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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

**Male Victims of Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Bill 2020:
A 21st Century and inclusive approach to supporting ALL victims including male and LGBTQ+ victims**

(1) Executive Summary

- Despite the fact that one in three victims of domestic abuse are male, the political/media narrative remains focussed on heterosexual female victims and not on all victims including male and LGBTQ+ community. The outcome is remains a lack of services, societal understanding and statutory service awareness of these cohorts.
- While the Domestic Abuse Bill is welcomed and there have been improvements to it – the issue is how it is applied. In effect, it will apply to all equally, the challenge is whether it will be applied to all equally?
- On this basis, the changes that we would like to see that will enhance the Domestic Abuse Bill/Act by making it more inclusive are:
 1. Economic Abuse (Amendment): We support changes proposed by other charities (Women’s Aid, for example) to ensure that previous legislation (Serious Crime Act 2015) on coercive/controlling behaviour includes economic abuse by ex-partners.
 2. Statutory Guidance (Amendment): We believe that the clause **(Clause 73(3))** that states that the Statutory Guidance reflects that the majority of victims are women, should be amended to include the words “*without minimising or reducing understanding of the existence male victims and victims in same-sex relationships.*”
 3. Domestic Abuse Commissioner (Amendment): The role of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is important and welcomed, however there is a lack of accountability and transparency in the advisory board. The domestic abuse sector tends to be dominated by the same voices/organisations and therefore lacks diversity and inclusion in terms of the victim voice. Two amendments **(Clause 12)** will improve transparency and accountability.
 4. Statutory Guidance (Debate): We would believe that the Statutory Guidance is broadly very good in explaining the different dynamics of domestic abuse. However, the overarching narrative remains very skewed towards steering those using the Guidance to only recognise heterosexual female victims. In effect, it lacks equivalence. Any references to female heterosexual victims should have equivalent explanations, references and research to male victims and those in same-sex relationships. Points such as parental alienation which are in the Guidance should remain in situ.
- 5. Appendix 1 includes a letter from over 50 women who have been affected by a male victim that they have a personal connection with.

(2) Statistics

- 1) The Office for National Statistics figures show¹ every year that one in the three men are victims of domestic abuse equating to 757,000 men (1.561m women).
- 2) However, only 4% of victims of domestic abuse being supporting by local domestic services are men².
- 3) Of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police, 26% were committed against men³.
- 4) One in 6-7 men and one in 4 women will be victims of domestic abuse in their lifetime⁴
- 5) Over a three year period (April 2016 to Mar 2019), 38 men were killed by a partner or ex-partner (222 women)⁵
- 6) Half of male victims (49%) fail to tell anyone they are a victim of domestic abuse and are nearly three times less likely to tell anyone than female victims⁶.
- 7) 11% of male victims (7.2% women) have considered taking their life due to partner abuse.⁷
- 8) Since Covid, the charity saw an increase of calls to its helpline by one third and visits to its website double. Victims have reported being more isolated than ever more, the intensity of the abuse (psychological and physical has increased), less able to leave because of lack of money (furlough and redundancy) and lockdown has been used an excuse for breaches in agreed child contact agreements by mothers.⁸
- 9) There are only 38 organisations with 215 refuge/safe house spaces for male victims (only 48 are solely available for male victims, the other 167 are for either men or women).⁹
- 10) Less than 2% of men who are victims of partner abuse state that it is a man who has carried out the abuse¹⁰.

(3) About the ManKind Initiative

The ManKind Initiative charity (formed in 2001) was the first charity in Great Britain to support male victims of domestic abuse. We take a modern 21st century inclusive and equality-based view of domestic abuse. Our core services include a national helpline, a popular website, a training programme and a national information service for agencies. We also worked in partnership with both the CPS¹¹ and the Home Office¹² on their respective statements regarding male victims of VAWG crimes.

¹ Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2WQ4JZ8> (Table 2)

² Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: November 2020 (Table 13)

³ Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2WQ4JZ8> (Table 16)

⁴ Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2WQ4JZ8> (Table 1)

⁵ Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2WQ4JZ8> (Table 23)

⁶ Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales: year ending March 2018: Report - <https://bit.ly/38epe4X> and Data - <https://bit.ly/38faSRL>

⁷ Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales: year ending March 2018: Report - <https://bit.ly/38epe4X> and Data - <https://bit.ly/38faSRL>

⁸ ManKind Initiative helpline calls (March to September 2020)

⁹ Male Domestic Abuse Network (www.mdan.org.uk)

¹⁰ Partner abuse in detail, year ending March 2018 – <https://bit.ly/2KLW8UO> (Table 2)

¹¹ CPS Public statement on male victims for crimes covered by the CPS VAWG Strategy <https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-public-statement-male-victims-crimes-covered-cps-vawg-strategy>

(4) Amendments/Changes

(1) Economic Abuse (Amendment):

Women's Aid in conjunction with charities such as Surviving Economic Abuse are proposing that the legislation that covers coercive and controlling behaviour (Serious Crime Act 2015) includes economic abuse by ex-partners. This is because this is a form of coercive and controlling behaviour which we agree. The current legislation only applies to partners who are still living in the same household.

