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Ms Jane Tully
Public Affairs Advisor
NSPCC, Weston House,
42 Curtain Road, London,
EC2A 3NH

CC – Mr John Grounds, Director of Communications
Mr Phillip Noyes, Director of Public Policy

8th February 2009

Dear Ms Tully

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN CAMPAIGN

As Chairman of a charity that supports male victims of domestic violence and domestic abuse, I am writing to raise my concerns that, despite the facts, some of the campaign materials used in the above do not take into account that men are domestic violence victims. We ask that you consider adding in statistics about male victims to correct the false picture given.

We are concerned that the NSPCC is giving a false picture on this campaign (other statistics elsewhere on the web-site show both male and female statistics. The picture of domestic violence in the UK is more varied than the briefings and policies suggest. It is vital that the NSPCC remains gender neutral in its portrayal of domestic violence and we are pleased the petition is.

The areas we are most concerned about are:-

- All of the examples of domestic violence in the briefing materials feature women as victims, men as perpetrators and never the other way round. Your own published figures clearly show that this is not the case.
- All of the statistical examples in the briefing materials are only about female victims (and their children).
- The lack of refuge space/safe houses for male victims (and their children) is severe with only 10 dedicated refuges (with 50 spaces) in the whole of the UK. Where can these men go with their children?

- Many female refuges in the UK do not place mothers if they have their teenage sons with them.

It is vital that children in households where domestic violence is being perpetrated realise that it is wrong whether it is their mother or father (or stepmothers/stepfathers) committing this crime. If some campaigning material only shows that a mother can be a victim but not a father, this paints a false picture.

Some statistics from the British Crime Survey¹ show the varied picture include:-

- One in five (20%) men have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 (3.2 million)
- 17.1% (1 in 6) of men have experienced domestic abuse by their partner since the age of 16 (2.7 million).
- 1.4% of men (1.5% women) were victims of severe force by their partner in 2007/08 (224,000)
- 11% of male victims were abused more than six times in 2007/08 (19% of women suffered the same)

In terms of service provision (as known):-

- There are only a few organisations in England and Wales (none in Scotland or Northern Ireland) with 10 refuges (c50 spaces with 18 of these for gay men) for men.

Calls to the ManKind Initiative help-line in 2008 showed:-

Male Victims with Children (Yes answers)	
Did the children:-	
Witness the physical abuse?	44%
Witness the mental abuse?	53%
Hear the abuse?	61%
Did your partner threaten to remove the children?	39%
Did your partner encourage the children to:-	
Ignore/undermine you	30%
Assault You	10%

The above figures show children witnessing abuse perpetrated by the mother on the father.

In this regard and to reiterate, The ManKind Initiative is formally requesting that you revise some of the briefing materials to show that children will also witness their fathers being victims of domestic abuse, not just their mothers.

Thank you for your time in this matter and if you wish to discuss this further, the charity's Project Manager (Mrs. Pat Moffatt) and I would be more than happy to discuss this in person.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks

Chairman

The ManKind Initiative

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1 The British Crime Survey report: Home Office Statistical Bulletin – Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2007/08 (published 22nd January 2009). Chapter 3 (page 55) of <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb0209.pdf>.

The ManKind Initiative is a registered charity consisting of men and women who support male victims of domestic violence and domestic abuse. It provides a help-line, information, referral and training service.

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