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Hon. Patrons – Lord Cotter, John Penrose MP, Erin Pizzey, Ian McNicholl and Stephen Fitzgerald

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Ms Rachael Byrne,  
Executive director of care and support  
Home Group  
2 Gosforth Park Way  
Gosforth Business Park  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Tyne & Wear  
NE12 8ET

11 June 2012

Dear Ms Byrne

### **Public turns blind eye to domestic violence as Euro 2012 kicks-off**

I am writing as Chairman of The ManKind Initiative, a charity that support male victims of domestic abuse, to express our tremendous disappointment and surprise with the above press release and research which fails to give a rounded picture about domestic abuse. This disappointment and surprise stems from the excellent support that Stonham gives to male victims

While the charity has no dispute with the premise of the research we object to the fact that no equivalent research was presented or even undertaken where the genders were reversed. This should have shown a more rounded picture of domestic abuse in the UK.

We would like to understand why Home Group/Stonham chose not to produce this equivalent research and its failure to do merely serves to continue with the old-fashioned stereotype that domestic abuse victims are only female. This is despite the fact that Home Office figures show that one in three victims of domestic abuse are male and in 2010/11, 600,000 men suffered partner abuse. I have listed the alternative questions (see Annex 1) that could have been asked.

Lastly, while the research does show disturbingly lax attitudes from many men, the same disturbingly lax attitudes were also exhibited by women but only the male figures were brought out in the text of the press release – this suggests the purpose of the press release was designed to portray a negative attitude towards men rather than both men and women.

As set out, the charity is disappointed with the research because it serves to continue to marginalise the plight and existence of male victims of domestic abuse, when it is vital that the plight and existence of all victims are recognised.

I look forward to receiving your response on why Home Group/Stonham chose not to ask the same questions with the genders reversed and whether you will produce research on this basis.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks  
Chairman  
The ManKind Initiative

Annex 1: Questions with genders reversed

- (1) Thinking about if you suspected that a female friend or neighbour might be hitting their husband/ partner... How likely or unlikely do you think you would be to intervene in any way (for example, by calling the police, social services, going round to their house etc.)?
- (2) Sometimes women might make comments about violence towards a husband or partner that are intended to be a joke or light-hearted, for example joking with their friends that they'd like to give their male partner 'a good slap'...In general, how acceptable or unacceptable do you think a comment like this ever is
- (3) And thinking about if you heard someone making a comment about violence towards a husband or partner that was intended to be a joke or light-hearted, for example joking with their friends that they'd like to give their male partner 'a good slap'...How likely or unlikely would you be to challenge them (for example, telling them they shouldn't say it, even as a joke)?
- (4) Have you ever experienced a situation where a woman or group of women have joked about physical or emotional harm towards women?
- (5) You said that you had experienced a situation where a woman or group of women have joked about physical or emotional harm towards women. Have you ever challenged the woman or group of women making this type of joke (for example, saying it was an unacceptable thing to say)?