Human Rights Commission, not noted for much enthusiasm relating to male inequalities, has recognised that “if you’re white, male and poor enough to qualify for a free school meal at school, then you face the toughest challenge when starting out in life.” The increasing population of young men in our prison system might perhaps be one outcome⁽⁵⁾.

Many parents would like their sons to be disciplined by strong male teachers. According to one father of a young boy, six of the nine primary schools he visited didn't appear to have any men at all. "Male primary schoolteachers seemed to be an endangered species."⁽¹⁾

In July 2016, the charity *Save the Children* claimed that boys are nearly twice as likely as girls to be behind from the moment they begin school. A quarter of boys in England - some 80,000 - start reception age four struggling to speak a full sentence or follow basic instructions. From that point on, save for A* grades at maths, most boys never catch up.⁽⁶⁾

In 2015, by the age of 8, 83 per cent of girls in England achieved level 4 and above in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 77 per cent of boys. At GCSE, girls have outperformed boys at most subjects for 27 years, with 52.5 per cent of boys achieving five A*-C GCSE's including English and Maths that year, compared with 61.8 percent of girls. The worst performing of all groups - below all females and Asian and Black boys - are white working class British boys.⁽¹⁾

One father has commented that "it's like the whole agenda is to drive girls and women forward, while ignoring boys". "Girls are told they're smarter, both genders believe it, and Sats results reinforce it.

Mary Curnock Cook has repeatedly stated that we can end "years of lower educational achievement by boys" by recruiting more male teachers, pointing to the fact that 85 per cent of British primary school teachers are women – along with 62 percent of secondary."

Dr Gijsbert Stoet, professor of cognitive psychology at Leeds Beckett University and an internationally renowned expert on gender differences in education, thinks the boy crisis is a matter of nature and nurture. "When it comes to boys falling behind, the real scandal is that it isn't a scandal." "Boys mature slightly slower than girls, are more playful, and have an attentional system that is far more vulnerable to distraction. By contrast, girls are compliant and easier to teach. To help boys mainly is about increasing discipline - and boys are more easily disciplined by male teachers."⁽¹⁾

Warren Farrell, a men's activist in America, claims that divorce and 'dad deprivation' at home is a root cause for boy's disengagement from education. "Dad-deprived boys are less likely to display empathy, and tend to be less assertive, depressed, have nightmares, talk back and be disobedient. They are more likely to have low self-esteem, fewer friends, and are likely to do worse in every academic area, especially reading, writing, maths and science." "We need a major overhaul of education systems, especially in inner cities where we know dad deprivation is higher."

Karl McCartney, Conservative MP for Lincoln, in September 2016 led a parliamentary debate on 'the gender education gap' calling for an urgent government task force to investigate the issue. "The gender education gap has been with us for at least 30 years and is no secret. It is unacceptable that governments of all colours, the education sector and the trade unions, have wilfully continued to turn a blind eye to the issue. The 'equalities industry' is also strangely silent. It is if the educational needs of boys do not matter." "We need the government to find out what causes the gap and then implement policies to close it while ensuring we do not lower the performance of girls. We need to immediately ensure male role models in the form of male teachers are recruited and retained in far greater numbers." "This is a One Nation, fairness and equality issue. We cannot afford to waste any more time. Our boys deserve better."⁽¹⁾

Sources

(1) 'My son and Britain's Boy Crisis'. Martin Daubney. *The Times Magazine*, 20 Nov 16

(2) 'Women take more Oxbridge places'. Nicola Woolcock. *The Times*, 26 Jan 17

(3) 'Rise in women teachers 'bad for boys'. Nicola Woolcock, *The Times*, 12 May 16

(4) 'Why do women get more university places? Sean Coughlan. Educ Correspondent. BBC News 12 May 16

(5) 'Poor white boys get 'worse start in life' says equality report. Declan Harvey, BBC Newsbeat. 30 Oct 16

(6) 'Boys 'twice as likely to fall behind girls in early years'. Hannah Richardson, BBC News Educ reporter. 18 July 16

CPS feminisation

Has the Crown Prosecution Service gone feminist? In the past ten years or so, under the previous and present Directors of Public Prosecution, there has been a policy to treat violence against women and girls as a priority. To accompany and emphasise this, the presentation by the Service of numbers of victims of certain forms of violence (affecting both males and females) has been changed from a gender neutral approach (eg. Violence Against the Person) to that of including them all under the title of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), so downgrading the status of male victims. Such a classification also appears to exclude non-domestic violence such as violence outside the home where men are the main victims. The public could perhaps be forgiven for thinking that the Service has indeed 'gone feminist'.

