

Press Release
21 July 2021

The experiences and voices of male victims of domestic abuse can no longer be ignored

The Government has today published its “Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls” strategy which also includes male victims of sexual violence (including child abuse), domestic abuse, stalking, forced marriage and “so-called” honor-based violence.

The charity supports the measures to keep women and girls safe including those set out in the strategy.

However, despite requests from survivors, academics and organisations in the Government consultation to make sure the voices of men and boys were also included, this has not happened.

Many also called, including the ManKind Initiative, for the creation of a parallel strategy for men and boys who are victims of these crimes to ensure that their experiences, support needs and voices are not lost. Given the detail in the publication of the Government’s strategy today, including the media coverage, response by public bodies and the general narrative, it is clear this is needed more than ever.

The charity has argued that any new Government strategy must meet the “Male Survivors Test” so men and boys were better recognised, better supported and more be able to escape – including those with daughters and sons. Given the publication today, it is clear the time has come for a parallel strategy which would also help to overcome the societal and gender stereotypes that are a significant barrier in men and boys being recognised by the public and by public services. It would also help them recognise they are victims of these crimes especially if there were focused communication campaigns. Such a strategy would rightly not take away from any support for women and girls.

The Government has promised an updated Male Victims Statement setting out their commitments to male victims, however, whilst welcome, this does not go far enough as it does not guarantee that men and boys suffering from these crimes are

recognised and supported in the same way as women and girls. It should only be seen as a stepping stone to a parallel strategy as this would create and allow space and a policy framework that focusses on their needs.

Mark Brooks OBE, Chair of the ManKind Initiative, said: “We fully acknowledge the need for a strategy that ends violence against women and girls and the need to tackle these crimes that affect them.

“In an inclusive society it is vital that the voices of boys and men who are victims of these are crimes are also heard, recognised and viewed as in clear need of support too. This strategy does not address this.

“The understandable emphasis on women and girls reinforces the cultural barriers men face in not being ‘seen’ by society and public services, not being encouraged to seek help and not being aware of the available support. Many still complain, as they did in the consultation, that they have sought help but not been taken seriously because they are a man.

“This reinforces the need for a specific strategy for men and boys, and not the current situation that risks marginalising them even further. A refreshed Male Victims Statement, will not address these barriers significantly enough and must only serve to be a stepping stone to a full strategy for men and boys.”

The ManKind Initiative, the principal charity in the UK supporting male victims of domestic abuse, had taken part in the Government’s Consultation earlier in 2021. It argued that the new strategy must meet the “Male Survivors Test” so more male victims as well as their daughters and sons are recognised, supported and can escape.

The charity also argued that there should be:

- A parallel strategy to the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (which we support) with an interim/transitional position of a refreshed Male Victims Statement and National Statement of Expectations for local areas.
- A cultural change led by the Government and public bodies on ending gender stereotypes and supporting equal recognition for male victims of domestic abuse.
- Assurances that core domestic abuse training given to public services is fully inclusive and is independently reviewed - not by public service training providers to avoid conflicts of interest (“marking their own homework”).

- Increased funding for local domestic abuse services for male victims and greater clarity/transparency on how much is allocated for male victims. This could be through ring-fencing and/or transparent reporting.
- The creation of proactive national and local awareness campaigns specifically targeted at male and LGBTQ+ victims.

Men currently make up one third of all victims of domestic abuse (757,000 men and 1.561m women)¹, 26% of all victims reporting to the police² but make up only 4.4% of victims being supported by local community service (IDVA services)³. One in 6-7 men will be a victim in their lifetime⁴. Only half (51%) of men will tell anyone they are a victim of partner abuse and the charity remains concerned about a narrative that continues to minimise and marginalise male victims⁵.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

(1) Statistics

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> (Tables 11 and 16)

3 Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: year ending March 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2Nf2bSx> (Table 13)

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

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

(2) About the ManKind Initiative

The ManKind Initiative (www.mankind.org.uk) is the leading national charity which runs a help-line providing, practical information and emotional support for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence. The help-line number is 01823 334244 (weekdays 10am-4pm) which relies on public donations. It also runs an accredited training course, a national conference and a national services directory.

(3). Media Enquiries

Journalists requiring further information please contact Mark Brooks on 07834 452357 chairman@mankind.org.uk.

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