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Honorary Patrons – Lord Cotter, Ian McNicholl, John Penrose MP, Sara Westle and Erin Pizze

Draft Police and Crime Plan for London 2017-2021 Consultation Response: Violence Against Women and Girls

(A) Background

1. This response is from the ManKind Initiative, a national charity supporting male victims of domestic abuse through its national helpline, website and IDVA drop-in service. It also supports the male victim domestic abuse sector through its CPD accredited training, membership of a number of Government/stakeholder committees and its annual national conference. It also advocates and campaigns on behalf of male victims.
2. In addition, while this response is primarily from the charity, it is also being submitted on behalf of the Chair, who is a resident of London, living in the London Borough of Bexley.
3. The submission focusses solely on the Violence Against Women and Girls Section of the draft Police and Crime Plan.
4. The charity fully recognises that there are more female victims than male victims in London and any proposals and comments in this submission fully recognise this. The charity also does not endorse any proposals or views that mean taking away resources and funding from female victims and then given to male victims, or, any views or proposals that diminish the lived experiences of female victims.
5. The charity supports male victims in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

(B) Executive Summary

6. Depending on the official dataset used, between 23% and 34% of victims of domestic abuse in London are male.

7. The draft Police and Crime Action plan currently fails to adequately recognise male victims of domestic abuse within London. The charity therefore urges that this is rectified in the final plan.
8. London is one of the worst cities in the United Kingdom to be a male victim of domestic abuse given the proportionate lack of available services including no refuge or safe house for male victims anywhere in the Capital. Many will also have daughters and sons who they need to escape with.
9. The Mayor of London has a real opportunity to be a world leader in terms of gender inclusion and gender responsiveness by adopting an Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys Strategy in parallel to its Ending Violence Against Women and Boys Strategy. The charity would of course be willing to work alongside the Mayor of London and other stakeholders in the creation of this strategy.
10. The charity has outlined a number of proposals in line with the Mayor's proposals set out in the draft plan. These include ensuring there is a support service for male victims of domestic abuse in every single London Borough and also that there are a network of safe house/refuges throughout London for male victims – including being able to support fathers who need to escape with their daughters and sons.

(C) Statistics on victims of domestic abuse in London

11. According to the Office for National Statistics¹ Datatool, in the Metropolitan Police/City of London area, the average annual number of victims of domestic abuse, aged 16-59, by sex between April 2013 and March 2016 were:

74,100 men and 143,100 women (a ratio of 34%:66%)

12. According to the Office for National Statistics² Crime Survey of England and Wales, in Greater London, the percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 in 2015/16 who were victims of intimate violence in the last year, were

Victims of domestic abuse: 3.1% men and 6.5% women (a ratio of 33%:67%)

Victims of partner abuse: 1.3% men and 4.4% women (a ratio of 23%:77%)

¹ Office for National Statistics: Domestic abuse in England and Wales Datatool (published 8 December 2016)

² Appendix table 4.11: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence in the last year, by headline categories, household and area characteristics and sex, year ending March 2016 CSEW (Release date: 9 February 2017)

13. According to the Metropolitan Police³, in 2015, the gender split of the number of people reporting to them stating they were victims of domestic abuse, was:

16,681 men (24%) and 53,472 (76%) women

14. There are no refuges or safe houses in the whole of London for male victims of domestic abuse, including those who have to escape with their daughters and sons. In addition, there are only approximately 15 services available for male victims across London. There are boroughs across London where there are no services.
15. Based on the numbers of male victims of domestic abuse (in heterosexual and same-sex relationships) and the proportionate level of services available, London is one of the worst cities in the whole of the United Kingdom to be a male victim of domestic abuse.