Whatever has happened to that fundamental concept of 'equality' so espoused and defined by the 2006 Equality Act as meaning '**between individuals**' (Section 8(2)). Surely, on this basis, any priority should be based on the seriousness of the case rather than on the sex of the victim? Male and female victims suffering comparable violence should be treated by a public service surely in a comparable fashion, and not on the basis of their sex.

The British Crime Survey for year 2015/16 for England and Wales, estimated that some 716 thousand men and 1,272 thousand women over age 16, had been victims of some form of partner or family violence or abuse during the year. The corresponding figures for the category of threats or force were 353 thousand males and 640 thousand females, and for primarily force some 207 thousand males and 364 thousand females. Yet these are all lumped together by the CPS under the VAWG umbrella.

The VAWG approach is also disturbing some legal people. Barrister Laura Perrins fears that the Service "is sliding towards the status of a noisy pressure group in the grip of feminist dogma."⁽¹⁾ No longer the stern, impartial bulwark of our legal system, it now appears to be increasingly driven by fashionable politics and ideological fads".

Perrins thought that was certainly the outlook that shines through the CPS latest annual report on Violence Against Women and Girls, published in September 2016. "In triumphant language, the document spells out a lengthy catalogue of success for the modern feminist agenda." "More than 100,000 individuals were prosecuted for domestic abuse with over 75,000 convicted - the highest volume ever recorded." "Domestic abuse, rape and sexual offences now account for nearly 19 per cent of our workload, an increase over the past six years from just under nine per cent."

Perrins believes that much of this focus on offences against women has been driven by the present Director, Alison Saunders, whose attachment to a doctrinaire brand of feminism is the most disturbing feature of her CPS leadership. "There is also a perception that crimes against women are dealt with more harshly than crimes against men."

In Ms Saunders' brave new world, a rape suspect may have to show the steps he took to establish that consent was 'fully and freely given', "which rather inverts that age-old British tradition: innocent until proven guilty. But what profoundly concerns Perrins, is "the CPS's lack of balance." "Is the same energy devoted to incidents where men are overwhelmingly the victims. Grievous bodily harm, for example?" Perrins asks.

Perrins thinks that "in practice, the CPS - and much of the rest of the political establishment - now gives the impression that offences against women are treated with more robustness than

those against men.” “We see that in the rash of new legislation designed to meet the demands of the feminist creed.”

Perrins believes that most of this legislation is not necessary, since personal abuse and harassment are already against the law. Another example is the legislation against female genital mutilation. “There was no need for yet another Act, for this vile form of misogynistic torture was already covered by a host of measures, such as the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.”

Perrins thinks that it’s a bit rich of the CPS to now posture as the champion of female emancipation. The CPS’s strategy is not only unfair to men, who are, in fact by far the biggest targets of crime, but it also undermines the concept of due process under the law, one of the pillars of our justice system.”

“With its relentless message, the CPS seems to want to trap women in victimhood, whipping up fears and exaggerating dangers. There is something offensive about its urge to sweep all kinds of crime, from brutal rape to nasty texts, into one vast category of female misery.”

Perrins considers that this latest CPS report on Violence Against Women and Girls simply reinforces how badly Ms Saunders’ service has lost its way.”

Source: Laura Perrins. *Daily Mail*, Sept 16

Gender Pay gap

The alleged gender pay gap is a bit like the legendary ‘curates egg’. Some is edible and some is not. It really depends on what factors are compared. “Basically, the statistics on the gender pay gap are so various and so nuanced that almost anyone can take anything out of it and say what they want” says Sheila Wild, a former head of age and earnings at the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Legal entitlement

Sometimes when people see ‘gender pay gap’ they think it means that women are getting paid less for doing the same work as men. But women have a legal entitlement to equal pay for equal work, so this situation is most unusual and unlawful.

