



MEN'S AID PRESS RELEASE JULY 2017

Men's Aid charity and those from allied area of interest have become particularly alarmed by the recent release of a Women's Aid (WA) driven 'research' document in which they appear to have collaborated with CAFCASS to produce a report which essentially points out that 62% of private law cases include allegations of Domestic Violence. The reader is left with the insinuation that these allegations are in fact well founded and militate robust measures to be taken against those who perpetrate violence.

The full content of this Women's Aid report can be found here

https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/media/321990/allegations_of_da_in_child_contact_cases_pdf.pdf

CAFCASS commentary on the report can be found here

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/news/2017/july/cafcass-and-women%E2%80%99s-aid-collaborate-on-domestic-abuse-research.aspx>

However Men's Aid as legal services providers contend that the quality of the data and methodology of such 'research' leaves far more questions than answers and particularly calls into question whether WA and CAFCASS are reliable sources of information at all. In our opinion it is not only valueless but inherently dangerous and misleading. Those who are fully informed of such matters will recall another recent 'research' publication emanating from WA entitled 19 Child Homicides which inferred that unsupervised child contact for fathers statistically gave rise to grave concerns about the probable dangers arising to children from fathers. The data for this research was obtained by selecting only nineteen examples out of hundreds that conformed to the model that WA wanted to present.

This piece was challenged openly in a comparative all inclusive study by MRA who studied all 330 Child Homicides during the same period in a scholarly manner. In their study the 'result' that men were dangerous to children while engaging in contact was refuted by the data showing that women were in fact more dangerous to children and had committed more homicides during the sampled time frame. Despite being openly challenged WA have never responded to substantiate their spurious claims.

The WA 19 Child Homicides study can be found here

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/launch-of-nineteen-child-homicides-report-child-first-campaign/>

The comparative MRA 330 Child Homicides study can be found here <http://mra-uk.co.uk/?p=1281>

This current report incorporating CAF/CASS appears to be essentially a revisitation of the same methodology of only sampling a narrow band of examples that conform to the model they wanted to present in the first place and then ignoring all discrepant evidence and data. Sadly the recurring theme of WA publishing demonstrable falsehoods to pursue their goals is common practise. WA CEO Polly Neate (recently retired from office) for some time repeatedly published the claim that ninety percent of all DV victims were in fact female without any evidence at all to support this claim and plenty to refute it including British Crime Statistics that are published annually and put the figure of male DV victims at around forty five percent. In other words roughly equal. There are also many studies employing robust evidence to suggest that younger women are both more violent and coercive than men.

As usual Ms Neate blithely ignored any open challenges to her claims but has since revised her claim to say that 90% of all victims suffering from four or more incidents are female. Ms Neate has also repeatedly published claims that Parental Alienation does not exist and is simply a manifestation of embittered fathers who are justly denied parental contact and that they employ the courts as naïve agents in pursuing their campaigns of psychological terrorism. We shall set aside arguments relating to alienation for now but mention it only to give context to some of the extravagant claims made by WA.

The fact that WA make such spurious claims and publish inherently erroneous materials is however only half the problem. Any agency is of course entirely free to conduct and publish any research at all no matter how flawed it may be. The problem is that WA appear to have gained the collusion of CAF/CASS in this latest work and have intoxicated a government body with their results. They have also presented these reports to luminaries such as Lord Mummery, President of the Family Division, HHJ Stephen Cobb of the Family Division, Theresa May and Amber Rudd of the Conservative Party as proof positive that men are inherently dangerous to women and children.

Men's Aid believe that there is now a very real danger that they are colouring the entire landscape of family law with false representations in order to garner millions of pounds in governmental funding and make the Family Division even more biased than it already is against male victims of DV and father's seeking a meaningful role in the lives of their children. All too often these 'reports' go unchallenged (with the notable exception of the MRA report on child homicides) and are read and repeated as statements of fact. Further commentaries appear drawing on them giving rise to the 'documentary echo chamber' effect. Also please note that WA actively argue against funding for male victims of DV demonstrating that their eye is on the money.

Increasing pressure for gender neutral services is exacerbating the crisis of funding to specialist domestic violence services for women q. Polly Neate - CEO Women's Aid

There's no point in providing services for male victims of DV, as men don't access those services. q. Franki Hackett – Board of Directors for Women's Aid

Men's Aid believe that it is now time to obtain consensus on what is fact and what is unreliable research. That spurious and discredited research should be challenged and withdrawn from circulation. That there should be agreement on what is of value for stakeholders and service providers.

