

# #SOS Man Down



**THE MEN'S  
HEALTH CRISIS**  
THE CASE FOR  
A MINISTER FOR  
MEN AND BOYS

*"The pain of losing my dad was almost unbearable."*

*Jackie Dodd, Daughter*

## **HELP SAVE OUR SONS, BROTHERS & FATHERS**

**The Fathers4Justice #SOSManDown campaign has been born out of the stories of suffering and loss we have received from the thousands of broken men we have helped since our foundation in 2001.**

**The campaign, which extends across the UK and Ireland, aims to break the wall of silence surrounding the men's health crisis and calls on respective governments to take urgent action.**

**As a father of three boys and founder of a campaign that helps men in difficulty everyday, I care passionately about this issue. Now, more than ever, we need to sound the alarm about the sons, brothers and fathers who are in crisis.**

**I do not want my children to suffer what I went through - an experience that drove me into a dark depression and the brink of suicide. I hope we can bring men and women together in unity to make a difference to the lives of millions of men and boys.**

**I urge you to support this vital campaign.**

*Matt O'Connor*

FOUNDER, FATHERS4JUSTICE





We Are  
Fathers  
4Justice

We Are  
Fathers  
4Justice

We Are  
Fathers  
4Justice

We Are  
Fathers  
4Justice

END SCOTTISH  
FATHERS'  
HEARTBREAK

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY



## THE CASE FOR A MINISTER FOR MEN AND BOYS

Our men are dying. Beneath the cosmetic veneer of lad culture, football and TV shows like Love Island, masculinity is diseased and in crisis.

History, biology and feminism have conditioned us to believe in the myth of male power, when paradoxically, the opposite is often true. **Men's relationships, jobs and identities are being blown apart by new social dynamics**, yet there is little or no support for them.

**If you are a male and under the age of 45, the thing most likely to kill you, is you.** The biggest killer of men under 45 is suicide and 12 men take their own lives every day.

**Separated dads are three times more like to die than mothers** and have no rights to see their children. Many are left struggling for access in cruel and secretive family courts. According to the Samaritans, men's separation from their children is a significant factor in men's suicides.

**Many will suffer from mental health problems, depression, alcoholism or worse. 84% of the hidden homeless are men.**

Men are also more likely to die from cancer than women.

**Every one of these men is somebody's son, somebody's brother and somebody's father**, but too many are left to face these challenges with little or no support. **There must be a cultural change in the way we treat men and boys.**

Many men feel they have been abandoned by society and are too ashamed to ask for help out of embarrassment, or because of social stigmas and religious taboos. This crisis does not discriminate: **dads from all faiths and cultures are affected by the suicide epidemic and cancer of fatherlessness.**

Worse still, **men have been demonised and stigmatised as deadbeats and predators** in a toxic narrative that further alienates and marginalises them. This dangerous stereotyping threatens to leave a harmful imprint in the minds of vulnerable young men and boys, about who they are, and how they are valued and treated by society.

**If this is a man's world, for many men, it's a world of extreme difficulty and pain.**

Since F4J was founded in 2001, we have witnessed the **institutional discrimination of men** by the state, justice system, local authorities and other public bodies and organisations. This has been compounded by funding inequalities which have resulted in **eight times as much money being spent on specific female health issues as on male ones.**

Men don't tick conventional minority boxes, but they are still deserving of equal treatment and support. Institutional anti-male, fatherphobic discrimination is putting countless men at risk of emotional harm and suicide.

The #SOSManDown campaign by Fathers4Justice aims to raise awareness about the unprecedented public health emergency affecting men. Unlike women, who are represented by a Minister for Women & Equalities, men and boys have no political representation on these issues.

That's why we **are calling for the creation of a new government post, a Minister for Men and Boys**, to coordinate a response to this crisis and give men an equal voice in government on these issues and **help break the wall of silence.**

But for many, the men's health crisis and mass fatherlessness remains a political and social taboo. Some claim that because most elected representatives are men, the issues are already being addressed. **But just because many politicians are men, it does not mean they are addressing men's health issues.**

In fact, the opposite is true. Male politicians, like men in society, are uncomfortable discussing men's health, as evidenced by the failure of male politicians to address the crisis.