Working part-time

A much clearer factor behind the gender pay gap found by the Institute of Fiscal Studies is the effect of part-time work. Women are three times more likely to be part-time workers than men. One in seven men are part-timers compared to three in seven women. That is important because part-time work, on average, attracts lower hourly rates. It’s not just that part-time workers get less because they work fewer hours. They actually get paid less per hour. So arguably, what we are talking about is a part-time wage gap. That contributes to a gender pay gap because women are more likely to be working part-time.

“Women’s work”

Another reason why men, on average, get paid more than women is that more men tend to work in better paid jobs.

But why do more women end up in worse paid jobs? “First of all, it’s difficult to disentangle what is choice and what is forced choice”, says Wild. “Most people’s selection of their employment is determined by all sorts of things. It’s determined by the national labour market - what sorts of jobs are available. It’s determined by the local labour market. It’s determined by family circumstances”. “And, then, on the other side of that, there’s employer selection, and the well-known phenomenon of people appointing in their own image”.

“Also, of course, culture plays a role too - what our society sees as appropriate jobs for men and appropriate jobs for women”.

Age

It also depends on age. If we take the official figures on the gender pay gap, it's much larger for women in their 50s, at 27%, than it is for women in their 20s, who are paid 4% less than the average man in their age group. Strip out part-time workers, and the gap more or less disappears for women aged 22 to 39.

If we look just at full-time workers, the gap has been getting smaller for pretty much everyone - except for the over-50s.

Conclusion

So, when it comes to the gender pay gap, the numbers you get depend on the question you ask.

Source: Four ways the gender pay gap isn't all it seems. Simon Maybin. BBCNewsMagazine, 29 August 16

The Justice Gender Gap

In a speech given to the International Conference on Men's Issues in London in July 2016, Philip Davies, Conservative MP for Shipley, spoke about the justice gender gap, very much applying against males in the criminal justice system in the UK. He feels that there has been a political trend in the last few years which has led to an "equality but only when it suits agenda." Some of the main points he made are given below.

Prison uniforms Men in prison on the basic regime have to wear a prison uniform. Women in prison do not. How can this be fair? Well, I'm told that it is because women are different and they may have self-esteem issues which prevent the policy of prison uniform applying equally. Men and women are different. It is a fact. Yet this is not allowed to be a reason to prevent equality in the fields where men are "differently better" on the whole, eg. when it comes to jobs that require great strength. Oh no - that would be sexist.

Prison numbers Just about 5% of the prison population at any one time in recent history has been female - the other 95% male. As of last week, there were 3,856 women in prison and 81,272 men. Yet so much time, effort, concentration and brow beating has taken place over this tiny minority of women. So why all this concern over the 5% of women in the prison population? Well, this seems to be because of the many myths being peddled on the subject.

Myth 1 *I keep hearing and still hear that women are very likely to be sent to prison and more likely than men to be given custodial sentences.*

This is simply untrue. The published statistics show a higher proportion of men are given a sentence of immediate custody than women, irrespective of age of offender (juveniles, young adults or adult) and type of court. For each offence group, a higher proportion of males are sentenced to custody than females.

For example, figures for West Yorkshire show that for robberies - which you could be forgiven for thinking are surely the same whether committed by a man or a woman - the imprisonment rate in 2012 was 70% for men and 50% for women. Then, of those actually sent to prison, the average sentence for men was 39.2 months and yet just 28.4 months for women.

The Home Office also undertook statistical research some years ago to try to ascertain the best comparison for similar sentencing situations. This research looked at 13,000 cases and concluded that: "*women shoplifters were less likely than comparable males to receive a prison sentence....and women first offenders were significantly less likely than equivalent men to receive a prison sentence for a drug offence.*"

The Ministry of Justice confirmed that probation staff were more than twice as likely to recommend custody for male offenders due to be sentenced in Crown Court cases than for female offenders, 24% of males and just 11% of females. Their own published figures for all offences included: "In 2011, women given an immediate custodial sentence for indictable

offences received shorter average sentence lengths than men (11.6 months compared to 17.7 months for males)." This is not a minor difference. This figure shows that the average male prison sentence is over 50% more than the average female prison sentence.

