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Mr Trevor Phillips
Chair of Equality and Human Rights Commission
3 More London, Riverside,
Tooley Street,
London,
SE1 2RG

CC – Dr Nicola Brewer (Chief Executive)

19th February 2009

Dear Mr Phillips

MAP OF GAPS – MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As Chair of a charity that supports male victims of domestic violence and abuse, I am writing formally to request that a Map of Gaps and associated campaign, similar to that produced by the Commission for female victims, is produced concerning the even greater lack of services for male victims of domestic violence (heterosexual, gay, bi-sexual and transgender).

This widespread lack of services has meant that hundreds of thousands of men who are victims of domestic violence have no local services, no local refuges and no local information campaigns provided by their local statutory agencies. In effect these victims are unrecognised. Such a lack of services and information suggests that the vast majority of statutory agencies are likely to be in breach of their Gender Equality Duties.

As calls to our help-line show, male victims do not have local services available to them and in many respects, when they ask, they are rebuffed by the police and housing authorities. The reason for such a request for a Map of Gaps is that while, as you rightly point out, there are large gaps in services for women, the existing situation for men, as all available figures show, is considerably worse.

British Crime Survey¹ statistics show a substantial level of female aggression in partner relationships:-

- One in five (20%) men have 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*).

In terms of service provision (as known):-

- There are only a few organisations in England and Wales (none in Scotland or Northern Ireland) with specific refuge provision for male victims (only 10 refuges with about 50 spaces with 18 of these for gay men). This compares with over 450 refuges exclusively for female victims. This does not take into account the new network of refuges announced this week in Northamptonshire.
- Local authorities and the police run campaigns generally aimed only aimed at female victims, with the exception of just a few statutory agencies who have also run campaigns for men – Surrey Police, Leicestershire/Leicester Councils, Barking and Dagenham Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Warwickshire County Council.

Many male victims face particular barriers because they feel, for cultural reasons, because of male culture, embarrassment and a lack of pride, in admitting they are a victim. With so few information campaigns aimed at male victims, it only further compounds the fact they do not feel confident in coming forward because they do not think they will be supported or believed. Sadly, on many occasions, they are not. These perceptions are well-founded as about one quarter are themselves arrested by the police, and few female assailants are prosecuted.

The BBC ran news features² on Tuesday 10th February 2009 on the plight of male victims and two common themes were the attitude of the police towards male victims and the lack of local support. The BBC were applauded directly or indirectly (when victims called our help-line) for highlighting the issue.

As the statistics show, there is a clear mismatch between the level of male victims and the local services available. This is why, as the Commission represents all in the UK, male victims need the Commission to explicitly and publicly put pressure on statutory agencies to provide meaningful support services (such as refuges) and information campaigns for male as well as female victims. There needs to be a cultural change within statutory agencies (including the police) to make sure they show the same concern for male victims as they rightly show for female victims.

Lastly, we feel it is important to make clear that all victims of domestic violence should be supported, whether female or male.

In this regard and to reiterate, The ManKind Initiative is formally requesting that the Equality and Human Rights Commission conduct a Map of Gaps exercise for male victims of domestic violence and abuse.

If you wish to discuss our request further, the charity's Project Manager and I would be more than happy to discuss this in person. I look forward to a favourable and prompt response from the Commission.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks

Chairman

The ManKind Initiative

chairman@mankind.org.uk)

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. BBC Coverage:-

http://news.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/hi/health/newsid_7878000/7878801.stm

http://news.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/hi/health/newsid_7878000/7878698.stm

Podcast (10th Feb 2009) - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/podcasts/5lnpi/>

The ManKind Initiative is a registered charity consisting of men and women who support male victims of domestic violence and domestic abuse. It provides a help-line, information, referral and training service.

Registered Charity No. 1089547 – Company Registration No. 3869893 Patrons – Lord Cotter, John Penrose MP, Paul Rowen MP (NW Branch), Erin Pizzey and Stephen Fitzgerald.

Our ref: TP/MMcC/192brooks

Your ref:

Date: 3rd July 2009

Mark Brooks
Flook House
Belvedere Road
Taunton, TA1 1BT

Dear Mr Brooks

Map of Gaps - Male Victims of Violence

Thank you for contacting the EHRC and raising your concerns. I apologise for the delay in responding to you; this is obviously an issue that the Commission thinks is extremely important. In your letter you stressed that you feel there is a need for a Map of Gaps that focuses on male victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, you have raised concerns surrounding the Gender Equality Duty as you feel that the vast majority of statutory services are likely to be in breach of their duties for not providing equal services to men and women.

