



Press Release
17 December 2020

**National Quality Service Standards
for Male Victims and Survivors of Domestic Abuse Launched**

<https://mdan.org.uk/service-standards/>

The ManKind Initiative, the national charity supporting male victims of domestic abuse, alongside partners Hestia who support adults in crisis, have created National Quality Service Standards for male victims and survivors of domestic abuse. These are aimed at services and commissioners to better support men who are victims and survivors of this crime alongside any organisation/professional wanting to set up a service or learn more.

The Standards were developed and produced by national safeguarding organisation, LimeCulture CIC. They are hosted and managed by the Male Domestic Abuse Network which supports the practitioner community working in this field.

The Standards are based on the views of domestic abuse practitioners, commissioners and survivors through extensive research conducted in spring 2020. They have also been reviewed by two of the UK's leading academic experts in this field.

These Standards create a framework for the continuing development, commissioning and improvement of gender-informed services for male victims. This will support:

- male victims/survivors in being assured that their individual needs will be recognised and understood when accessing support from a service provider;
- existing services to review how they can further improve their provision or support new services with information on how to develop them;
- commissioners in ensuring the services they commission are male victim-friendly and inclusive;
- associated organisations (for example, police forces, housing bodies, local councils and clinical commission groups) to assess how they support male victims they come into contact with.

There are four main sections in the Standards covering:

1. Leadership and Governance
2. Access and Engagement
3. Service Delivery
4. Outcomes and Evaluation

Whilst independent, they are also aimed at forming a parallel set of Service Standards to those developed by the Male Survivors Partnership for boys and men affected by sexual abuse, rape and sexual exploitation. They therefore form an additional part of the overall quality and policy framework for supporting male victims of intimate violence crimes. These were also produced by LimeCulture and are in the same format.

Mark Brooks OBE, Chair of the ManKind Initiative, said:

“Over the past five years, there has been good progress in ensuring there are services in local communities for male victims of domestic abuse. However, far too many men are still not coming forward, there continues to be challenges around service funding and many men feel that due to gender stereotypes they are not getting the support they need. These Standards aim to accelerate progress in tackling these issues by helping to provide a route map and four core principles that service providers and commissioners can use.

“Importantly, these standards have been developed by taking into account the views of survivors, commissioners and service providers. This means they are very much created for the sector and survivors, by the sector and survivors. Direct quotes from them are featured throughout the standards.

“More broadly on issues of intimate violence against men and boys, it was important that there was alignment with other standards in the field. Hence why they were developed with the same organisation, LimeCulture, who developed standards for male victims of sexual violence and are in the same structure and format.”

Lyndsey Dearlove, Head of Domestic Abuse Prevention at Hestia, said:

“It is vital for any victim of domestic abuse to have access to specialist domestic abuse support. Through our partnership with the Mankind Initiative and Lime Culture, we have started an essential conversation with experts, survivors and commissioners to create national standards that will ensure male victims are listened to and believed.

“As lockdown and social distancing measures continue, we know there is an increased level of uncertainty for people looking to escape an abusive relationship. Our message to victims is clear, there is support available, and specialists will help you.”

Stephanie Reardon, Chief Executive at LimeCulture Community Interest Company, said:

“We are delighted to have been involved in the development of these Quality Standards for services supporting male victims of domestic abuse. In recent years, LimeCulture has been involved in the development and implementation of a number of similar standards which have had a key role in driving improvements in the quality of support provision.

“The wide engagement of male victims/survivors of domestic abuse, as well as frontline professionals and support services, have been central to the development of these Quality Standards. Their views, experiences and suggestions have enabled us to set the benchmark for support that meets the needs of male victims and survivors”.

Dr Elizabeth Bates, Principal Lecturer in Psychology and Psychological Therapies (University of Cumbria), said:

“These standards are a really significant step forward in the journey to ensuring gender-inclusive service provision for all victims of domestic violence and abuse. My research working with male victims of domestic violence has revealed a number of barriers to accessing services and support; the creation of these standards, and the experience that has informed them, means we should be able to address and remove some of these barriers. There is a real appetite from service providers in the sector to be able to support men and this as a resource is going to enable that to happen more widely.”

Paul Chivers, survivor of domestic abuse, said:

“When I was going through an abusive relationship, the local service was not able to provide me with a service that recognised me or provided the support I needed because I was a man. I know thankfully things are changing and improving but more needs to be done to help men going through what I did. I am confident these Services Standards will play an important role in making that change happen.”

Next steps

In 2021, a range of case studies will be published alongside the development of a Quality Mark for those who state they meet or have a process for meeting the standards.

