

Mark Brooks,

(London Borough of Bexley).

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Equalities Team
PP22
City Hall
More London
Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

19th February 2009

Dear Equalities Team

The Mayor's Equality Framework: Equal Life Chances for All

As a resident of the London Borough of Bexley and Chairman of a national charity (The ManKind Initiative - www.mankind.org.uk) that provides support for male victims of domestic abuse, please find attached my response to the consultation on The Mayor's Equality Framework.

As you will see from my response, I am concerned about the gender bias and institutional barriers that confront male victims of domestic violence in London. It is therefore greatly disappointing that the two sections on domestic violence within the draft framework only make female victims a priority. There is a need that all victims, whether male or female, are equally supported and the response sets out the reasons for this.

If you wish to discuss this further I would be more than happy to discuss this in person.

I look forward to the requisite changes being made to the framework.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks

**SUBMISSION TO EQUALITY FRAMEWORK: EQUAL LIFE CHANCES FOR ALL –
MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC ABUSE**

From

Mark Brooks, (London Borough of Bexley).

Mark Brooks is also Chairman of The ManKind Initiative (www.mankind.org.uk), a national charity that supports male victims of domestic violence and abuse.

(1) Vision Aim 3 – Measuring Success Statement : share London’s success with all Londoners by ensuring our capital’s diverse communities are celebrated

GLA group Partner - MPS	Increase in the percentage of arrests following domestic violence incidents.	Percentage of arrests following domestic violence incidents.	•Women
GLA group Partner - MPS	Increase in the detection rate following reports of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault.	Domestic violence, rape and sexual assault detection rate.	• Women

The priority group on VISION AIM 3 on the issue of domestic violence, if adopted, will mean that the continual gender discrimination faced by male victims of domestic violence will continue and the adoption of only women as a priority (rather than all victims) will mean the Mayoral strategy will likely to be in breach of the Gender Equality Duty. Male victims include heterosexual, gay and bi-sexual men.

The framework raises the issue of “*discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and stereotyping*”. As the following sections show, the framework should therefore ensure that such discrimination does not apply to London’s male domestic violence victims.

(2) Statistics on London’s male victims

The evidence for the inclusion of male victims is outlined in the latest British Crime Survey¹ statistics. The victim figures for London (table 3.16) show during 2007/08:-

	Victims of Domestic Abuse		Victims of Partner Abuse	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
%	3.9%	4.7%	3.9%	4.8%
Numbers	33,000	45,000	33,000	46,000

The figures show that 37% of London’s victims of domestic abuse and/or partner abuse are men.

In context, the British Crime Survey showed on a national basis that:-

- One in five (20%) men has experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 (3.2 million) - *(Table 3.03)*.
 - 17.1% (1 in 6) of men have experienced domestic abuse by their partner since the age of 16 (2.7 million) - *(Table 3.03)*.
 - 1.4% of men (1.5% women) were victims of severe force by their partner in 2007/08 (224,000) - *(Table 3.01)*
 - 11% of male victims were abused more than six times in 2007/08 (19% of women suffered the same) – *(Table 3.09)*.
-

(3) The Justice Gap

I, and the charity I represent, have long been concerned about the attitude of the Metropolitan Police (and other UK police authorities) about male victims and the justice gap for male victims that is present.

Metropolitan Police statistics for Domestic Violence related violence against the person (VAP) for 2007/08 show about 18% of recorded victims were male. In addition, only 11% of those cautioned and charged were female. Of this total, females accounted for about 15% of those cautioned and only about 5% of those charged.

If 37% of London's men are victims of domestic abuse and/or partner abuse, yet only 11% of those cautioned and charged are female, then there is a justice gap.

It means that the aims of the strategy on increasing arrests and detection in cases of domestic violence should not be confined to female victims (as a priority group).

It must include male victims as a priority group otherwise the strategy will be gender-biased because the evidence clearly shows that male victims have also to be a priority.

(4) Police Attitude and Training

One of the many barriers male victims in London face is the fact that many, when approaching the police for help, are not treated in the same way as a female victim is when approaching the police. Statistics from our help-line show that of those who contact the police, 26% are arrested and 39% are not offered help.

While the statistics cover the whole of the UK, the charity believes these figures also apply to London.

