

Press release

Date: 26 September 2017

Fear that Lavinia Woodward sentence reinforces society's view of male victims of domestic abuse as less than equal.

In response to the 10-month suspended sentence given to Lavinia Woodward for her conviction for unlawful wounding, **Mark Brooks, Chair of the Mankind Initiative, a national charity for male victims of domestic abuse**, said:

"This sentence is a real concern as we fear it sends a message to society that domestic abuse against a man is not to be treated as seriously as it rightly is when a woman is a victim. Far too many men who are victims of this crime do not recognise that they are and many others do not come forward because they fear they will not be taken seriously or believed. The sentence in this case only serves to reinforce their fears.

"The fact that the focus has not been on the effects of what happened on the male victim adds to empathy gap between men and women – it is almost as if he was invisible.

"Some form of acknowledgement from the judge about not wanting this sentence to put society off from recognising male victims would have greatly helped to dispel those fears. The Crown Prosecution Service made a bold statement and commitment earlier this month on how they view and recognise male victims, the judiciary needs to follow suit."

Crown Prosecution Statement:

<http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/equality/vaw/public-statement-male-victims-crimes-covered-by-CPS-VAWG-strategy.pdf>

For key facts about male victims, please see: <http://new.mankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/30-Key-Facts-Male-Victims-February-2017-1.pdf>

ENDS

Notes to Editors

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 1,500 calls from male victims (or from people on behalf of victims – often mothers and sisters) every year.

It created the award winning #violenceisviolence social experiment highlight society's double standards when it comes to domestic abuse against men:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3PgH86OyEM>

Media

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