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Home Office Consultation:

Cross-government definition of domestic violence consultation

Response by the ManKind Initiative

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The charity mainly answered two questions:

- (1) Do you think the cross-government definition of domestic violence should remain the same?**

This definition should be changed to domestic abuse not domestic violence.

- (2) Do you think the current definition of domestic violence is properly applied by government departments, local government and frontline practitioners?**

The current definition includes the phrase 'regardless of gender or sexuality' and domestic abuse/violence and human rights/equalities legislation underpins this.

This means that while policy and the law is gender-neutral the application of policy is not gender neutral in the case of male victims of domestic abuse whether heterosexual or gay. The government (local and national) at all levels still has a culture of institutional discrimination against male victims.

This can be seen in a number of areas.

At a national level, domestic and sexual violence/abuse policy falls under the overarching 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' - which therefore by its very definition ignores male victims of domestic and sexual abuse/violence. This has the effect of not only embedding institutional discrimination at a national level but also at a local level as local government takes its cue from national government. This means the continuation of a lack of services (outreach, signposting, and refuge/safe house), lack of awareness campaigns and also lack of training for front-line staff on how to support male victims. Many councils will be in breach of the public sector equality duty.

If there is to be a policy called 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' then there has to be an equivalent 'Ending Violence Against Men and Boys'

In addition, even the documents for this consultation are an example of institutional discrimination and certainly the impact assessment is likely to be in breach of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Home Secretary's foreword of the consultation is skewed toward just female victims. It rightly produces figures for female victims but does not include the equivalent figures for male victims, even though these are available from exactly the same British Crime Survey source. Why has the Home Secretary (or those that drafted it for her) consciously decided to ignore the male equivalents when the figures are in the same tables?

The impact assessment is highly likely to be in breach of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The summary and evidence only quotes female victims not female and male victims. For example, it states "Total cost of an additional 306 MARACs meetings to support high risk female domestic abuse victims." MARACs and any additional MARACs will be supporting female and male victims. Considering that Annex 1 states that 7% and 5% of women and men respectively are victims (a ratio of 58:42), it is concerning that those that wrote the impact assessment could not bring themselves to mention both female and male victims.

Lastly, the Home Office and many in local government (it is changing at a local government level) still wrongly view domestic violence/abuse as a gendered crime when it is a crime against an individual. Despite mentioning the ratio above, Annex 1 still tries to suggest it is a gendered crime - "statistically women are more often victims than men and this has been identified as a possible impact on gender." Why does the Home Office see domestic violence/abuse ideologically - it is out-dated in a modern society and unjustifiably goes against the core principle of equality for all.

ENDS

Produced by Mark Brooks, Chairman,, The ManKind Initiative.