Those discharged from determinate sentences in the quarter ending December 2011 had served 53% of their sentence in custody (including time on remand). On average, males served a greater proportion of their sentence in custody - 53 per cent compared to 48 per cent for females in the quarter ending December 2011. This gender difference is consistent over time, and partly reflects the higher proportion of females who are released on Home Detention Curfew. In the few years that figures have been published, women have had 50% more chance than men to be released from prison on Home Detention Curfew.

Quoting from the book written by Vicky Price after her release from prison "*the result (of the Home Detention Curfew) was that at times over the weekend the prison was less than half full. In fact, what did amaze me was the sheer number of people who were away most of the time*".

Myth 2 Most women are in prison for petty or non-violent offences and are serving short sentences.

If we take a snapshot of the sentenced female prison population at a moment in time (June 2014) let's just look at the actual details of all those poor women serving prison sentences who should, apparently be free from the oppressive prison system. Which of these do those who advocate reducing the female prison population actually want to let out?

The 260 serving sentences for murder? Or the 103 in prison for manslaughter or attempted homicide? Or the 354 convicted of wounding, the 131 for serious assaults or other violence against the person, or the 54 for cruelty to children?

Or the 92 for rape, gross indecency with children? The 297 in for violent robbery or the 215 for burglary? Or the 294 drug dealers or importers? Or the 53 arsonists or the 29 serving time for kidnapping and blackmail? Or the 163 in prison for serious fraud or forgeries?

Or we could, as many would no doubt like, let out the 525 in prison for theft and handling stolen goods. But if we did that - to be fair - we would have to let out the equivalent of over 4,000 men who are in prison for theft or handling too and that would be ridiculous.

Just under 16% of women are in prison for sentences of less than 6 months. A further 6% are in prison for up to a year. So, 22% of female prisoners are in custody for up to 12 months, which covers all cases heard in Magistrates Courts and some cases from Crown Courts.

All the rest of women offenders are serving sentence of over 1 year which means their offences were so serious that they would have had to have been dealt with at a Crown Court. This puts these women - 78% of the total female prison population - not as those serving short sentences for 'not so serious' offences but serving much longer sentences for the most serious of all crimes.

It might be interesting to note that more women are punished for disciplinary offences whilst in prison per 100 of the prison population than men - 130 adjudications per 100 prisoners compared to 106 for men.

Myth 3 Women are often remanded in custody and then do not get sentenced to custody

The Ministry of Justice's own figures show that women are more likely to get bail than men. In 2009, 80% of females were bailed compared with 62% of males and 20% were remanded in custody compared with 38% of males.

Of those remanded in custody, 66% of females were then sentenced to immediate custody in comparison with 75% of males.

Myth 4 Prison separates mothers from their children and this unfairly punishes them

It is claimed that some 17 thousand children are separated from their mothers in prison and that 60% of women in custody have children under the age of 18.

A Ministry of Justice senior civil servant has commented that two-thirds of the mothers sent to prison who have children were not even looking after them at the time.

Why therefore is there all this huge outcry about separating mothers from their children when most of the mothers in prison were not being mothers to their children anyway?

Sarah Salmon from *Action for Prisoners' Families* said "For some families the mother going into prison is a relief because she has been causing merry hell."

More women than men benefit from the "get out of jail free card" and yet more women are convicted of offences against children - in fact 40% more in the latest year. Even so, they are less likely to be sent to prison for the same offence. The custody rate for child cruelty or neglect is, in fact, 33% for men and just 13% for women.

It is estimated that some 180,000 children are separated from their fathers because they are in prison. In this age of equality, what about this much higher figure?