**Worst still, men are now facing a catalogue of other health and economic challenges** including a fertility crisis as sperm counts and testosterone levels collapse, an explosion in steroid use amongst young men, and the hollowing out of men's jobs as they are replaced by automation and informal, unstable, working contracts that depress wages and living standards. **The poorest men, are also the most vulnerable.** An unskilled man can expect to live 11 years less than a professional women, and the excess of premature male deaths is the equivalent of **a jumbo jet full of men crashing every week.**

It is imperative that government acts urgently and responsibly to tackle these issues. We are also **calling on mothers, grandmothers, sisters and aunts to speak out** and support their men and help them feel safe, respected, valued and heard.

**Looking after the health and well-being of men and boys is not only in the national interest, but in the best interest of our children, our families and our country.**

Join the conversation about the men's health crisis at: <http://twitter.com/SOSManDownNews> <https://twitter.com/F4JOfficial> <http://www.facebook.com/Fathers4Justice> <http://www.fathers-4-justice.org/> Hashtag: #SOSManDown





*"We must break the wall of silence surrounding the men's health crisis."*

*Richard Castle, Dad*

## **THE VICTIMS OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND THE MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS**

**The Son / Suicide** Distressed dad Michael Asher took his life at Beachy Head in April 2017 after his ex-wife abducted their children, then denied him access to them. Michael's heartbroken mother, Wendy, collapsed when Police arrived at their home to tell her of the tragic news. She said her son was unable to cope with the grief of losing his children who meant everything to him. She said five lives had been destroyed by one mother and that there were no public services to support her son at a time of crisis.

**The Brother / Domestic Violence & Alcoholism** A victim of years of abuse, violence and controlling behaviour by his partner, David Williams felt unable to leave his home. Ashamed and embarrassed, for years he kept the abuse secret. When he finally gained the courage to leave, he battled to get any help, support or emergency accommodation. His brother said David had been abandoned by the state and later suffered from depression and alcohol dependency.

**The Daughter / Murder & Sexual Abuse** Jackie Dodd was left without a dad and emotionally scarred for life after her dad Brian was stabbed to death by his wife's lover in a crowded court as he was battling to gain access to her and her siblings. Jackie said the horrific loss of her loving dad left a hole in her heart. On his release, the step dad was allowed to return home and live with them. Jackie was later sexually abused by another stepfather. She says children are abused and neglected by a 'fatherphobic' system and she is sickened that her dad died fighting to see his children while complete strangers had unrestricted access.

**The Father / Fatherlessness** Like many children, Richard Castle's daughter was abducted by her mother. Despite obtaining orders for contact, these were never enforced by the court. To date, train driver Richard has paid £80,000 in child support for a child he hasn't seen in over a decade. Richard, who later battled life-threatening Leukaemia, said losing his daughter was like a 'living bereavement'. He said the state has failed him and his daughter, left him suicidal, and treated him like a sperm bank and cashpoint.

**The Uncle / Prostate Cancer** Paul Robinson discovered he had advanced prostate cancer in 2013 when he was 53. Paul believes there should be better treatment for men and mandatory prostate cancer testing for men. He says that if he had been tested when he was 50, the cancer could have been treated and prevented from spreading. He says men and cancer don't get the same attention as women and cancer, even though more men die from it. Paul says that when it comes to health, men are being left behind - men's health is dramatically underfunded.

### **The Grandfather / Contact Denial**

Heartbroken granddad Stuart Thompson battled for years in the family courts to see his granddaughters before succumbing to cancer without ever seeing them again. His wife Alison said grandparents have no rights and that their treatment was unbelievably cruel. Worst still, she said, the children never got to know what a great grandad he was.

