

Academics working with Male Victims of Interpersonal Violence

c/o ManKind Initiative, Flook House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1BT
Registered Charity No. 1089547 – Company Registration No. 3869893
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18 February 2021

Interpersonal Abuse Unit
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Team
Home Office
5th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Office

Submission: Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Call for Evidence

<p style="text-align: center;">“Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)” Request for Parallel Strategy (Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys)</p>

We are UK academics specialising in the field of interpersonal violence, with a specific focus on working with male victims.

We are writing on behalf of male victims of interpersonal violence to state that it is no longer acceptable, and is in fact, demeaning and re-traumatising for them to continue to be defined and classed as victims of crimes against “Women and Girls” by this Government.

We would therefore request that the Government:

- Agrees and starts the process of creating a parallel and complementary strategy entitled, “Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys” to the “VAWG” strategy;
- Works with charities, academics and practitioners who specifically focus and have expertise in the field of these crimes to create such a strategy, and,
- Ensures this strategy is started and is developed in parallel with the work undertaken to create the “VAWG” Strategy.

Having produced research in this field, including hearing the voices of male victims and survivors directly, it is clear that the current position of the Government is untenable.

The reasons for the need for a complementary and parallel strategy include:

- It is factually incorrect to class men and boys who are victims of these crimes as being women and girls;
- This decade is meant to reflect and respect diversity and different aspects of both individual and society but for male victims of these crimes the Government chooses to ignore this;
- The approach minimises and disrespects the lived experience of the men we know who suffer these crimes, contributing to their vulnerability;
- Reporting rates for male victims of these crimes continues to be far too low, which then has an impact on service provision and funding. It is our judgment that current policies act as a disincentive and barrier to reporting;
- Male victims of these crimes continue to be more invisible than they should be to society at large and classing them as victims of “VAWG” crimes contributes to this;
- The approach hampers the creation of nuanced and gender responsive services and understanding at a national, regional and local level;
- There continues to be chronic under provision of resources and funding through national, regional and local bodies, and,
- Our research shows we need a gender-inclusive and a gender-informed approach to these crime types and classing male victims in this way fails this approach.

We are fully supportive of women and girls who are victims of these crimes and all efforts including those under a refreshed “VAWG” strategy to support and protect them. This would also not undermine any commitments the Government has made under the Istanbul Convention.

We urge you to ensure that men who are victims of these crimes are correctly described and that they have an appropriate strategy that is directly aimed at recognising and supporting them. This is an approach that is fit for this decade and our society, and, is one which no longer renders them invisible.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact us through the ManKind Initiative charity as above.

Yours sincerely

- 1) Professor Nicola Graham-Kevan, Professor of Criminal Justice Psychology, University of Central Lancashire
- 2) Dr Elizabeth Bates, Principal Lecturer in Psychology and Psychological Therapies, University of Cumbria,
- 3) Dr Daisy Best, HCPC Registered Counselling Psychologist ,BPS Chartered Psychologist
- 4) Dr Nikki Carthy, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Teesside University
- 5) Dr Andrew Divers, Research Associate; Teesside University
- 6) Dr Ben Hine, CPsychol, FHEA, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of West London
- 7) Dr Jenny Mackay, CPsychol, BSc, MSc, AFHEA, Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, Course Leader MSc Forensic Mental Health, Nottingham Trent University
- 8) Dr Julie Taylor, Head of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience, University of Cumbria
- 9) Dr Sarah Wallace, Senior Research Fellow, University of South Wales
- 10) Gerard McElhone, Lecturer in Psychology, University of Cumbria
- 11) Deborah Powney, PhD Psychology Researcher, University of Central Lancashire