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

Male and LGBT+ Victims of Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Bill 2021:

House of Lords Committee Stage

(1) Background

1.1 During the Committee Stage, the charity, the wider practitioner networks and the survivors it supports would be grateful that the debate and discussion at Committee Stage is as fully inclusive as possible – taking into account:

- All amendments will apply to male and LGBT+ victims as well as female victims
- The lived experiences that male victims suffer from and the barriers they face
- Male and LGBT+ victims make up a significant minority of victims* (one in three of all victims of domestic abuse are male).

1.2 Appendix 1 is a letter from over 50 women who have been affected by a male victim that they have a personal connection with, who urge that the discussion and the Bill itself includes the voices of male victims.

*A phrase used by the Victims Commissioner, Dame Vera Baird QC

(2) About the ManKind Initiative

2.1 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, National Service Standards, a training programme and a national information service for agencies. We also worked in partnership with both the CPS and the Home Office on their respective statements regarding male victims of VAWG crimes.

(3) Impact of excluding the voices of male and LGBT+ victims

3.1 There are a range of barriers that male and LGBT+ victims face, often exacerbated by not being included in debates and discussions on domestic abuse. This includes their voices not being heard in Parliamentary Debates, the media and public policy even when issues affect both female, male and GBT+ victims. The impact of this is set out below.

3.2 Negative impact on the lives of male victims and survivors:

Ensuring equal recognition is important because key barriers for male victims that prevent them from leaving an abusive relationship or moving on when they have left include:

- a) Concern that they will not be believed because they are male when they approach public services (police, GPs, local authorities), employers and friends/family;
- b) Failing to see/find information or hear about male victims means they feel the abusive behaviours they are enduring is not domestic abuse when it is. Many do not understand or recognise they are victims;
- c) Following on from above, if they do realise, they do not where to go or who to speak to;
- d) A sense of shame and the stigma for being a male victim because they feel they are viewed as weak and “less of a man”;
- e) When they are not included in discussions on domestic abuse, it can re-traumatise them because it reinforces their sense of invisibility, stigma and lack of recognition of the experiences they endured;
- f) For example, on the above when the House of Commons held a witness session at the Committee Stage of the Bill, only female survivors and charities supporting female victims gave evidence. A number of male victims contacted the charity to say they felt re-traumatized as their voices and experiences were being ignored by Parliament.

3.3 Lack of service provision and response:

Ensuring equal recognition is important in ensuring services providers and professionals who provide support/signposting for victims of domestic abuse (including police, GPs and social services departments) fully recognise male and LGBT+ victims. This includes:

- a) Fully recognising the signs of domestic abuse in male and LGBT+ victims and applying the same levels of professional curiosity they rightly apply for female victims
- b) Applying the same policies, procedures and signposting for all victims
- c) Ensuring their services are visible to men including information on websites, awareness campaigns and posters/leaflets
- d) Ensuring they and key staff they support are trained in supporting male and LGBT+ victims

3.4 Ending Gender Stereotypes:

Ensuring equal recognition means that gender stereotypes about who are and who can be victims of domestic abuse are challenged and ended. This means there is equal recognition for all victims of domestic abuse ensuring we move more quickly to an inclusive and 21st century approach to domestic abuse.

4. Holding an inclusive debate on Amendments

- 4.1 There are a number of amendments being suggested to the Bill which we support including ensuring post-separation abuse as a coercive/controlling behaviour, non-fatal strangulation, stopping GPs for charging letters for domestic abuse victims alongside changes to support for migrant women and men. There are also suggested changes to the Family Courts which will apply to fathers as victims as well as mothers.

- 4.2 To ensure the points made on Section 3 are taken into account, it is vital that the debates and discussions include male and LGBT+ victims when these amendments are put forward.
- 4.3 A good example is the debate on providing better support for migrant women including those with no recourse to public funds. Over the past number of years, calls to helplines for male victims and requests for support to charities involved in the broader field of immigration have increased from men in this situation. It is important to note that 20% of those who are victims of forced marriage are men. However, the debate on this issue has been fully focused on female victims in this situation, not female and male victims. It would be inclusive to include men in this situation too and we ask politely ask Peers to be cognisant of this.
- 4.4 A further example are proposals around the Family Courts and the protection of children and parents. The debate and discussion thus far has solely focused on mothers in these situations, rather than mothers and fathers.
- 4.5 By not including the voices of male and LGBT+ victims in discussions on amendments when they apply equally to them places additional barriers on them and can re-traumatise them. This is through exacerbating their invisibility, ensuring services are not as responsive as they should be and reinforcing gender stereotypes.
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5. Statistics on male and LGBT+ victims

- 5.1 As set out, male and LGBT+ victims make up a significant minority of victims (one in three of all victims are male), the list below provides statistics which can be used in the debate.
- 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) One in 6-7 men and one in 4 women will be victims of domestic abuse in their lifetime²
 - 3) However, only 4% of victims of domestic abuse being supporting by local domestic services are men³.
 - 4) Of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police, 26% were committed against men⁴.
 - 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.

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

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

³ Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2Nf2b5x> (Table 13)

⁴ Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2WQ4JZ8> (Table 16)

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>

- 7) 11% of male victims (7.2% women) have considered taking their life due to partner abuse (.⁷
- 8) 8.3% of men (16.9% of women) were victims of both domestic abuse and also then suffered from “force” within that abusive relationship⁸
- 9) 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.⁹
- 10) There are only 39 organisations with 220 refuge/safe house spaces for male victims (only 48 are solely available for male victims, the other 172 are for either men or women).¹⁰
- 11) Less than 2% of men who are victims of partner abuse state that it is a man who has carried out the abuse¹¹.
- 11) One in every five victims of forced marriage is a man (21%)¹².
- 12) The percentage of gay men (3.2%) or bi-sexual men (3.3%) who suffered partner abuse in 2018/19 is more than for heterosexual men (2.8%). Lesbian women (7.6%) and bisexual women (9.1%) as a percentage are more likely to be a victim of partner abuse compared to heterosexual women (5.6%)

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

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

⁹ ManKind Initiative helpline calls (March to September 2020)

¹⁰ Male Domestic Abuse Network (www.mdan.org.uk)

¹¹ Partner abuse in detail, year ending March 2018 – <https://bit.ly/2KLW8UO> (Table 2)

¹² Forced Marriage Unit, Home Office: <https://bit.ly/2SMTGMY>

Appendix 1: The voices of women wanting to ensure the voices of men are included.

Below is a letter from over 50 women who have been affected by a male victim that they have a personal connection with who urge that the discussion and the Bill itself includes the voices of male victims.

Letter

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.