CONCERNS REGARDING THE CONTENT OF THE REPORT

The origins of the data

The data is not raw. It is derived after interpretation by CAFCASS. In 2010 a special parliamentary select committee headed by the Right. Hon. Margaret Hodge MP found that CAFCASS 'do not make child based decisions' and are 'unfit for purpose' after failing eight out of ten points tested by Ofsted. The following year 2011 they failed again on eight out of ten points tested and a second select committee found that they 'are beyond reform' and 'should be abolished.' Clearly they have not been abolished and we are now confronted with their version of reform which we have already been told is impossible. CAFCASS have never, of course, been given a clean bill of health or been declared 'fit for purpose' and have simply faced less scrutiny although they continue to fail annually at a regional level when tested by Ofsted. Only the select committees assessed them nationally and no more have been commissioned.

Essentially the data has already been contaminated by CAFCASS before being double distilled by WA. For example 'Where the order at the final hearing was known, it was less common for unsupervised contact to be ordered in cases featuring allegations of abuse (39%) than cases without (48%). Cases featuring allegations of abuse were more likely to conclude with an order for no direct contact (19%) than cases without (11%), and this was the same for contact that was supervised or monitored in some way (11% and 6% respectively). In the cases where domestic abuse was alleged and unsupervised contact was ordered, unsupervised contact had been taking place between the applicant and the child either at the time of the application to court (67%) or within the six months prior to the application to court (33%). Where known, orders at the first and final hearings were made with the consent of the parties in 89% and 86% of cases respectively.'

These statistics are generated by CAFCASS recommendations based on allegations alone and are no indicator of whether these allegations were true or not. In reality those accused of DV are treated as guilty until proven innocent and sometimes even after they are proven innocent by exercising what is known as the 'precautionary principle.'

Clearly WA feel that further precautions should be taken 'just in case' the allegations might be true. They conclude the paragraph above as follows...*Women's Aid and Cafcass caution that contact taking place before proceedings and consent may not always equate to an 'agreement' about contact and may instead be indicative of a context of coercion or fear.*

This technique of insinuation is called value addition wherein values are added to data for no discernible reason. Note the qualifying term 'may'. Whether parents with residential control over their children do truly acquiesce to 'coercion' in order to grant child contact or not is given no consideration at all in favour of a presumption that this 'may' be the case.

Women's Aid are not simply a women's support group as the name suggests either. They are a self-declared feminist group. Feminism is not an essential ingredient in supporting women. Neither is it a charitable cause yet WA enjoys charitable status and receives millions of pounds in central and local government funding. WA discriminate in the work place by only advertising for and accepting women for paid posts. Khatie Ghose the current CEO applied for a post asking for a woman with 'strong feminist convictions' and not a long history of supporting women. Male job applicants are simply ignored. Many men and women find feminist values abhorrent and incompatible with charitable work. Erin Pizzey who founded the first women's refuge in the 1970s quickly became disillusioned with militant feminism and distanced herself from them. She is one of the most outspoken critics of Women's Aid and similar operations. Nevertheless it remains the fact that you cannot play a role in WA unless you are subservient to the doctrine of feminism and it pervades through every level of their operations. In comparison Men's Aid are gender neutral, serve women equally and engage women staff without any doctrinal requirements.

The WA slogan that appears on their logo is also worthy of note 'until women & children are safe.' This is a very clever and multi layered piece of propaganda. Firstly it implies that women and indeed children are not safe. That they are subject to impending doom. In fact the UK has one of the safest populations in the developed world and is relatively crime free. Secondly without directly stating that they are a feminist organisation by implication they don't care whether men are safe or not. Thirdly they hijack children. Women & Children are coupled together like Salt & Pepper or Black & White. Men don't protect children apparently but women do. Seemingly if it were not for feminist women children would not be safe at all. Bear in mind that women statistically murder more children than men do (Re: *330 Child Homocides*) and are approximately twice as likely to be complicit in maltreatment of children. Thus there is bias hardwired into every level of their representations that is inherently misandrist, fails women who have no interest in feminism and attempts to claim an imperative to act in the best interest of children who have never sought their services and have no idea who they are.

