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Registered Charity No. 1089547 – Company Registration No. 3869893
Honorary Patrons – Lord Cotter, Ian McNicholl, John Penrose MP, Paul Chivers, Sara Westle and Erin Pizzey

Executive Summary: Home Office/Ministry of Justice Domestic Abuse Consultation Response (ANON-1WEK-1X2W-A)

(A) About the ManKind Initiative

The ManKind Initiative is national charity (based in Taunton) and established by both men and women over 17 years ago becoming the first British charity to support male victims of domestic abuse. Since 2001, we have been at the forefront of providing services, support and campaigning for male victims ensuring that they (and their children) receive the support and recognition they need.

We are gender inclusive in our approach so whilst we are a service provider for men, we want all female victims (and their children) to escape too so do not want services or funding switched from male to female victims.

We provide a range of services directly to men including an anonymous national helpline that any man anywhere can call us (01823 334244) and a drop in service from our Taunton base. On average, we receive 1,800 calls per year. We also receive calls from people on behalf of a male.

We help other organisations to support to men by offering a seven point CPD accredited [one day training course](#), a [national conference](#) every November, a national directory of services for male victims (called the '[Oak Book](#)'), information on safe house/refuge provision and deliver [presentations](#) at conferences/meetings around the UK.

We also give male victims a public voice by campaigning for them, taking part in policy consultations, and sitting on statutory/sector led committees and bodies. This includes our award winning [#violenceisviolence campaign video](#) and regularly featuring in the media

(B) Key Points

We wholeheartedly support the Government's intention of taking a more proactive and focussed stance on domestic abuse. Our response to the consultation is to be taken in this good spirit – where comments are made these are based on enhancing the measures in the Government's proposals – they are not aimed at undermining the Government's intentions.

- 1) We support the proposed gender-neutral statutory definition of domestic abuse
- 2) We support the proposed inclusion of Economic Abuse in the new legal definition of domestic abuse

- 3) We believe Parental Alienation Syndrome must also be included in the new legal definition of domestic abuse
- 4) We believe that Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 on coercive and controlling behaviour must be amended to take into account partners and ex-partners who are not or are no longer living together. This will also bring the legislation into line with the proposed new legal definition of domestic abuse.
- 5) We believe that the Statutory Guidance for professionals with safeguarding responsibilities must be fully gender-inclusive and all training must also be gender-inclusive. This includes clear direction that their relevant responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998, Housing Act 1996, Equalities Act 2010 and Care Act 2014 also include male and LGBT+ victims.
- 6) We believe that if the Government is to continue, as indicated, with its Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and policy framework, for inclusion reasons the time is now right to create a parallel Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys Strategy covering the same types of crimes.
- 7) We fully support the position of a Domestic Abuse commissioner but the person appointed must be someone who has an inclusive, multi-dimensional and equality based view of domestic abuse (men and women can be perpetrators and victims – including those in same-sex relationships).
- 8) All statutory service provision must be gender-inclusive ensuring male and LGBT+ victims are not excluded from the national or local commissioning. The latter must come via a clear direction from Government and to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, Housing Act 1996, Equalities Act 2010 and Care Act 2014.
- 9) There needs to be a funded national network of refuges and safe houses for male victims.
- 10) There needs to be national, regional and local awareness campaigns about male victims of domestic abuse to ensure more come forward and to improve societal recognition.
- 11) The forthcoming guidance on Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools must be inclusive ensuring equal recognition and focus is given to male and LGBT+ victims as heterosexual female victims.
- 12) The Government has a responsibility to change the national narrative, culture and conversation on domestic abuse so it more inclusive to encompass male and LGBT+ victims.
- 13) We continue to have serious concerns about the skills and legal training of a number of magistrates especially their ability to ensure any existing or future Domestic Abuse Protection Orders pass the relevant evidential threshold – even more so in the family courts.

- 14) All guidance and communications on the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s Law”) need to be explicitly clear that it is available for both women and men to use.
- 15) Within the police there still remains a culture and view with far too many individual police officers that domestic abuse is a “heterosexual women’s issue” and not a “person’ issue”. There is not so much a “postcode lottery”, it is more of an “individual officer lottery”. The College of Policing’s domestic abuse training should be open to more scrutiny to ensure it is fully inclusive.
- 16) Any new measures, training and guidance in the family courts must apply to male victims of domestic abuse in the same circumstances as female victims, and, that this should be presented as such. This includes the equal application of evidential tests.
- 17) Any new measures in the family courts including must ensure there is an “Equality of Arms” between parties and must delineate between those actually convicted and those accused when domestic abuse arises as an issue.
- 18) There is a requirement for investment to rehabilitate female perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 19) All Domestic Homicide Reviews must be published by the Home Office in one central repository and there must be a statutory responsibility for local authorities to actually inform professionals with safeguarding responsibilities and agencies in their area and region that they have actually published and finalised a DHR.
- 20) Within the statutory sector, we believe health professionals, social services officers and housing officers are the weakest link in the chain for recognising and supporting male victims of domestic abuse. The police response also needs to improve but that is more amongst a large number of individual police officers rather than being such a structural issue as it is within those three other areas.

31 May 2018