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Registered Charity No. 1089547 – Company Registration No. 3869893

Honorary Patrons – Lord Cotter, John Penrose MP, Ann Goodchild, Paul Chivers, Erin Pizzey and Clive Lever

**Consultation Response:  
Government to review support in the workplace for survivors of domestic abuse**

**(A) About the ManKind Initiative**

The ManKind Initiative (formed in 2001, was the first charity in Great Britain to support male victims of domestic abuse and their families. Our aim is to ensure all male victims, and their children, escape from the domestic abuse they are experiencing. We take a modern 21<sup>st</sup> century inclusive and equality-based view of domestic abuse. The charity thus strives to ensure that all victims, including males, females, LBGQTQ+, and their children, receive the support they need.

Our core services include a national helpline, a popular website, a training programme and a national information service for agencies. We have delivered our training and given presentations to employers and regularly given presentations to them across the UK.

The charity was a member of the advisory group with respect to the development of the Employers’ Toolkit and have supported the Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse since it was first formed.

**(B) Statistics**

In addition, to the key ONS statistics<sup>1</sup> that show 3.8% of men (786,000) and 7.5% of women (1.6 million) were victims of domestic abuse in 2018/19, there are a range of additional statistics on domestic abuse victims in employment and their gender:

- 4% of men in employment<sup>2</sup> are victims of domestic abuse (7.8% women) and 3% of men in employment are victims of partner abuse (5.8% women ). In effect, for every three victims of domestic abuse and partner abuse who are in employment, two will be female and one will be male.
- The above ratio is the same for different occupations and show that victims occupy all levels of occupations<sup>3</sup> as can be seen below.

|   | Any domestic abuse |       |     | Any partner abuse |       |     |
|---|--------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|-------|-----|
|   | Men                | Women | All | Men               | Women | All |
| Managerial and professional occupations | 3.8                | 6.0   | 4.9 | 2.8               | 4.4   | 3.6 |
| Intermediate occupations                | 4.6                | 6.7   | 5.8 | 3.3               | 5.2   | 4.4 |

<sup>1</sup> ONS domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2019 (<https://bit.ly/3cXPfc9>) - Table 1a and 2a

<sup>2</sup> ONS domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2019 (<https://bit.ly/3cXPfc9>) – Table 6a

<sup>3</sup> ONS domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2019 (<https://bit.ly/3cXPfc9>) – Table 6a<sup>3</sup>

|                                |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Routine and manual occupations | 3.3 | 9.2 | 6.1 | 2.7 | 7.2 | 4.8 |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

- In 2017/18, 13% of male victims of partner abuse had told a work colleague (11.8% women) they were a victim<sup>4</sup>.
- 23% of male victims who called the ManKind Initiative helpline in 2018/19 stated they had been a victim of financial abuse<sup>5</sup>.
- In terms of victims experiencing economic abuse 40% are men (60% women). One in seven men (15%) and one in five women experience financial abuse (21%).<sup>6</sup>

## **(C) Consultation Response**

The answers (as numbered) focus on the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse which is our area of expertise. These answers, of course, are not designed to diminish the experiences of female victims.

### **(1) What practical circumstances arise in relation to domestic abuse and work?**

There are two practical circumstances that arise in terms of the impact on male victims of domestic abuse as employees alongside the impact on their employers.

The many impacts on a male employee will be primarily focused on their performance. They will be distracted, unable to focus and become withdrawn. This can also affect their behaviour which may become erratic, their clothing can be dishevelled, punctuality may be affected possible lateness or alternatively staying in work longer to avoid going home, not being able to do overtime or attend meetings outside of usual working hours; and also attentiveness due to constant feelings of fear and possible sleep deprivation. They can also be harassed at work with their abuser constantly contacting them via social media, telephone, email or text.

Some male victims who call our helpline report that their abuser after dropping them off at work then waits outside all day whilst harassing/stalking them at the same time. Then after work, they are picked up on time and then are subjected to questions such as:

- How many women did you talk to?
- What do they do?
- Do they find you attractive?
- Do you find them attractive?
- Why did you wear those trousers today?
- Why are they contacting you outside of work time?
- Why are they on your social media?
- Are they single?
- Why did you not call me back when I rang you x times?

<sup>4</sup> ONS domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018 (<https://bit.ly/2FY8UYc>)- Table 24.

<sup>5</sup> The ManKind Initiative helpline (2018/19)

<sup>6</sup> Report by Co-op and Refuge entitled Money Matters: <https://bit.ly/2Wib0xD>

For employers, as well as the impact on the employee as set out above, there is the impact on other staff. An abuser can harass other staff through constantly trying to contact their victim and hassling other employees for information on the victim. We also know of cases where the abuser has stalked the female (or males in a same sex relationship) colleagues of their partners to make sure they are not contacting/meeting their partners out of hours.

