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Patrons – Lord Cotter, Erin Pizzey, John Penrose MP (SW Branch) and Paul Rowen MP (NW Branch)

Peter Baker
Chairman
The Men's Coalition
c/o The Men's Health Forum
Tavistock House
Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HR
United Kingdom

6th May 2008

Dear Mr Baker

Men's Coalition : Our Agenda – Domestic Violence

As Chairman of a national charity that supports male domestic abuse victims, I am writing to express our disappointment about the content of the above section of your web-site.

Instead of addressing the plight of male victims, the lack of help/services available and what male victims can do if they are victims, the content focuses completely on men as perpetrators. In addition, it selectively uses one Home Office statistic (89% of victims of 4 or more attacks are women) which has been superseded by a current British Crime Survey which shows that 20% of male victims in the past year have been abused by their partner six times or more, and the figure for females is 23%.

This is a clear distortion of the reality that male victims face. In addition, the Government agenda is about personalising public services, and to ignore those men who are victims and need support, is clearly not achieving this.

If the Men's Coalition is truly about *"requiring public policies that take full account of the specific needs and experiences of men and boys in a wide range of areas"* then the content has to change. In addition, your proposed work programme must include a programme of activity that addresses the lack of support and services available to male victims.

If the content does not change then the coalition will not be speaking on behalf of

male victims and certainly will not be meeting the “*specific needs and experiences of men and boys.*”

It will mean that our charity, which consists of both women and men, will not endorse the coalition at the present time and we will make our reasoning public. I will be copying this letter and your response to the Minister for Equalities and the Shadow Minister for Equalities.

I would like to draw your attention to some key facts about the plight that male victims face:-

- (1) Two in every five domestic abuse victims per year are men (2006/07 - 4.3% men and 5.6% women).
- (2) The same percentage of men as women was a victim of severe force in a relationship (2006/07 - 1.7% men and 1.8% women).
- (3) One in every four domestic abuse incidents is against a man.
- (4) One in six men will be a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime. As 1 in 4 women will also be a victim, then the ratio is 40%:60%
- (5) There are five or six refuges with dedicated space for men in the UK (one is specifically for gay men). There are 500 for women.
- (6) There are five small charities/organisations in the UK offering specialist support and help-line services for male victims. All suffer from severe funding problems.

Sources

(1), (2) - 2006/07 British Crime Survey: Intimate Violence (page 80)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0308.pdf>

(3) - 2006/07 British Crime Survey: General

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1107.pdf>

(4) - Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004) Domestic Violence, sexual assault and stalking : Findings from the British Crime Survey. Home Office Research Study No. 276. London : Home Office

Lastly, it is also disappointing that the content was not written by one of the few charities in the third sector that are helping male victims on a day-to-day basis. The ManKind Initiative, which for some reason you have not approached to be a member of the Coalition, would have been better placed to have drafted the copy.

In view of my comments, I hope that you will give serious consideration to correcting the present distortion against male victims on your web-site, and I look forward to receiving a favourable reply.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks
Chairman
The ManKind Initiative