Part of the problem is that the police are conditioned to view only females as victims and therefore police training must recognise both male and female victims. The charity has raised its concerns with

the Association of Chief Police Officers over their domestic violence guidance because within their guidance, male victims are only acknowledged in one line.

In addition, information campaigns such as the Metropolitan Police's 2005 advertising campaign² are clearly gender-biased as they purport to the fact that only women can be victims.

(5) Information and Publicity campaigns

In any publicity campaign on domestic violence, the needs of male victims have to be considered. Currently, only the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham produces a leaflet for male victims. There is no evidence that the Mayor has ever produced or supported a campaign for male victims and whilst the last Domestic Violence strategy did mention male victims, again, this was in passing. This is similar in all documents and strategies (if it is mentioned at all).

All campaigns produced by the Mayor and supporting statutory organisations either have to be gender-neutral (mention both female and male victims) or are gender-specific (a campaign of support for female victims has to be matched by a similar campaign for male victims).

(6) Services

While the Mayor does provide some support to a help-line that supports male victims, services across London for male victims are very poor and literally non-existent.

This was confirmed in qualitative research carried out by the ManKind Initiative in September 2008 on the quality of the support available to male victims on the council web-sites of the 16 London Boroughs. Some do not even advertise the help-lines that exist for men and there is precious little help and information aimed specifically at male victims.

The only refuge dedicated to male victims is one for gay men, and that is not big enough. There are no refuges that the charity is aware of in London that cater specifically for heterosexual men (and their children).

(7) Conclusion

If the principles outlined in the Equal Life Chances For All statements are to be carried through then male victims of domestic violence can no longer be ignored.

There is clear evidence that male victims in London are victims of institutional discrimination and this needs to be addressed by the Mayor of London. This includes

- (1) Amending the domestic violence priority groups to include male victims
- (2) Produce publicity campaigns that include male victims
- (3) To ensure all strategies produced by the Mayor, the Metropolitan Police and other support networks funded and created by the Mayor include male victims throughout.
- (4) To create a change in attitude and culture towards male victims by the Metropolitan Police.

If these measures are carried out, then male victims across London will no longer be ignored and the Mayor will be creating a London where all victims are treated with equal support, dignity and respect.

MARK BROOKS

19th February 2009

1 The British Crime Survey report: Home Office Statistical Bulletin 02/09 – Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2007/08 (published 22nd January 2009). Chapter 3 (page 55) of <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb0209.pdf>.

2. <http://www.met.police.uk/dv/publicity05.htm>

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Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
Greater London Authority
City Hall
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London SE1 2AA

CC: Kit Malthouse, Deputy Mayor, Policing
James Cleverly AM, Bexley and Bromley

14th June 2009

Dear Mayor Johnson

<p style="text-align: center;">The Mayor's Equality Framework: Equal Life Chances for All Measuring Success Vision Aim 3 – Measuring Success</p>

As a resident of the London Borough of Bexley and Chairman of a national charity (The ManKind Initiative - www.mankind.org.uk) that provides support for male victims of domestic abuse, I am gravely concerned about the policing implications and equality of justice available to London's male victims regarding the proposals in the proposed framework. As the framework is being finalised, I am asking for an urgent re-consideration of this section of the framework.

The reason for writing at the present time is that while the charity formally replied to the consultation, I am concerned about the response (Ref MGLA240409-0605) from the Communities and Intelligence team to a request by an equalities charity (Parity) regarding the legal basis of the proposed policies on domestic violence within the framework.

The response states that "it is proportionate to propose priority attention for women over men victims."

The framework rightly wants to "increase in the percentage of arrests following domestic violence incidents " and "increase in the detection rate following reports of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault", however the "priority group" that is proposed is "women." The framework should not have a priority group, as both female victims and male victims in London should be treated equally.

This raises a number of philosophical, legal and practical issues for London's male victims, both from the heterosexual and GBT groups. It leaves the Metropolitan Police open to legal challenge under the Human Rights Act and other equalities legislation.

Statistics

The latest British Crime Survey figures¹ show that in London during 2007/08, 37% of London's victims of domestic abuse and/or partner abuse are men.

	Victims of Domestic Abuse		Victims of Partner Abuse	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
%	3.9%	4.7%	3.9%	4.8%
Numbers	33,000	45,000	33,000	46,000

As the British Crime Survey does not have a further breakdown of London's statistics, the figures² on severe force for England and Wales show that there is near equality as 1.4% of men and 1.5% of women were victims of severe force by their partner in 2007/08.

