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Registered Charity No. 1089547 – Company Registration No. 3869893

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

Chief Constable Brian Moore,
Association of Chief Police Officers
1st Floor,
10 Victoria Street,
London
SW1H 0NN

27th May 2008

Dear Chief Constable

Guidance on Investigating Domestic Abuse 2008

As Chairman of a national charity that supports male domestic abuse victims, I am writing to express my concern about the lack of recognition, in the above Guidance, of male victims and the support services and agencies/charities available specifically for them.

The overwhelming majority of statutory agencies, whilst addressing domestic abuse using gender neutral language, do not provide specialist services or information for male victims. Part of this problem is the lack of official recognition of male domestic abuse victims. This is despite the fact that the British Crime Survey (see appendix 1) shows that c40% of domestic abuse victims are male and virtually the same percentage of men are victims of 'severe force' in a domestic relationship as of women.

Unfortunately, the 2008 ACPO Guidance on domestic abuse continues with this 'lack of recognition' theme. What makes matters worse is that the authors of the guidance appear not to have carried out any research into what is available for male victims. A simple 'Google' search would have provided the information.

I would like to draw your attention to a number of particular areas in the Guidance:-

3.12 REFERRALS TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Officers should inform victims of the local availability of refuges, VS, outreach services and Women's Aid and Refuge operate a network of refuges and community-based support services across the country for women and children who need advocacy and support and a safe place to stay. Specialist refuge and support services also exist for victims of domestic abuse who might experience additional barriers to reporting or escaping domestic abuse.

In areas where specialist services do not exist, police officers should seek information from the National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline to establish the nearest specialist support service. There are a small number of specialist refuges and support for women with learning disabilities, ethnic minority women and gay men.

Firstly, the text does not refer to the fact that (as currently known), there are six refuges in the UK with dedicated refuge provision for heterosexual male victims (See Appendix 2).

In addition, there is no reference to a number of charities or organisations (see Appendix 3) that support heterosexual male victims, including one help-line that is actually funded by the Home Office (M.A.L.E. Advice Line).

Of course, due to the lack of recognition, funding for these charities and refuges is extremely tight, however, they do exist.

This issue is compounded by the lack of listing of those services in section **9.9 REFUGE/OUTREACH SERVICES**, where again there is no listing of the organisations that can help male victims.

Lastly, in 9.6 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING SERVICES, the Guidance again clearly shows the lack of recognition, let alone statutory agency service provision, for male victims:-

As the majority of victims of domestic abuse are women, LAs should ensure that they provide women-only accommodation and refuges. Children's well-being should also be central to decision making about accommodation. Any specific accommodation needs of particular groups of people and their households should be taken into account, for example, victims from minority ethnic groups.

What concerns our charity is that the lack of recognition for male victims is institutionalised within statutory agencies and this includes the vast majority of police forces. Surrey police force is one such police force that does recognise male victims and has produced leaflets to show they will help male victims.

Male victims need police forces to treat them on the same terms as female victims and official recognition is part of the process. A survey the charity carried out in November 2006 (119 responses) showed:-

59% of those surveyed sought help from the police and of those:-
28% were arrested themselves,
18% were asked to leave the home,
35% were offered no help,
19% help offered.

If the official police guidance on domestic abuse does not refer to heterosexual male victims at all, then the lack of recognition becomes institutionalised.

I am more than happy to discuss this issue in person. Nonetheless, I would be grateful if you could reply to the charity's concerns and confirm that changes will be made to the Guidance that reflects the existence, plight and needs of male victims.

I look forward to receiving a favourable reply

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks
Chairman
The ManKind Initiative
(personal office number 020 7808 1312)
(personal mobile 07917 506683)

Appendix 1 : Statistics

- (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-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) – 31st Jan 2008
<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

Appendix 2 : Refuges for heterosexual men

Confidential Information – not disclosed

APPENDIX 3 - Charities/Organisations

The ManKind Initiative

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M.A.L.E. Advice Line

<http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk/>
0808 801 0327

The Dyn Project

<http://www.dynwales.org>

0808 801 0321

Men's Aid Scotland

<http://mensaid.org.uk/content/view/16/30/>

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