Statistics

- The latest released figures¹ from the Office for National Statistics (2018/19) show that an estimated 757,000 men (1.56 million women) were victims of domestic abuse in 2019/20. In effect, one in three victims of domestic abuse are male. Broadly, one in six men and one in four women will be victims of domestic abuse in their lifetime
- Only 4% of victims (one in 25) who access local support services are male.

Male Domestic Abuse Network

The Male Domestic Abuse Network (www.mdan.org.uk) is the national community and information network for practitioners supporting male victims and was created in partnership with Hestia and its UKSAYSNOMORE campaign. MDAN is owned and operated by the ManKind Initiative.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- (1) Table 2: Domestic abuse numbers, prevalence, types and victim characteristics, based upon findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime <https://bit.ly/2JOHsUh>
- (2) Table 12: Personal characteristics of clients accessing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services that use SafeLives' Insights tool, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018: <https://bit.ly/2VPz0GH>
- (3) Media Enquiries
Journalists requiring further information please contact Mark Brooks on 07834 452357 chairman@mankind.org.uk.

- (4) **About the ManKind Initiative**

The ManKind Initiative is the principal, expert and specialist charity in the UK focussing on male victims of domestic abuse. The charity collaborates and works in close partnership with other organisations and practitioners to support these victims too. It was the first in Great Britain to support male victims. It provides a national helpline for male victims, a training and consultancy service and manages a practitioners' community network.

- (5) **About Hestia and UK SAYS NO MORE**

Hestia is one of the largest providers of domestic abuse refuges in London and the South East and is the main organisation supporting victims of modern slavery in the capital. It is the home of domestic abuse and sexual violence campaign UK SAYS NO MORE and developed the Bright Sky domestic abuse app in partnership with Vodafone. This year, it celebrates 50 years of providing support to those in crisis by providing safehouses, refuge accommodation and support.

Safe Spaces was developed as an initiative of the UK SAYS NO MORE campaign in response to the challenges faced by victims of domestic abuse during the COVID-19 lockdown and their inability to access specialist support services. It was first launched in partnership with Boots and is now available in 1 in 4 pharmacists across the UK, including major brands and local independent pharmacists.

Annex 1: Quotes from the Standards

Section 1: Leadership and Governance

"I think the biggest issue out there is that domestic abuse is always perceived as being something that only affects women. It is therefore really important that services recognise the differences in approach when they provide support to males."

Survey Respondent

"It is so important that staff are properly trained to support male survivors. It requires different knowledge, a different way of working to support males effectively."

Service Provider

"It's an important principle that local services can meet the needs of our local communities. We want our commissioned services to be available and accessible for the range of people who live there – survivors from the different backgrounds, cultures and religions that we have in our area."

Commissioner

Section 2: Access and Engagement

"I was able to access some support from the service but not everything they do was available to me, apparently because I am a man. It seems rather odd that I could have some bits [of support] but not others."

Survey Respondent

I didn't feel physically unsafe, but definitely like a 'fish out of water' — every poster, every leaflet, was female = victim, male = perpetrator, with the exception of a single line on their website 'we also offer assistance to male victims of abuse'."

Survey Respondent

"I've since learned that there might have been help when I needed it but I didn't know about it then. There was nothing to show that they would have supported me."

Survey Respondent

Section 3: Service Delivery

"I found it difficult to flee from DA and came across too many barriers to access services due to the lack of help for male victims in my local area. There was also not enough refuges for males in this area."

Survey Respondent

"It was really helpful having a male worker, I felt like I was being heard and had a feeling of being in charge of my support."

Survey Respondent

At present the majority of support available is provided by female workers to male victims via outreach and resettlement. This is purely because those same workers also work with female victims. If funding was provided to create a post/service allowing a male worker to provide support for victims at all levels of risk (IDVA) this would help meet the needs of male victims/survivors better."

Service Provider

"It's important that ensure that the services we refer our male clients on to are not going to be dismissive when a male presents as a victim. This could be devastating for the male."

Service Provider

"In male same sex relationships, agencies seem to find it challenging to ascertain which person is the actual perpetrator."

Survey Respondent

Section 4: Outcomes and Evaluation

"I was invited to a conference to share my experience, and the organisation have continued to ask me to be involved in the building of their men's service."

Survey Respondent

It isn't a one-size-fits-all, we are continuing to develop our services for men, and a lot of that is through trial and error but we have a steering group of men who have previously accessed support which helps."

Service Provider

"We need to ensure that we capture information about whether the service is effective in supporting males. It's not just about the numbers going through the service, but that we are actually making a positive difference to these men."

Service Provider

“We require data from our commissioned services about the number of men they’re working with. As part of the tender we required them to give a development plan of how they will grow the services.”

Commissioner