Equality of Justice

The whole basis of policing in the UK, since the first police force were formed, is based on equality of justice and protecting all citizens equally, irrelevant of gender. That is, 'justice is blind' and that the severity of the crime is more important than the gender of any victim.

It is of grave concern that the Metropolitan Police therefore, in terms of increasing arrests and detection rates regarding domestic violence, will not be treating all victims equally. This goes against the whole ethos of policing.

With the modern-day target culture plus a policy stating that the priority is to increase arrests and detections against those who commit domestic violence against female victims means by definition, increasing arrests and detections against those who commit the same crime against males (both heterosexual and GBT) is not as important.

This will lead to practical issues on the ground especially if the Metropolitan Police are not reaching a target of increasing arrests/detections against those committing crimes against female victims. It is reasonably presumed under the target culture that we live in that police officers will be under pressure to meet this target.

In a practical sense, if a male victim presented himself to a police station (or called the police) but was in more danger than a female victim doing the same, the female victim would still take priority. If so, this not only breaks the ethos of policing, even though it was the Metropolitan Police's policy, but also leaves the Metropolitan Police open to legal challenge.

Legal Challenge

By definition and passing any test of reasonableness, if one group is deemed to be a priority group, then other groups are not a priority.

Article 5 of the Human Rights Act 1998 is quite clear - "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person."

The implication of the policy within the framework deems that the security of a male victim is therefore not as important as the security of a female victim when the crime warrants an arrest. It means that arresting/convicting a male perpetrating a domestic violence crime against a woman is a higher priority than arresting/convicting a female (or a male in a same sex relationship) perpetrating a domestic violence crime against a man, even if the actual severity of the crime is the same. This is in clear breach of Article 5.

The Communities and Intelligence team quoted, in response to the letter from Parity, that in the policy being pursued in the framework complied with section 76A of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended by the section 84 of the Equality Act 2006), section 404 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and the Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice (3.7).

The latter states that public authorities can commit to a set of priority objectives based on proportionality and relevance. Two issues arise:-

Firstly, the statistics, as previously stated, from the British Crime Survey show that the difference between female and male victims is not great (63%/37%) to warrant such a policy where one group is given a priority over another. Even less so when the issue of 'severe force' is considered.

Secondly, and more fundamentally, this may be relevant to issues such as information campaigns and housing (refuge) provision, although no Mayor of London has produced information or campaigns to support male victims (which is another issue), but would not apply to the fundamentals of equal policing and certainly not Article 5 of the Human Rights Act.

The Communities and Intelligence team have contended that in their "interpretation of the evidence indicates that violence between intimates is a relevant priority for gender equality and that it is proportionate to propose priority attention for women over male victims."

In applying this to the framework, it unequivocally means that the Mayor of London and the Metropolitan Police gives priority to female victims over male victims in terms of arresting and convicting the perpetrators of domestic violence against them.

It therefore means that both bodies are open to legal challenge because male victims in London have a different policy, test, code and threshold being applied to them that is different to a female victim.

If the proposed policy is not changed so that all victims are a priority, any male victim in London who believes his request for 'security of the person' or his case has not been pursued with equal vigour in the same regard as a female victim, will have a legal case against the Mayor of London and the Metropolitan Police.

The charity would not only support such a case in the courts but would encourage any male victim in London who feels he has not been treated equally to consider legal redress.

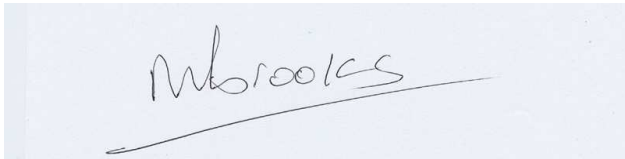
Conclusion

In conclusion, I urge the Mayor of London to ensure that the section in the framework on domestic violence gives equal priority to arresting and convicting all perpetrators of domestic violence, whether female or male.

Equality means that all victims, both female and male, must be protected and it is not acceptable in moral terms, let alone on legal terms, for London's male victims to know that their plight is not seen as important as the plight of others.

Thank you for your due consideration and I and the charity that I am Chairman of look forward to a favourable reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature appears to read 'm brooks' in a cursive style.