(2) Statutory Guidance (Amendment):

Clause 73(3) states *“Any guidance issued under this section must, so far as relevant, take account of the fact that the majority of victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales (excluding children treated as victims by virtue of section 3) are female.”*

The charity does not dispute the fact that the majority of victims of domestic abuse are female. However, the risk of just having this statement hardcoded into the Statutory Guidance as it stands means there is a risk in current and subsequent versions of the guidance that it will be used to minimise and reduce understanding of the existence male victims and victims in same-sex relationships.

This can already be seen in two areas of the Guidance¹³:

Paragraph 14: *“Domestic abuse is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, with women disproportionately the victims.”* However, there is no equivalent explanation on why male and LGBTQ+ people are victims of domestic abuse

Paragraph 38: This sets out a model (The Duluth Model) developed in the USA which focusses solely on female victims as being the standard model for all victims in the UK. It is not inclusive male or LGBTQ+ people who are victims. In fact, the creators of the Duluth Model¹⁴ state that *“...many women who do use violence against their male partners are being battered. Their violence is primarily used to respond to and resist the controlling violence being used against them.”* This is not true.

The suggested amendment is to add these following words to the end of Clause 73(3):

without minimising or reducing understanding of the existence and experience of male victims and victims in same-sex relationships.

¹² Position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government strategy on ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783996/Male_Victims_Position_Paper_Web_Accessible.pdf

¹³ Draft Statutory Guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896640/Draft_statutory_guidance_July_2020.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheels/faqs-about-the-wheels/>

(3) Domestic Abuse Commissioner (Amendment):

The role of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is important and welcomed, however there is a lack of accountability and transparency especially in areas such as the advisory board and thematic groups. The domestic abuse sector tends to be dominated by the same voices/organisations and therefore the risk is both a lack of diversity of thought but also a lack of diversity in the voices of different victim cohorts, especially men. The following amendments will ensure the Advisory Board is not a Closed Shop.

To ensure that there is greater accountability and transparency, and, a wider range of voices on the advisory board, suggested amendments are:

Clause 12 (2):

Insert a new sentence: Appointments must be made through an open recruitment process.

Clause 12 (4):

Insert new appointee: (g) at least one person appearing to the Commissioner to represent the interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with male victims of domestic abuse in England;

Insert new appointee: (h) at least one person appearing to the Commissioner to represent the interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with LGBT+ and non-binary victims of domestic abuse in England;

(4) Statutory Guidance (Debate):

We would believe that the Statutory Guidance is broadly very good in explaining the different dynamics of domestic abuse. However, the overarching narrative remains very skewed towards steering those using the Guidance to only recognise heterosexual female victims. In effect, it lacks equivalence (see references in section 2).

Any references to female heterosexual victims should have equivalent explanations, references and research to male victims and those in same-sex relationships. At the moment this is not the case throughout the document.

It is vital Parental Alienation, which is referenced in the Guidance (paragraph 48) as a form of coercive and controlling behaviour, remains in the guidance. This is especially where one parent deliberately, wilfully and without justification sets out to alienate a child against another parent as a form of control. There have been some organisations who have argued that this should come out but this belies a body of evidence and practice that shows this, under the circumstances, mentioned, that parental alienation does exist and is an example of this behaviour.

For further information – please contact Mark Brooks OBE, Chair, 07834 452357 / chairman@mankind.org.uk

Appendix 1: Women supporting male victims of domestic abuse (Domestic Abuse Bill)

We are writing to you regarding male victims of domestic abuse to ensure that their voices are heard in the Domestic Abuse Bill and its Statutory Guidance. This is also part of a new campaign run by the ManKind Initiative charity called Stand With Him.

We are a group of women who have been personally affected by the experience of an individual male victim of domestic abuse we know. Whether that be as mothers, sisters, daughters, friends, colleagues or new partners of a man who has been in this situation.

We are writing on behalf of all male victims of domestic abuse to ensure their voices are heard alongside the voices of their daughters and sons. As the Government recognises, they make up one in three of all victims of domestic abuse (1.56 million women and 757,000 men were victims of domestic abuse in 2019/20)

In both the Domestic Abuse Bill and the Statutory Guidance, it is vital they have equal recognition with female victims, their barriers to seek help are fully understood and that they are fully supported. They should no longer be marginalised and ignored and any attempt to do so places them and their children at higher risk.

We believe all individual victims, whether female or male, deserve the same levels of support and that the law should not only apply to all equally, it must be applied equally to all.

Male victims of domestic abuse often fear they are not believed and will not be supported or understood if and when they do come forward. There are not enough awareness campaigns to encourage them to do so, not enough funding to support them and not enough recognition within many statutory agencies. We also need society to change its attitude towards them. It is vital this Bill and Guidance addresses this and does not make their situation even worse by marginalising them further.

