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01823 334244

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Emma Thomas,  
Chief Executive  
YouthNet UK  
First Floor  
50 Featherstone Street  
London, EC1Y 8RT

01 June 2013

Dear Ms Thomas

### **Do it – Volunteers for men’s charities**

I am writing as the chair of trustees of a national charity that supports male victims of domestic abuse and to set out by disappointment that there is no volunteering category on the above website for ‘men’.

While I was pleased to see that there was a category for women I do not understand why there is no category for ‘men’, especially bearing in mind the growing number of charities in the UK supporting men on male-related issues. These include charities related to health, suicide/depression, eating disorders, domestic abuse and homelessness to name but a few - all of whom would be delighted to have some of the volunteers that view your site.

In addition, our charity is concerned that the lack of a male category has no basis in terms of equality and is in fact an institutional barrier that charities supporting men and boys have to overcome without foundation.

It is worth noting that a key part of the a landmark report (entitled ‘**Invisible Men: Engaging More Men in Social Projects**’) published last year by the Youth Foundation on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund, was the fact that “we know that men have particular needs, but we have also become aware that fewer men than women get involved in or benefit from the social projects we fund.” A key finding was for more support to be given to organisations supporting men.

I would be grateful, in terms of both equality and in terms of supporting people to volunteer for charities supporting men and boys, if you were able to add a new category for ‘men’ and also inform me when this has been added. This will enable me to circulate the good news to the

range of male-related charities the Mankind Initiative works with, who can look forward to an increase in the number of both female and male volunteers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

*M J Brooks*

Mark Brooks  
Chair of Trustees  
The ManKind Initiative  
[chairman@mankind.org.uk](mailto:chairman@mankind.org.uk)

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11 JUN 2013

Mark Brooks  
Chair of Trustees  
The Mankind Initiative  
Flook House  
Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
TA1 1BT

3 June 2013

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your interest in Do-it and your letter regarding the absence of a men category on the areas of interest on the service.

YouthNet's focus since Do-it's inception has always been to make volunteering easy for individuals looking to get involved in their community. As a result, much of our development and operation of the service is based upon user needs. The reason for the lack of this category is that neither our research nor user feedback has ever included such a request from volunteers searching for opportunities. This has been the primary basis for determining filters to offer. In parallel, the other vital factor is that filters are populated with significant opportunities. So the introduction of a filter is always accompanied by ensuring a range of opportunities to populate this, again so that we are meeting user needs who might select this category.

I do think, however, that your letter highlights the importance of equality in terms of opportunities to support those in need. Yet, the technical work to introduce a new lookup value is more complex than it might appear, as whilst relatively straight forward to add it to the search functionality on the website, we would need to add it to the various products that organisations use to upload their opportunities to Do-it.

As you may be aware, YouthNet announced in March that we are looking to transfer Do-it to a new owner and have begun a selection process in conjunction with the Office for Civil Society. Do-it has more than met YouthNet's aims and outgrown our mission of supporting young people. So we are looking for a new owner to lead Do-it on the next phase of its development and YouthNet can focus on support for young people. Do-it will transfer to a new owner in December and until then we are restricting the amount of technical work to focus our resources on key funded deliverables and on supporting the transfer once a new owner is selected in the summer. Therefore we are not in a position to undertake the work during this time. Once we know the new owner and have a clearer idea of the support required to transfer the service, then this maybe something we can undertake, or otherwise we could raise it with the new owner.





In the meantime, I do believe we could work together to ensure there are sufficient opportunities to populate this category to ensure this offers a diversity of choice for those looking to volunteer. Given the reach of users of Do-it and their geographical spread, it would be important to ensure the opportunity to support men across a range of locations, as users use their postcode for opportunity searched. So is there an opportunity to work with the range of male-related charities the Mankind Initiative works with, in order that in introducing the category there is a wealth of choice to inspire individuals to get involved? In your letter you suggest these are not existing partners of Do-it so are not currently using Do-it to reach volunteers. Therefore, our Partnerships Team could support a recruitment drive potentially with a discounted rate depending on the number of organisations you could reach out to.

If you were interested in this, please get in touch with our Head of Partnerships, Simon Jenkinson on [simon.jenkinson@youthnet.org](mailto:simon.jenkinson@youthnet.org)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Emma Thomas", written in a cursive style.

Emma Thomas  
Chief Executive



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Emma Thomas,  
Chief Executive  
YouthNet UK  
First Floor  
50 Featherstone Street  
London, EC1Y 8RT

31 July 2013

Dear Emma

**Do-It website**

Thank you for your letter dated 6 June 2013, regarding the lack of a category for volunteers wanting to support men and boys.

Given that the site is moving to a new owner and the lack of resource for technical changes, I would ask that you raise the issue with the new owner and also the Office for Civil Society. I am happy to contact them direct or if you were able to forward the correspondence to the right person that would be very helpful.

We were of course both disappointed and surprised that your research did not find male-orientated charities when there are such high profile organisations such as Families Need Fathers, the Prostate Cancer UK and CALM (male suicide) in existence as well as many more.

In addition, in working with the Office for Civil Society in handing the site and the development over to a new organisation if there is a category for women and girls (which of course would be entirely understandable), but there is no category for men and boys, then the Office for Civil Society would be in breach of the Equality Act 2010. In particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty. I hope therefore that the new site will provide a remedy for this issue.

Thank you for consideration and time on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M J Brooks".

Mark Brooks

Chair of Trustees

The ManKind Initiative

[chairman@mankind.org.uk](mailto:chairman@mankind.org.uk)