Now let us examine exactly what an allegation is without even considering whether it is true or not. Long before allegations end up with WA and or CAFCASS they often are reported to the police. These reports might be considered as raw data free from interpretation or spin. However the police report that forty per cent of the 421,000 DV allegations they receive annually are not even crimes. Of those referred to the CPS only seventy per cent resulted in convictions with an acquittal rate of twenty two per cent. In other words more allegations were unfounded than were deemed to be valid. Many were petty or vexatious in nature.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2016/relateddata>

No statistics are available for how many allegations of DV are found as legal fact in the Family Division and thus WA proceed on the basis of pure allegations alone. They ignore the fact that DV allegations have multiplied exponentially since the cutting of Legal Aid in 2014 over eightfold and make no mention of the 'DV gateway' to legal funding wherein public funding can be obtained through the vaguest means such as a letter from a GP based on self-reporting or a referral from an agency such as WA again based on self-reporting, or admission or refusal from a refuge. Note here that WA is instrumental in generating or supporting these allegations as a referral agency.

More suggestive evidence of DV to qualify for public funding would be a police caution, arrest or conviction. However a non-molestation undertaking or order without admission of guilt also qualifies. Many accused men are glad to sign such an undertaking when they have no wish to remain in contact, little knowing that it will open the gateway for their ex-partner to receive thousands of pounds of skilled representation. WA however are fully mindful that they open the DV gateway when they write letters repeating the allegations they hear without any regard for their veracity.

The DV gateway to Legal Aid produces a judicial anomaly wherein public funding is normally provided for accused people to defend themselves however in instances involving DV the accuser is funded and the accused is most often unable to afford representation. The application of Practise Direction 12J prohibiting the accused from even questioning the accuser (a right normally afforded by *habeas corpus*) further tilts the table against them and they are clearly legally disadvantaged by it in ways we can explore further in other articles.

WA completely disregards the possibility of false and malicious allegations. They never appear in their lexicon of false reportage. Men are routinely accused of using the courts to pursue coercive campaigns against women but nowhere is the possibility that women may not tell the truth even explored yet alone quantified. It is a no go area for WA.

The inclusion process

The report claims that *“from the total sample of 15,160 cases, 216 were chosen at random to form the sample to be studied”*. Presumably this strange number was deemed to be representative. As there was no oversight of this process we must apparently take their word for it. *“No medical evidence of domestic abuse was recorded during data collection”* It does not distinguish reciprocal violence and allegations from the non-reciprocal.

What is clear is that CAFCASS undertook to share confidential materials with WA that they had no business doing so under the Data Protection Act. Furthermore that they either actively excluded all their other key stakeholders such as Men’s Aid and interested parties from participating or simply failed to include them at best. It is hard to surmise how they could not have predicted this cosy arrangement would not provoke outrage. They are currently inviting others to participate but will not give them the exclusive opportunity afforded to WA.

The exclusion process

Not only have other affected parties and special interest groups been excluded from participation but so have all discrepant research materials. For any scholarly work to have credibility it should refer to and countervail any comparative works. However the current report is achieved by CAFCASS and WA colluding in isolation. There is a wealth of robust evidence showing that in some age groups women are many times more violent than men. However WA have repeatedly been presented with such sources and stoically ignore them.

Clinical and social studies reveal far higher figures for male victims than reported crimes or allegations in the Family Division and in some cases many times higher than women. This is believed to be because both men and women participating in research do not have to make complaints against intimate partners or obtain convictions.

<http://www.saveservices.org/2012/02/cdc-study-more-men-than-women-victims-of-partner-abuse/>

<http://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176%2Fpn.42.15.0031a>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence_against_men

Conclusions drawn

The report is predictably very thin on conclusions although it states that those accused of DV were less likely to be granted unobserved contact which is not exactly a revelation. Instead the report relies heavily on insinuation. For example it produces a series of Venn diagrams linking DV allegations to various forms of direct and indirect contact. The two topics are of course completely unrelated unless you want to link them by persuading courts to withhold contact until allegations have been resolved or indeed

if you conclude that DV to a parent is likely to impact on a child even when the victim parent is not present. All paths lead in this direction. Most tellingly it makes no attempt to quantify the number of allegations that come to be proven with time. Conversely it makes no attempt to measure how many remain unproven and out of them how many are false and malicious. The possibility of a cult of false and malicious allegations is not up for exploration at all. The emphasis is always on protecting or rewarding those who make allegations.

In fairness to Anthony Douglas of CAFCASS the only conclusions he states publically is that it highlights the 'complex' nature of such matters in typically non-committal terms and it remains to be seen if he has been snake charmed by this long complicated display of smoke and mirrors.

Richard Hoseason B.A. (Hons) Law

Men's Aid Legal Services Manager

Tel :0333 567 0556.