Please ensure the voices of those who we love, care for and share friendships with are not silenced, marginalised or forgotten. We urge you to ensure the Bill and Guidance fully supports and equally recognises male victims of domestic abuse and their children. We all Stand With Him – the male victim we know.

1. AH, Carmarthenshire, brother (*he was a victim for 17 years, which ultimately resulted in him taking his own life*)
2. Alexandra, Birmingham, step sister (*my step brother was murdered*)
3. Alison, Edinburgh, friend (*he was a victim for over 30 years*)
4. Ann G, Southampton, mother (*my son took his own life*)
5. Anna, Southampton, sister (*my brother took his own life*)
6. Anne, Somerset, sister (*my brother was a victim for 18 years*)
7. Anne-Marie H, Lincolnshire, friend (*my friend had nowhere to go for help*)
8. Barbara Lavelle, Wirral, mother (*my son was murdered by his partner*)
9. Becky, Bristol, daughter (*my father was a victim for 18 years*)
10. Brenda, Hertfordshire, mother (*my son has been scarred for life because of his ex*)
11. Caroline, Birmingham, ex-partner (*my ex-partner was murdered*)

12. Cath, Bolton, mother (*my son was subjected to violence*)
13. Diana, Edinburgh, mother (*my son has been a victim*)
14. Diana, Cheshire, ex-wife (*my ex-husband suffered domestic abuse that he hid from his daughters*)
15. Debbie Livesley, Chorley, ex-partner (*my ex-partner was murdered by his wife*)
16. Eileen, York, mother (*my son suffered mental trauma even after the relationship ended*)
17. Elizabeth, Norwich (*I have friends and a colleague who were victims*)
18. Fiona, Worcestershire, friend (*my friend's brother was murdered by his partner 2019*)
19. Hannah, London, daughter (*my father was a victim for 18 years*)
20. Hannah, Birmingham, friend (*my friend's brother was murdered by his partner 2019*)
21. Jackie, Carmarthenshire, mother (*my son was a victim*)
22. Janet, Sussex, mother
23. JW, Cheshire, mother (*my son has full parental responsibility but his ex is still causing trouble for the family*)
24. Jo, South Wales, daughter (*my elderly father's new wife physically and financially abused him*)
25. J, North West, fiancée (*my partner suffered at the hands of his ex-wife*)
26. JLW, Cheshire, sister (*my brother suffered for five years*)
27. Kate, Herefordshire, partner (*my current suffered coercion, control and physical violence from his ex*)
28. Kathleen, Greater London (*close relative of male victim*)
29. Kathryn, Hertfordshire, partner (*my partner suffered for 15 years due to his ex*)
30. Katie Brown, Birmingham, brother (*he was killed by his partner*)
31. Kelly, sister (*my brother and a friend suffered, the latter committed suicide*)
32. KR, friend & now partner of one survivor,
33. Jenny, Birmingham, friend (*my friend's brother was murdered by his partner 2019*)
34. Laraine, Birmingham, mother (*my daughter lost her ex partner to domestic abuse*)
35. Louise, Glasgow, sister (*people laughed at my brother*)
36. Louise Cunningham, Birmingham, mother (*son was murdered by his partner 2019*) –
37. Margaret, Birmingham, ex-husband (*my ex husband abused by his partner*)
38. Natalia, wife (*my husband was subjected to awful abuse by previous partner*)
39. Olivia, London, friend (*my friend was murdered by his girlfriend*)
40. Rosie, Worcestershire, sister
41. Ruth, Birmingham, friend (*my friend's brother was murdered by his partner 2019*)
42. Sara Westle, Leicestershire, mother (*my son was murdered by his girlfriend*)
43. Sharon, Bromley, girlfriend (*my boyfriend was in an abusive relationship for several years*)
44. SW, Essex, sister (*brother was murdered by partner*)
45. Tamsin Hutchinson, Chorley, friend (*my friend was murdered by his wife*)
46. Tracey, mother (*my son is going through mental abuse*)
47. Vicki, Leicester, mother
48. V. M. A, mother
49. Zoe, Birmingham, cousin (*cousin was murdered by his partner*)
50. Anonymous mother, Wales, mother (*my son took his own life*)
51. Anonymous mother, YM, Armagh, mother
52. Anonymous, Manchester, mother
53. Anonymous, London, mother (*my son considered suicide*)
54. Anonymous, Gloucestershire, mother
55. Anonymous, Midlands, sister (*my brother was a victim and took his own life*)
56. Anonymous, Warwickshire, sister (*my brother was a victim and took his own life*)

* Note: These testimonies have been sent freely to the charity over the past month and have been anonymised where necessary and where requested. All signatories have a direct connection to a male victim as described. Some signatories do not wish to be contacted by anyone bar the charity.