In 2007, the inaugural Map of Gaps report documented for the first time the uneven distribution of specialised violence against women (VAW) services in the UK. The findings from the report were alarming: over one-third of local authorities had no specialised service provision at all. Only a minority had a diversity of services across a range of forms of violence which provide routes to safety, information and support and help rebuild their lives. The Map of Gaps campaign does not focus on domestic violence solely, but is focusing on all forms of violence affecting women including:

- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Violence

- Crimes in the name of honour
- Stalking
- Forced Marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Sexual harassment

The EHRC recognises that violence against men is an important issue in society which clearly needs to be addressed; however, we place our work on violence against women in the broader social context. The Commission recognises that violence against women is a cause and consequence of women's inequality: it happens because women have an unequal position in society and further reinforces that unequal position. We also follow the United Nation's lead by defining violence against women as "*Violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately*". It is from this framework, which recognizes all the forms of violence that women suffer, and recognizes that a majority of perpetrators are men that we have developed our policy on violence against women. Again, this is not to suggest that men do not suffer violence; we recognise that men do suffer violence at the hands of women and other men and we condemn this violence. We will continue to keep under review the question of male victims of domestic violence, and should there be an appropriate opportunity in the future to engage in this agenda, within our statutory remit, we will consider doing so.

In your letter you have also raised concerns surrounding the Gender Equality Duty (GED), as you feel that the vast majority of statutory agencies are likely to be in breach of their duties for not providing equal services to men and women. However, it should be noted that the GED does not require that services are provided on the same scale for both men and women. The GED requires equality of outcome, which may mean providing different services to men and women depending on the inequality being addressed. As women are the majority of victims of interpersonal violence, it would not be

appropriate to provide single-sex support services on an equal basis for men and women. Indeed, the code of practice clearly states that:

2.36. In certain circumstances, public authorities may wish to address gender inequality by developing policies or providing services on a single-sex basis. This might mean providing services to one sex only, providing a similar service separately to each sex or providing a service in different ways to women and men. This could be an appropriate and sometimes even a necessary way of complying with the gender duty if evidence shows that single-sex approaches are needed to allow both women and men to access public services equally or in order to deliver equality of outcomes. The most common examples of this in practice are rape crisis centres or refuges for women who are victims of domestic violence. Public authorities might also wish to consider providing single-sex family support or health services, under certain circumstances. However, public authorities must satisfy themselves that any approach to single sex services complies with the Sex Discrimination Act.

In your letter you have also provided British Crime Survey statistics that relates solely to domestic violence. While powerful, the data does not present the full range of issues. The statistics are also based on single incidents of a predominantly criminal nature and do not pay regard to:

- Whether or not the violence was repeated - and if so, how often.
- The complex pattern of overlapping abuse of various kinds (including emotional, financial and sexual violence).
- The context in which it took place in.

They also exclude sexual assaults - which are overwhelmingly perpetrated against women, by men - many of whom are partners or former partners of the victims. A more complete picture of the extent and nature of domestic violence may be found in Sylvia Walby and Jonathan Allen's analysis of the self-completion module of the British Crime Survey.¹

To gain an accurate picture of domestic violence for women and men, it is necessary to look further than the data on prevalence and to examine the data on repeat victimization. On average, women suffered more repeat victimisation than men; nearly half of male victims had experienced just one incident of domestic violence in the past year compared to under a third of female victims.² The data shows us that there are significant differences in the patterns of violence: some women were subject to many attacks from the perpetrator of the worst incident of violence, where as others – especially men – were not subject to more than one occurrence. Indeed, 69% of men stated that the event of domestic violence was never repeated by the same partner. Further, 32% of women who had experienced violence after the age of 16 experienced it “many times”.³ Women constituted 89 % of all those who suffered four or more incidents.

It is also important to look at the extent of harm that men and women who are victims of domestic violence suffer in order to make a comprehensive assessment of the severity of the problem. The

¹ Home Office Research Study 276: “Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey” by Sylvia Walby and Jonathan Allen; Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, March 2004

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid

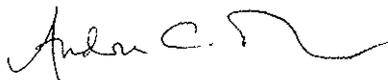
⁴ Ibid.

analysis of the Home Office data shows that women are more likely than men to suffer physical or mental injury (75% compared with 50% of men) and are much more likely to suffer from self-reported emotional problems as a result (37% versus 10%). Women are also far more likely to suffer more severe physical injuries (for example broken bones or teeth) or to sustain severe bruising.⁴

In order to develop an appropriate public policy response to violence against women and men, it is important that we have a clear understanding not just of the scope of the violence, but also the context and impact. The Walby and Allen research report cited provides some of that context, and gives a clearer picture of domestic violence.

I hope that this has helped to clarify the Commission's perspective on violence against women, and illustrated how we have developed our current focus on violence against women, as seen in our Map of Gaps project.

Yours sincerely,



Andrea Murray
Acting Group Director Strategy

Cc John Penrose MP