A significant case of the impact on an employee and employer can be found in the Domestic Homicide Review<sup>7</sup> of David Edwards from Chorley. He was a criminal solicitor, whose wife murdered him. She deliberately got him sacked from the solicitors' practice he worked for. She was harassing and being abusive to female staff to the point where male employees were having to escort female staff to their cars as a means of ensuring they were protected from her.

There is also the case of Alex Skeel, (Abused By My Girlfriend on BBC iPlayer<sup>8</sup>) where his former partner made him give up his employment to accompany her to university to prevent him from having contact with family and friends.

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## **(2) What support can be offered in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse?**

We think that the key support offered in the workplace for male victims is based on what direct support can be given and that all policies, training and communications are fully inclusive. The latter is vital to ensure that line managers, HR and others with safeguarding responsibilities are fully aware of and are supportive of male victims.

### **(i) Direct support:**

We fully support moves for employers to help tackle economic abuse, such as by paying wages to a different bank account or making emergency salary payments available for those in real financial hardship.

We also believe that employers should respect the need for victims to attend court, understand the sudden change on child arrangements (for example, if an abusive partner is convicted or subject to court orders such as non-occupational orders) and also give confidence to the member of staff that their job is not at risk due to them dealing with this issue.

### **(ii) Policies, training communications**

It is vital that all internal employment policies are fully inclusive of male and LGBTQ+ victims, given that they make up one third of the victim population.

This means any internal policies referencing domestic abuse or safeguarding are made clear they apply to men as well as women.

Any training that key staff receive (managers, HR and those with safeguarding responsibilities) on domestic abuse must also fully recognise male victims, treat them as

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<sup>7</sup> Domestic Homicide Review of David Edwards: <https://bit.ly/2GyFUM9>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p0700912/abused-by-my-girlfriend>

equals to female victims and does not minimise their experiences. Any internal employee champions (as described by Dame Vera Baird from her time in Northumbria) should be fully supportive of male victims.

Any internal communication campaigns should also make clear that support is available for male victims as well as female victims. We recommend campaigns specifically refer to men such as “Women and men can be victims of domestic abuse and if you need support, please contact your HR manager”. Campaigns specifically focussed on men and women also work well alongside case studies. In addition, any internal policies must also ensure they have telephone numbers and contacts at a national and local level for organisations that support men as victims.

The above will ensure that the employer’s culture and values are male victim-friendly. We know from those men who contact our helpline that some employers have not taken the abuse they have suffered seriously because they are a man (not accepting men can be victims) or shown belittling victim-blaming attitudes (“what type of a man are you if your wife beats you up”). Those types of cultural and societal attitudes towards male victims should not be included in any employer response.

We always advise employers that the same policies, attitudes and type of responses they rightly provide for female victims should be the same for male victims. Any difference not only will not support a male victim but will also be discriminatory.

The statistics showed that some men do tell their work colleagues they are a victim of partner abuse (13%) so it is vital they responses they receive are supportive and help the male victim on his journey to escaping from domestic abuse.

Lastly, we endorse the Employers’ Toolkit (developed by Business in the Community/Public Health England) and the new Employers Helpline run by Hestia. In addition, we have developed Service Standards for the domestic abuse sector, commissioners and service providers. Much within these Standards are applicable to employers and we would recommend employers use these as a base line for assessing how they can support male victims.

### **(3) What is possible with the existing framework?**

the existing framework will be enhanced by the upcoming Domestic Abuse Bill but the key change that is needed is to make sure they are applied equally to both male and female victims. This requires a more cultural and inclusive approach for those employers who do not fully recognise male victims.

### **(4) What does current best practice look like?**

There is best practice in a number of areas available for employers either directly aimed at them or a range of Service Standards that they can use.

For male victims of domestic abuse, we would recommend employers review and test their policies against those of the Service Standards that we have developed with Hestia and Lime Culture. Whilst these are aimed primarily at the domestic abuse sector, commissioners

and service providers much within these Standards are applicable to employers and could be used as a base line for consider how they can support male victims.

Lastly, we endorse the Employers' Toolkit (developed by Business in the Community/Public Health England) and the new Employers Helpline run by Hestia.

**(5) What is the potential to do more?**

There is always potential to do more and we certainly support any measures that provide employees with additional support and for measure for employers to better support them.

We believe for male victims, it is ensuring policies, staff and training fully reflect or recognise the need to support male victims. That is an area that continues to need to be tackled and more can be done.

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