*"Losing my children in the family courts drove me to the brink of suicide. I'm lucky to have survived. Many others haven't. Now I fear for my sons."*

*Matt O'Connor, Founder, Fathers4Justice*



SLEEP TIGHT

DADDY

## #SOSMANDOWN: THE FACTS ABOUT THE MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

### THE CANCER OF FATHERLESSNESS

1. More than 1 in 3 children never see their father again after their parents separate. Mishcon de Reya, 2009
2. Over 3 million children live in fatherless homes. Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2010
3. 1 in 4 children do not consider their father to be part of their family. Childwise, 2007
4. More boys aged 15 have a smartphone than live with their father. Centre for Social Justice, 2014
5. Fatherless young people are almost 70 per cent more likely to take drugs and 76 per cent more likely to get involved in crime. Addaction, 2011
6. The cost of family breakdown across the UK is £48bn a year. Relationships Foundation, 2016
7. Almost 50% of men who take a paternity test turn out not to be the real father. BioClinics DNA Clinic, 2016

### THE MALE SUICIDE EPIDEMIC

1. Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK. CALM, 2015
2. 12 men take their own lives every day. CALM, 2015
3. Dads are 3 x more likely to die after separation than mothers. Department for Work & Pensions, 2015
4. Separation from children appears to be a significant factor in some men's suicides. Men, Suicide And Society, The Samaritans, 2012
5. Divorced men are three times more likely to take their own lives. The Samaritans, 2015
6. Over 100 dads are believed to have killed themselves because of demands from the Child Support Agency. Daily Mirror, 2006
7. Because of social stigma and religious taboos, male suicide is significantly underreported, or deaths wrongly attributed to other causes such as 'accidental' or 'undetermined intent' by coroners. Samaritans, Men Suicide and Society Research Report, 2012
8. Suicide remains an inequity, with men and deprived groups disproportionately affected. Andrew Sim, Executive Director, Samaritans, Scotland
9. Nearly 4 x more men die from suicide than in road traffic accidents. Parliamentary Health Select Committee, 2016 / Department for Transport, 2015
10. The suicides of dads are not included in any data despite men aged 45-54 being the highest risk group. Fathers4Justice, 2017

### THE MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

1. **Violence:** Men are twice as likely to be victims of violent crime and 40% of domestic violence victims are male. British Crime Survey 2011/12, 2008
2. **Cancer:** 53% of all cancer deaths are men. 237 men die from cancer every day. Cancer Research UK, 2014
3. **Homelessness:** 84% of the hidden homeless are men. Crisis, 2011
4. **Prison:** There has been a 92% rise in the prison population since 1993 of which 95% are men\*. 81,268 men are now in prison\*\*. Prison Reform Trust, 2016\* / HM Prison and Probation Service, April 2017\*\*
5. **Fertility:** Sperm counts have fallen by 60% in 40 years risking a fertility crisis. Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2017

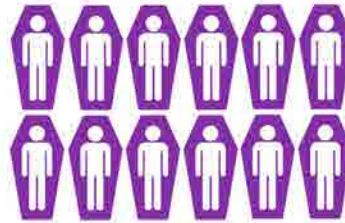


# #SOSManDown



The excess of premature male deaths is the equivalent of a jumbo jet full of men crashing every week

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, 2001



**12**

men take their own lives every day

CALM, 2015



Sperm counts have fallen by

**60%**

in 40 years risking a fertility crisis

HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM, 2017



**53%**

of all cancer deaths are men

CANCER RESEARCH, 2014



Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK

CALM, 2015



**40%**

of domestic violence victims are men

BRITISH CRIME SURVEY, 2006-9

**8x**

more money is spent on female health issues as on male ones

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, 2001

**3 million children live in fatherless homes**

OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS, 2010



Dads are 3x more likely to die after separation than mums

DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS, 2015



**97%**

of dads are denied parental equality & shared parenting because of their gender

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA, 2006



F4JOfficial



Fathers4Justice

[www.fathers-4-justice.org](http://www.fathers-4-justice.org)

