

Press release

Date: 17 February 2017

Lack of refuges in London and Bromley Council's proposed new domestic abuse service is symptomatic of the need for more support for London's male victims of domestic abuse

The ManKind Initiative, a charity support male victims of domestic abuse, has written¹ to the London Borough of Bromley urging it to rethink its proposed new domestic abuse service² which does not offer the same level of support for male victims as it rightly does female victims. The charity believes this is another example of how the estimated 74,000 male victims³ in London (including 45 who report⁴ to the Metropolitan police every day) do not have enough support services they need to escape – including those with children.

The Council's proposed new two year service, due to start from 1st June 2017, proposes that "*Standard, Medium and High level support should be provided to female victims*", which the charity firmly endorses. However, the organisation who the Council chooses to run the service will only need to "provide an appropriate service for male victims and relevant signposting when necessary" – in effect the Council is not guaranteeing that a male victim will receive the same level of support as a female victim if they are in the same situation. Failure to do so is a breach in the Equality Act 2010. The charity has urged the Council to change the terms of its proposed service so that "*Standard, Medium and High level support should be provided to female and male victims (or better still adults)*".

The charity believes this is a symptomatic of the overall lack of support for male victims in the Capital. Despite the fact that there are an estimated 74,000 male victims of domestic abuse in London (2015/16) and in 2015, 45 men per day (16,681 in total) reported to the Metropolitan Police as victims, there are:

- no refuge or safe house space available⁵ for a man fleeing from domestic abuse, including men with children who also need to escape. The nearest available for a London male is in the East Midlands.

- few awareness campaigns with the Mayor of London's new draft crime plan⁷ barely mentioning male victims at all.

The charity, believes that in London, there should be :

- A network of refuge/safe houses for male victims throughout London
- Ensure there are sufficient services available for men in each London Borough (these normally and rightly would be run by those providing services for women)
- Leadership from the Mayor of London and Council Leaders in ensuring there are information campaigns to help more men come forward.

The charity is clear that proportionate services for male victims should be funded in addition to services for female victims, which are themselves underfunded. Funding should not be switched from female services to male services.

Mark Brooks, Chairman of the ManKind Initiative charity, said: "We need to ensure all victims of domestic abuse, whether female or male receive the individual support they need. The Bromley example clearly shows that there is some way to go before male victims of domestic abuse are fully recognised and fully supported. In effect, Bromley is proposing to treat men as second class victims and that is not acceptable.

"Overall, London lags behind the UK when it comes to supporting male victims. The fact there is not one refuge or safe house in London is unacceptable and is leaving men vulnerable, including any children they may have. We need to ensure there are adequate services in each London Borough to ensure all Londoners are safe."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Letter addressed to Cllr Kate Lymer, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Safety, London Borough of Bromley <http://new.mankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Bromley-Council-Letter-17-February-2017.pdf>
2. Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls Service
London Borough Of Bromley Council
<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/e391624b-ebb5-4023-b5d1-926f70e68cf3>
3. Office for National Statistics: Domestic Abuse in England and Wales (datatool):
<http://bit.ly/2l1zuql>

4. Freedom of Information Request: The ManKind Initiative to Metropolitan Police: <http://new.mankind.org.uk/statistics/> (Number of domestic abuse victims reporting to the police)
5. The ManKind Initiative
6. The ManKind Initiative
7. Mayor of London Crime Plan: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/draft-police-and-crime-plan> (page 51)

About the ManKind Initiative

The ManKind Initiative (www.mankind.org.uk), based in Taunton, Somerset, is a national charity which runs a help-line, information and referral service for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence. The help-line number is 01823 334244 (weekdays 10am-4pm).

It received 1,400 calls from male victims (or from people on behalf of victims – often mothers and sisters) every year.

Media

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