

The ManKind Initiative

www.mankind.org.uk

**Submission to
Public Services Challenge**

Domestic Abuse – Male Victims & Children

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Version 2

Overview

Any one who has not suffered from domestic abuse can have no real concept of the depths of despair that a victim can fall into. Our helplines have taken thousands of calls from men who have suffered from between a few months to over twenty years. They have been aged from twenty through to seventy ; they have ranged from labourers to doctors or police officers ; they have been white, black, asian ; they have been mothers distraught about the suicide of their sons through domestic violence. Domestic abuse like any illness knows no boundaries.

Our first recorded case came in 1998 when a young father came to us with concerns about the physical and emotional violence that his wife was inflicting on his children. He sought help frcial services and health visitors and was given none. He thought to remedy the problem by divorcing her and obtaining custody of the children. He then entered the nightmare world of the Family Courts --welfare officers ignored affidavits from neighbours confirming the abuse of the children – a judge with a long standing record of failing to enforce contact orders choosing to ignore the evidence in front of him and granting custody to a violent mother – hearing from his boys about the level of continued abuse whilst in her custody and being unable to help them.

At the time we were engaged in Family Law reform. It was then that we realised that the true measure of bias against men and their children extended from custody issues into domestic abuse. As we embarked on our work on domestic abuse we have encountered discrimination far worse than anything we have seen in Family Law cases. The establishment is determined that domestic abuse will remain a gender issue even to the extent of denying the children of abused men the help they need. “Gender neutral” laws are passed in order to comply with social inclusion and human rights. These are all meaningless without the funding and infrastructure for men and their children to support these laws.

In our submission we outline the abuse suffered by men and children ; the barriers to men in accessing services ; government statistics ; our proposals for change.

We hope that you will give our submission serious consideration and will be pleased to give any oral evidence required.

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The ManKind Initiative

What is the ManKind Initiative ?

It is a Men's Civil Rights Charity which is largely devoted to reforming Family Law in order that children of divorced or separated parents have equal access to both parents where it is safe for them.

Directly linked to this is the work which we undertake for male victims of domestic abuse and their children.

We are also involved in other men's issues including Men's health, Boy's education, Equality under the Law, male/female relationships and support of the Family through marriage.

How do we achieve these aims ?

We work towards achieving our aims in the following ways :

- ❑ **Campaigns** – we have undertaken campaigns in support of our work on men's health, reform of the Court Welfare Service, and reform of Family Law.
- ❑ **Parliamentary lobbying** – our chosen method of reform in the case of Family Law is through the parliamentary system of lobbying for democratic change and working with the Department for Constitutional Affairs.
- ❑ **Coalitions** – where possible we work with other organisations and we head up the Coalition for Equal Parenting which now has the support of the Conservative Party.
- ❑ **Media** – we work closely with the media and we have given many interviews on local and national radio and tv as well as local and national newspapers.
- ❑ **Education** – in order to educate and inform local authorities and statutory bodies we run appropriate training courses and give talks to Forums.
- ❑ **Leaflets, Posters and Website** – we distribute leaflets and posters throughout the UK (in 2004 we distributed around 14,000 leaflets) and we have a website at www.mankind.org.uk
- ❑ **Regional Branches** - we are developing a network of regional branches throughout the UK.
- ❑ **Training Courses** - we run our own branch development training courses and domestic abuse training courses.
- ❑ **National Helpline** - we run our own National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0870 794 4124.

Domestic Abuse

How does domestic abuse manifest itself ?

Results of ManKind's Survey to date (122 victims)

The profile of a male sufferer

Age 42 : height 5'9" : weight 11 stone 9lbs : 35% professional, 39% skilled, 17% semi-skilled, 9% unskilled : 12% are registered disabled : 88% are white, 3% are black 5% asian, 2% mixed, 2% other.

The profile of the female abuser

Age 40 : height 5'6' : weight 10 stone 2lbs : 30% professional, 14% skilled, 19% semi-skilled, 37% unskilled : 7% are registered disabled : 81% are white, 7% are black, 7% asian, 3% mixed, 2% other.

The range of abuse suffered by men

Our current survey shows that on average a male victim will suffer from domestic abuse in the following way :

Duration – average five and a quarter years with 74% suffering from it weekly or daily

Physical – 75% are punched : 56% are scratched : 75% are slapped : 57% are hit with sharp or blunt instruments : 57% are kicked : 25% are kicked in the groin : 29% are spat at : 10% are head butted : 16% have scalding water thrown over them.

