

Press Release
29th April 2021

The application of the welcome Domestic Abuse Act has to meet “The Male Survivors Test” to ensure it meets the needs of male victims

The ManKind Initiative is the principal charity in the UK supporting male victims of domestic abuse. It has supported the passage of the Act from the beginning including to organising a focus group of male survivors and practitioners in 2018 to Royal Assent today. However, the challenge for the new law is whether it meets the “Male Survivors Test” so more male victims are recognised, more supported and more escape. The law applies to all equally, but the charity is still concerned whether it will in reality be applied equally?

A core change that the charity has been promoting since 2015 has now been included which is to extend the law on coercive and controlling behaviour to include partners and ex-partners who are no longer living in the same household. This should see more prosecutions and a better understanding of this form of domestic abuse.

The charity remains concerned that for male victims without a change in the political and societal narrative on domestic abuse, increased funding for community services and a significant increase in awareness campaigns, there is a risk that it could make little difference to male victims. The charity is particularly concerned about the minimisation of male victims within the current draft of the Statutory Guidance and the continued policy of placing male victims of domestic abuse under the “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy”.

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 minimises/marginalises male victims. The continual use of the phrase “disproportionately affecting women” without context and figures or describing domestic abuse as a “gendered crime” has the impact of marginalising and minimising male and LGBT+ victims.

Male Survivors Test:

The charity believes for the new and welcome law to meet this test it must mean more men are recognised, supported and escaping - including those with children. This leaves urgent questions:

- Where are they?
- Why are they not being supported?
- Why are they not being recognised?
- Why are they not in the system?
- Are they escaping? If so, how, who is helping them and where are they going?

This will mean a cultural change within politics and public services, more funding for local services to support men and also more effective awareness campaigns. It must also mean more appropriate policies and inclusive guidance.

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

“We greatly welcome the new law, the fact that the Government has listened to organisations and survivors and we are confident it will make a big difference in tackling this terrible crime.

“For male victims, the key question is that while it applies to all victims equally, will it be applied to all victims equally? Without a cultural shift at all levels in fully recognising and accepting male victims, ensuring there is increased service funding and more awareness campaigns, then far too many men will still not be leaving abusive relationships.

“We know already that there is a big gap between the numbers of male victims in society and those then being supported ‘in the system’. So for the new law to be effective, it has to pass the Male Survivors Test, else too many men will continue to suffer behind their closed doors”.

The charity takes a fully inclusive approach to domestic abuse and therefore supports increased funding, awareness campaigns and support for female victims too. It should never be a competition between the genders of victims.

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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