6. **Low Testosterone:** Men with a lower level of testosterone have a 33% increased risk of dying\* and low testosterone is linked to depression, obesity, tiredness and erectile dysfunction\*\*. \*University of California, 2011 \*\*WebMD, 2014
7. **Steroids:** Steroid use amongst men has quadrupled in one year. Office for National Statistics, 2017
8. **Employment:** The number of men in low-paid and part-time work has increased 400% in the past 20 years\* and men who work part time now earn less than part-time women.\*\* \*Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2017 \*\*Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings Statistical Bulletin, 2013.
9. **Life Expectancy:** An unskilled man can expect to live 11 years less than a professional woman. The Department Of Health, 2001

## THE FUNDING INEQUALITIES BEHIND THE MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

1. For every £8 spent on women's health, just £1 is spent on male health. Men's Health Forum, Royal College of Nursing
2. Eight times as much money is spent on specific female health issues as on male ones. The Department of Health
3. The excess of premature male deaths is the equivalent of a jumbo jet full of men crashing every week. The Department of Health
4. Just 1.7% of funding for road safety is spent on suicide prevention, yet men are nearly 4 x more likely to die from suicide than in road traffic accidents. £8.3m spent on Suicide Prevention, Dept of Health, 2017 / £470m spent on road safety, Pacts, 2000

## INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION: THE FAMILY COURTS IN CRISIS

1. Every day 200 children are separated from their fathers in the family courts. Fathers4Justice, 2017
2. 97% of non-resident parents are dads who are denied parental equality and shared parenting because of their gender. In effect, 97% of dads are regarded as 'unfit' to share in the parenting of their children. Kielty, S. Journal of Law, Policy and the Family, University of East Anglia, 2006
3. The government has rejected parental equality for separated dads, rejected shared parenting, and rejected a legal presumption of contact between fathers and their children. Fathers4Justice, 2017
4. "Judges are being brought out of retirement to cope with the family law crisis." The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, 2017
5. 50% of all court orders are broken. The Times, 2002
6. More than 100,000 children were involved in family court cases over the past year. Cafcass, 2017
7. 3.8 million children are living 'at the mercy of family courts' after their parents separate. Sir Paul Coleridge, Daily Mail, 14/7/11
8. There is no government support for separated fathers, yet separated mothers have a wealth of publicly funded supported services including support workers, Women's Aid, and access to free legal aid. Fathers4Justice, 2017





## THE SOLUTION: HELP STOP MEN DYING

1. **A Minister For Men & Boys:** Men and boys urgently need a voice in government and political representation for men's issues, with a Minister focused on coordinating a strategy to deal with the men's health crisis.
2. **National Safety Net:** A fully funded safety net for men and boys including a national Life Line and health strategy targeting the causes of male suicide, depression and other health issues, as well as supporting men in difficulty.
3. **Parental Equality:** Having a father is a human right. Dads should be treated equally and with dignity by the courts and the state, and their right to family life respected. That means automatic parental responsibility for all fathers and a legal presumption of shared parenting and child support.
4. **A National Conversation:** Let's break the political and social taboo around men's health and fatherlessness and bring men and women together in unity to make a difference to the lives of millions of men and boys.

## ABOUT FATHERS4JUSTICE

Fathers4Justice was founded in 2001 by father of three boys, Matt O'Connor.

F4J is the world's largest shared parenting campaign group with over 80,000 registered families in the UK and Ireland. It is also the third highest supported campaign group in the UK behind Greenpeace & Amnesty International (Conservative Party Polling 2011) and their position on Shared Parenting enjoys 84% public support. (YouGov, 13/6/12)

In 2013 the Fathers4Justice Early Day Motion 210 won cross-party support from 104 MPs and in 2017 MSPs from all parties in the Scottish Parliament backed the F4J 'Forgotten Fathers' campaign. F4J campaigns for 50/50 shared parenting and parental equality, family law reform, and on related men's health issues, including male suicide and depression.

*"If this is a man's world, for many men, it's a world of extreme difficulty and pain."*

*Nadine O'Connor, International Campaign Director, Fathers4Justice*


# SON BROTHER FATHER



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