Mental – 92% are shouted at : 96% are controlled : 95% are verbally denigrated:80% suffer from false allegations : 70% are threatened with a police callout : 76% suffer from sleep deprivation : 62% suffer from physical threats : 48% suffer from police callouts : 30% suffer from death threats : 15% suffer from ex-partie injunctions.

Sexual abuse – 57% are sexually denigrated : 11% are sexually abused.

Financial control – 57% suffer from their partner's debt : 62% suffer from financial control by partner.

Use of children – 42% of mothers threaten to remove the children : 39% encourage the children to ignore or undermine him : 7% encourage the children to assault him

Children – 80% of callers have children : 68% are aged under 12 : 48% witnessed the physical abuse : 61% witnessed the mental abuse : 66% heard the abuse : 18% were physically abused by the mother.

Accessing help

Police – 61% sought help : 25% arrested, 19% were asked to leave, 36% were offered no help, 20% help offered.

Social Services – 32% sought help : 38% sided with partner, 44% ignored the problem, 18% were helpful.

Housing – 27% sought help : 24% were helpful : 76% were unhelpful

Services for men

5% said they were good, 25% said they were poor, 70% said they were non-existent : 89% wanted confidential helplines, 57% wanted refuges, 70% wanted drop-in centres, 98% wanted equal access to existing services.

What are the barriers to male victims accessing services ?

Men

Generally, men are ashamed to report their abuse or do not even recognise that they are being abused.

Public perception

Generally it is one of disbelief. Women don't assault men and if they did men could control them. This is a common myth inasmuch that normal men do not hit women. Some will attempt to restrain a woman, but subsequent bruising will leave them open to a false claim of assault.

Variable response from statutory agencies

Women are five times more likely to report domestic abuse than men (BCS 1996) and for those men who do report abuse their response is highly variable. This acts as a disincentive to report.

Home Office

The Home Office, despite acknowledging that 1 in 6 men suffer from domestic abuse over a lifetime as against 1 in 4 women, have decided that they are prioritising women. This action has made domestic abuse a gender issue rather than a social issue.

Home Office letter from Baroness Scotland 10/6/04 "as a result, the Government's main focus on domestic violence is with female victims".....Home Office letter from Baroness Scotland 10/6/05 "To address your final point on the issue of our PR and campaigns, I can only reiterate that the Government recognise that the majority of issues and services are focused on women and make no apology for that". (full text on www.mankind.org.uk)

This gender specific funding policy feeds down from national to county authorities and results in women only campaigns which has a detrimental effect on all male victims including their children. Statistics relating to men and their children are excluded from the campaigns and literature is frequently distorted to create an impression that "Domestic violence is, in almost every instance carried out by men against women". (Worcestershire domestic violence leaflet)

Child Safety

The most significant sufferers are children of male victims. Whilst the Government is still delaying a programme of help for men, many thousands of children are witnessing or are part of the abuse. Following the inevitable family breakdown they invariably remain with an abusive mother leaving a father helpless to intervene.

The Law and Child Safety

We have since December 2003 been fortunate enough to obtain the services of a refuge which takes men and children. However, if an unmarried man does not have parental responsibility any attempt to take his children to any place of safety could result in his arrest for abduction. This places him and his children in an impossible situation in which there is no solution unless statutory agencies are prepared to take him seriously.

Facts

These figures are a summary of the Women & Equality Unit's publication "The Cost of Domestic Violence" produced in September 2004 – best estimate of extent of domestic violence against men and women using data from the 2001 BCS.

Types of Domestic Violence	Number of Victims		Total
	Female	Male	
Domestic Homicide	102 81.6%	23 18.4%	125
Non-sexual-severe force	242,000 56.5%	186,000 43.5%	428,000
Non-sexual-minor	410,000 70.2%	174,000 29.8%	584,000
Total	652,000 64.4%	360,00 35.6%	1,012,000
Best Estimate of violence	529,000 61%	338,000 39%	867,000

Government Statistics on Domestic Violence
Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence
England and Wales 1995 – 2004

Year	Number of Victims		Total
	Female	Male	
1996	694,000 70%	298,000 30%	987,000
1998	564,000 69%	253,000 31%	812,000
2000	575,000 74%	203,000 26%	771,000
2001	374,000 73%	134,000 27%	503,000
2002	511,000 81%	117,000 19%	621,000
2003	366,000 73%	135,000 27%	501,000
2004	298,000 66%	150,000 34%	446,000
2005	308,000 77%	92,000 23%	401,000
2006	285,000 80%	72,000 20%	357,000
Total over period	3,975,000 73%	1,454,000 27%	5,430,000

Figures produced by Dewar Research (full copy in appendix)

Summary

Denial of the facts - Given the problems always associated with statistics it would not be unreasonable to say that men form around 27% of victims of domestic abuse. This information is constantly buried both at national and local level.