Myth 5 Women are treated more harshly in the justice system than men generally

It is quite clear that women are less likely to be sent to prison than men. If they are not being sent to prison as frequently as men they are presumably being sentenced at the next level down to a community order. Actually, they are not. According to Ministry of Justice figures, yet again, men are more likely to receive a community order than women. 10% of women sentenced are given a community order compared to 16% of men.

So women are less likely to go to prison and less likely to be given a community order. But that is not all. Of those who were given a community order, the ones given to men are likely to be much harsher. The average length of all community sentences for men was longer than for women. Moreover, for women receiving a community order, the largest proportion had one requirement (46%), whereas the largest proportion of men had two requirements (41%).

Given the more severe sentences for men at the higher end of the sentencing spectrum, it is unsurprising, therefore, that women were more likely to receive the low levels of punishment at courts. It is a fact that a higher proportion of female defendants receive fines than males.

All this shows that throughout the courts' sentencing regime, men are, on average, treated more severely than women.

Family Courts

It is quite clear that the Family Courts are more likely to place children with the mother over the father. This is certainly a massive area where men face very different treatment to women. I really do think people underestimate the effect on fathers of having to battle to see their children and facing the inevitable likelihood that they will come off worse because of their sex.

After divorce or separation, many women use their children as a stick to beat the father with - either because they are bitter about their failed relationship, for financial reasons or because they have moved on and it is easier for them if their new partner takes on the role of 'father' to their children.

Victims of violence

In Parliament, we always seem to be hearing about strategies for combatting violence against women and girls. In fact, there have been specific debates in Parliament on just this very subject. You could be forgiven for thinking that there is a special problem in relation to violence

against women and girls which does not apply to men and boys. Some might think that there must be far more women and girls who are victims of violence than men and boys.

However, the reality does not match the concerns people seem to have. It is a fact that, in this country, men are much more likely to be victims of violent crime than women. The most recent Biennial statistics (released Nov 2014) on the representation of females and males in the Criminal Justice System, confirm that 1.4% of women interviewed in the Crime Survey for England Wales reported being victims of violence compared to 2.3% of men.

Further, women accounted for only around 30% of all recorded homicide victims between 2006/07 and 2012/13 whilst men were victims in the remaining 70% of cases.

The picture emerging here is that men and boys are by far the more likely victims of violence and murders than women and girls, and yet there is no or little mention of them in the debates and the strategies that have been drawn up in relation to females.

One thing that it is worth noting when it comes to sentencing is that despite all the evidence that shows women as the perpetrators of domestic violence - in far more cases than some would like us to think - the community requirement that is imposed by the courts on those who commit an offence in a domestic setting is only imposed on men and does not deal with female offenders. As usual, this shows that the whole issue of equality only works one way.

One additional interesting fact I have discovered is that 3,750 male sentenced prisoners were victims of domestic violence compared to 1,323 female prisoners [as at 31 Mar 13].

I believe that all these facts and figures show there are certainly questions to be answered in relation to the treatment of men and women in the justice system. It seems that there is clear discrimination against men and certainly not the other way around.

So what is going to be done to deal with this?

Well, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Family Justice has announced [recently] that she wants to see less women in prison. Not less people, not less men - you heard me right - less women.

Where on earth is the equality in that? How does it fit with the Equality Act? It is just like the example of female prisoners not having to wear a uniform.

Source: Big Ben partnership, www.bigbenpartnership.co.uk

Prostate cancer

Every year thousands of men are diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. It is hoped that with more targeted research, some progress will be made to allow men to hope that eventually a cure will be found for this.

The charity Prostate Cancer Research UK has announced recently that as part of such new research, it is proceeding with a new trial - ADRRAD, in an attempt to help find such a cure. 'It's the first of its kind and could potentially change the way we treat, diagnose and prevent prostate cancer'.

The theory is simple - by combining current effective cancer treatments with a drug called radium-223, the hope is that it can 'stop advanced prostate cancer in its tracks'.

Prostate Cancer UK claims that the potential of this work is huge. But they need more funding support to afford the equipment and staff they need to run this ground-breaking trial.

Any gifts or donations would be welcome to support this work. Prostate Cancer UK can be contacted on 020 3310 7000. Details can be found on www.prostatecanceruk.org