Mark Brooks
Chairman
The ManKind Initiative

Ref (1) Home Office Statistical Bulletin 02/09. Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2007/08. (Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2007/08), 22 January 2009. Table 3.16.

Ref (2) Home Office Statistical Bulletin 02/09. Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2007/08. (Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2007/08), 22 January 2009. Table 3.02.

Dear Mr Brooks,

Thank you for your letter to the Mayor dated 14th June 2009 expressing your concern about the GLA Equalities Framework and the issue of justice for male victims of domestic abuse. It has been passed to me for reply.

Both the Mayor's Equalities framework and his draft Violence Against Women Strategy, The Way Forward (published in April 2009 for a 3 month public consultation) address the needs of women reflecting the fact that women are at substantially greater risk of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence.

In your letter you suggest that the difference between female and male victims is not great enough to warrant a policy where one group is given priority over another. However, the analysis underpinning the Mayor's Violence Against Women strategy would suggest otherwise.

Metropolitan Police monitoring data for last year indicates that the majority of victims of domestic violence are female (82%) and that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators (89%) are male. Whilst we do recognise that it is important to consider research from other sources due to high levels of under-reporting with crimes such as domestic violence, there are a number of limitations with the British Crime Survey (BCS) findings that you highlight in your letter.

Firstly, the high prevalence levels for both men and women reflect a wide definition of both "domestic" and "partner" abuse within the BCS. Someone counts as a "victim" if they have experienced "one or more" incidents-this means that a single threat, push or slap is counted as domestic violence. Such single incidents, whether over a year or a lifetime, do not constitute a "pattern of coercive" control which is the more widely understood definition of intimate partner violence, and it is this which prompts calls to agencies for support and to police for intervention.

When the data is analysed in more detail to take into account frequency, fear and injury the disproportion between women and men as victims reappears. Home Office Research indicates that women are the overwhelming majority of the most heavily abused group. Among people subject to four or more incidents of domestic violence from the perpetrator of the worst incident (since age 16), 89 per cent were women (Home Office Research Study 276, Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey).

Furthermore, the BCS does not distinguish between offensive and defensive violence. Yet, research from the US indicates that in around three quarters of the incidents where women use violence against their partners it is in self-defence (Kimmel 2002).

In addition, research was carried out in Scotland to assess the extent and nature of the problem of domestic violence against men. Researchers at Keele University undertook follow up interviews with men who had participated in the Scottish Crime Survey. The main findings were:

-Over one in four of those men identified as victims of domestic violence in the Scottish Crime Survey subsequently claimed not to have experienced this form of victimisation.

-Compared to female victims, the men who identified as victims of domestic violence in the Scottish Crime Survey were less likely to have been repeat victims of assault, to have been seriously injured, and report feeling fearful in their own homes.

-Some of the male victims of domestic violence were also assailants.

-Only a minority of those men referred to as "victims" within the Scottish Crime Survey actually perceived themselves as victims and a significant proportion of the men who took part in the research said they had never experienced threats or force from their partners.

(Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, Crime and Criminal Justice Research Findings No.61)

Monitoring data from the Men's Advice Line (MALE) also shows that a significant number of men calling the MALE helpline initially identify as victims but subsequently change their identification by the end of the call or provide information about the violence in their relationships which strongly suggests that they are either not a victim or in fact are the perpetrator.

I think it is important to consider the British Crime Survey figures in the context of the research outlined above.

Having said that, The Way Forward recognises that men and boys are sometimes victims of crimes such as domestic violence, forced marriage and rape. Although basic BCS figures over-estimate the proportion of men suffering intimate partner violence who need support, it is vital that access to protection and services is there for those who need it. The Mayor's Equalities Framework and The Way Forward will sit alongside existing policies and procedures that provide protection and legal redress for all victims of crime.

The Mayor's approach to violence against women is consistent with International Human Rights standards. The United Nations has called on governments to take "integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women" and last year the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women expressed its concern about the absence of a national strategy to combat all

forms of violence against women and girls in the UK. By launching an integrated pan-London strategy to tackle violence against women the Mayor is leading the way and London will be one of the first global cities to put such a strategy in place.

Thank you once again for contacting the Mayor of London.

Yours sincerely,

Yeliz Osman
Communities and Intelligence