Abuse of Men's Rights and that of their Children - It is an abuse of men's human rights, equal opportunities and is socially exclusive to delay the help for men and children when the evidence has been available since 1996 that men form a sizeable minority of victims.

Misleading propaganda - It is wrong to promote campaigns through local authorities using misleading information – “Domestic Violence is, in almost every instance carried out by men against women” – this information was displayed on a recent leaflet at a event attended by ManKind. This is taking place throughout the UK. It is negative campaigning and will never solve the social issue of domestic abuse.

Proposals

How can we remedy this situation ?

This can be achieved in the following ways :

Nationally

National Campaign

There should be a national campaign aimed at **all victims** of domestic abuse. The Home Office is meeting part of this remit by instigating projects into the needs of ethnic minorities (women only) and those in same sex relationships. They claim that work done for women includes men – it does not. All funding is targeted at women only in respect of National Helplines, refuge provision, outreach services and campaigns.

National Helpline

It is socially exclusive to make public funding available for a National Helpline for women only. A National Helpline for all victims of domestic abuse administered by Men's and Women's organisations (to include ManKind) should be set up as a matter of urgency.

Local Authority

Local authority funding for domestic abuse should be restricted to those who show clear evidence that they are assisting all victims of domestic abuse. An annual audit of the authority should be undertaken to ensure the best use of the funding as well as a socially inclusive programme of work.

Hence local authorities should operate thus :

Funding

A funding programme which demonstrates the clear use of funding for services which will benefit all victims of abuse.

Social Inclusion

Local authorities should ensure and demonstrate in their funding applications that all sectors of society, including men, women and those in same sex relationships are involved in any and all initiatives.

Housing

ManKind has worked with a number of Housing Departments in Somerset and produced a document relating to the workings of the Housing Act. It also includes guidelines designed to assist Housing Officers when assessing the needs of male victims. A standard document should be drawn up for all Housing Officers and applicants which clearly outlines their rights and responsibilities.

Refuge Provision

Through their excellent work, Women's Aid and Women's Refuge have established an excellent network of refuges. Funding should be made available for a purpose built Men's and Children's refuge in each **region** of the UK.

Social Services

Social Services have recently drawn up a Guideline of Best Practice for Social Workers. A similar guideline should be drawn up for parents requiring their assistance in cases of domestic abuse involving children or vulnerable adults.

Police

We have a basic training programme aimed at domestic abuse officers and would like to spread this work throughout all Police Authority areas.

GOVERNMENT STATISTICS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence
England and Wales 1995 – 2005/06

British Crime Survey estimates

Up until 2001, estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales were given in a series of *British Crime Surveys* (BCSs) published by the Home Office generally every two years. Since 2001, estimated numbers have been given in the Home Office *Crime in England and Wales* annual publications. The estimates are based on people reporting actions against them perceived as crimes. Since not all people regard domestic abuse against them, even if serious, as a crime, particularly young men, and therefore may not report it (or wish to admit it) to crime surveys, these Home Office crime estimates are likely to significantly under-estimate the actual extent of domestic violence, particularly against young men.

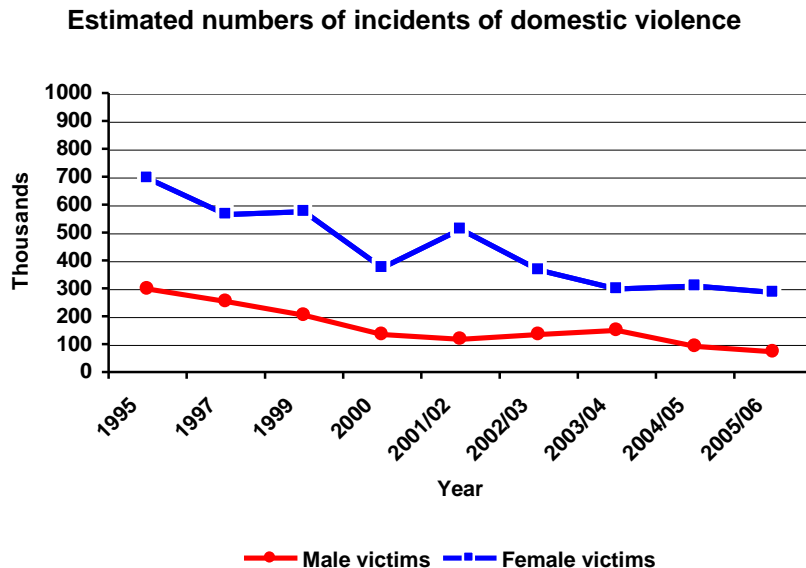
Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales during the ten-year period 1995 to 2004/05, based on these and other Home Office sources, are tabulated below. The trends over this period in estimated numbers of incidents and the proportions of male victims, based on these, are indicated on the accompanying two figures.

Thousands

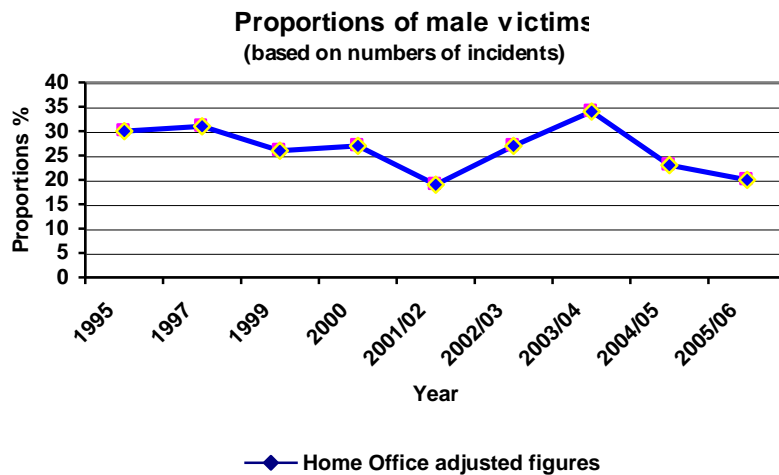
Year	Total⁽³⁾	Male victims	Female victims	% male victims based on no of incidents
'95 (1996 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	987	298	694	30
'97 (1998 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	812	253	564	31
'99 (2000 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	771	203	575	26
'00 (2001 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	503	134	374	27
'01/02 (2001/02 BCS interviews) ⁽¹⁾	621	117	511	19
'02/03 (2002/03 BCS interviews) ⁽²⁾	501	135 ⁽⁴⁾	366	27
'03/04 (2003/04 BCS interviews) ⁽⁵⁾	446	150	298	34
'04/05 (2004/05 BCS interviews) ⁽⁶⁾	401	92	308	23
'05/06 (2005/06 BCS interviews) ⁽⁷⁾	357	72	285	20

Sources: (1) Home Office private communication, January 2003
 (2) Crime in England and Wales 2002/03, Table 5a
 (3) Totals given are slightly less than sum of numbers of male and female victims
 (4) Total for male victims derived from 27% of 501 thousand given as total for all victims
 (5) Crime in England and Wales 2003/04, Table 5.01
 (6) Crime in England and Wales 2004/05, Table 5.01
 (7) Crime in England and Wales 2005/06, Table 5.01
 Interim revised ONS population estimates used to gross up BCS estimates.

The results of this series of crime surveys suggest that during the eleven-year period 1995-2005/06, the estimated numbers of incidents against both male and female victims decreased significantly (by about 64% overall). The proportion of male victims has also decreased based on the number of incidents.



Over the period, the proportions of male victims, based on estimated numbers of incidents, has varied between 19% and 34%, with a mean of about 24%. Since male victims tend to suffer fewer repeat incidents against them than female victims, the proportions of actual male victims are higher than those based on numbers of incidents. The more detailed BCS supplemental surveys specifically aimed at interpersonal violence detect much higher proportions of male victims, in the range of 42% to 50% for a last-year period [see below].



Supplementary British Crime Surveys

Supplement to 1996 BCS

A detailed survey specifically into the extent of domestic violence in couple relationships in England and Wales was carried out in 1995 as a supplement to the 1996 British Crime

Survey, with 10,844 men and women between the ages of 16 and 59 completing a computerised self-completion questionnaire. The results were published under Home Office Research Study 191 in January 1999.

In contrast to the routine crime surveys, these revealed an almost equal culpability between men and women. For the 12-month period preceding the survey, equal proportions (4.2%) of men and women reported being physically assaulted by a partner. In the longer term (over a lifetime), 23% of women and 15% of men reported physical assault by a partner, a proportion of male victims of about 40%.

The Study estimated that there were about 6.6 million incidents of domestic physical assault in 1995 (3.29 million involving women victims and 3.25 million male victims), with 2.9 million incidents resulting in injury (1.86 million women and 1.0 million men). Although women tended to be more harmed or frightened by domestic violence, one third of those injured were men and one quarter of chronic (repeated) victims were men.

The 6.6 million incidents of domestic physical assault in 1995 estimated by Study 191 compares with the total of 987 thousand estimated by the 1996 BCS for the same period, the difference giving some measure of the extent of under-reporting to the routine crime survey in 1995.

The results of Study 191 are discussed by Dr Malcolm George in his *An Analysis of Male Victimisation* which can also be viewed on the Dewar Research website.

Supplement to 2001 BCS

A similar detailed survey specifically into the extent of interpersonal violence, including domestic violence, in England and Wales was carried out in 2000/01 as a supplement to the 2001 British Crime Survey, with 22,463 men and women between the ages of 16 and 59 interviewed also using a computerised self-

completion questionnaire. The results were published under Home Office Research Study 276 in March 2004.

Although the pattern of results for domestic violence was generally similar to those of the earlier 1995 study, the estimated number of total incidents of physical assault were much higher (10.52 million compared to 6.6 million), but the numbers of victims of both sexes and also the proportions of male victims were slightly lower.

For the 12-month period preceding the survey, 3.4% of women and 2.2% of men reported being physically assaulted by a partner, a proportion of male victims of just over 39%. This compares with 4.2% of each sex, and thus a proportion of about 50% male victims, found by the 1995 survey. In the longer term, since the age of 16, 18.6% of women and 9.6% of men reported physical assault by a partner, a proportion of male victims of about 34%. This compares with 23% of women and 15% of men found by the 1995 survey for a 'lifetime' experience, and a proportion of male victims of about 40%.

The Study estimated that there were about 867,000 victims of actual domestic physical assault in 2000 (529,000 women and 338,000 men, a proportion of 39% male victims). For about half (49%) of victims, the assaults were classified as severe (242,000 women and 186,000 men - a proportion of male victims of 43.5%).

Generally, about half of male victims and about one quarter of female victims suffered no injury, and three times as many female victims as male suffered mental or emotional problems. Slightly more female victims than male suffered minor injury, and about twice as many female victims as male suffered moderate and severe injury.

Supplement to 2004/05 BCS

A similar detailed survey, using a self-completion module, of the extent of interpersonal violence, was also included in the 2004/05 British Crime Survey for England and Wales, based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 24,498 men and women between the ages of 16 and 59. This also included a category of family abuse for the first time, as well as partner abuse, but did not cover repeat victimisation or estimates of the numbers of incidents. The results were published in Home Office Online Report 12/06, and were given in percentage terms rather than total estimated numbers. The survey covered any partner abuse (non-sexual abuse, sexual assault, and stalking), any family abuse similarly, sexual assault, and stalking.

For the year preceding the study, and excluding stalking, 5.6% of women and 4.1% of men reported having suffered non-sexual partner abuse (any abuse, threat, or force from a partner or ex-partner), a proportion of male victims of about 42%. Of these, 2.7% of women and 2.0% of men reported suffering actual force [assault or violence], a proportion of male victims of about 43%, which was designated as 'severe' in the case of 1.8% of women and 1.6% of men, a proportion of male victims of about 47%. These proportions are slightly more than those found by Study 276 some four years earlier.

Such proportions of male victims are almost double those found by the BCS of 2004/05 (23% based on numbers of incidents) and that of 2005/06 (20%). This suggests either a significant level of under-reporting especially by male victims of domestic abuse to these routine annual surveys or that basing the proportion on the numbers of incidents distorts the actual prevalence of male victims.

Curiously, the survey found that equal proportions (8.9%) of women and of men reported having experienced stalking in this one-year period. Stalking was thus more likely to have been experienced by both women and men than any other form of interpersonal abuse.

In the longer term since the age of 16, and again excluding stalking, the survey found that 27.9% of women and 17.8% of men reported having suffered non-sexual partner abuse, a proportion of male victims of about 39%. Of these, 18.9% of women and 10.6% of men reported having suffered actual force [assault or violence], a proportion of male victims of about 36%, which was 'severe' in the case of 13.9% women and 8.8% men, a proportion of male victims of about 39%.

Some 50% of women and 35% of men who had experienced intimate violence since the age of 16 also reported that they had experienced more than one type of intimate violence in that time.

Marital status, especially being unmarried, being young, and having a limiting disability or illness, were found to be independently associated with intimate violence for both men and women.

Dewar Research

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www.dewar4research.org