(D) Response

Ensuring adequate support and recognition based on risk and need

16. The current police and crime plan does not recognise male victims of domestic abuse apart from a small aside. There is nothing of any substance. This is despite the fact that 16,681 men in 2015 (many with vulnerable daughters and sons as well) reported to the Metropolitan Police that they were victims of domestic abuse. In 2014, 2013 and 2012, the figures were 13,660, 19,444 and 9,245 respectively.
17. The section on Protecting Men and Boys (page 51) states “*While the majority of sexual and domestic offences are committed against women, and the majority of offences are perpetrated by men, men and boys are also at risk of becoming victims*”. The rest of the narrative is solely on male victims of sexual violence (we want male victims of sexual violence to be supported). It is hard to make a judgment at this stage on whether the failure to recognise or acknowledge male victims of domestic abuse is an oversight or a deliberate omission. As this plan is in draft format, it would therefore be expected that this is remedied in the final plan. This would also ensure that the Mayor of London’s Police and Crime plan has an adequate Equality Impact Assessment that fully equally recognises and supports victims of domestic abuse of all genders.
18. The failure to acknowledge and then address the needs of male victims of domestic abuse within London, reinforces the vulnerability of those adults (and their daughters and sons) as it means there is little recognition of their existence, which subsequently feeds into a lack of public policy, funding, responsiveness and support services. These

³ Freedom of Information request from the ManKind Initiative

services include those provided by the police, health sector, housing sector and local authorities. In addition, it affects the responsiveness of those support services in supporting men when they disclose – including a lack of training. This makes male victims (and their daughters and sons) even more vulnerable than they already are.

19. Further to this, in the eyes of male victims, the lack of recognition and services, minimises the abuse they are suffering from – in effect – it reinforces their belief that no one will believe or help them (and their daughters and sons).
20. A male victim, under all domestic abuse, crime, housing and equalities legislation (including the Public Sector Equality Duty) has the right to the same level of support as a female victim with the same level of risk and need. Failure to provide this at an individual level leaves the Mayor of London, the Metropolitan Police and local authorities at a risk of breaching the law, including the Equality Act 2010.
21. While at an individual level, there is a legal requirement that victims of all genders receive the same level of support based on equal risk and need, it is recognised that proportionately there would be more funding overall for female victim services than male victim services. However, given the extremely low level of support for male victims in London, it is therefore expected that the amount of financial support for the provision of male services should increase. It is important to be clear though, the charity does not believe additional funding for services for male victims should be at the cost of funding for female services. This would not be morally or ethically acceptable, and female services also require more funding as well.
22. The charity is more concerned about the level of services for male victims rather than who provides them – so long as they are male-victim friendly. This is why we are supportive of the approach in London that services that were previously only for female victims have been extended to also include male victims.

A gender responsible and inclusive approach for London

23. The charity supports the need for an Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. However, this strategy does not adequately support male victims of the crimes who are included under this umbrella strategy.
24. By taking a more gender inclusive and responsive approach, the Mayor of London has a real opportunity to take a national lead on supporting male victims of the crimes that currently fall under this umbrella strategy. This approach to intimate violence would

improve focus, recognition and support for female and male victims - both in same-sex and heterosexual relationships.

25. At a national and London level, under the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) umbrella, all victims of crimes such as sexual violence, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking and "honour" based crimes are classed as being victims of VAWG crimes. This also includes male victims of those crimes. In a city like London, with its diverse population and national leadership role in terms of inclusion, equality and fairness, this approach can no longer be acceptable for a number of reasons. By classing male victims of these crimes as being victims of women and girl's crimes is:
- factually incorrect as men and boys are not women and girls
 - minimising the lived experience of men and boys who suffer these crimes by making it harder for them to feel that what has happened to them will be recognised, supported and validated. This reinforces their vulnerability and risk.
 - making male victims of these crimes invisible to society, employers, policy makers and service providers thereby leading to inadequate recognition, awareness and support. This reinforces their vulnerability and increases risk.
26. The charity therefore believes that the Mayor of London should create a parallel strategy entitled "Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys" that sits alongside the "Ending Violence Against Women and Girls". This would provide the adequate recognition, awareness and support that men suffering from these crimes need – which is not the situation as it stands currently in London, or elsewhere in the UK.
27. For the Mayor of London to adopt this approach, he would provide further proof that London is a leader both in the United Kingdom and globally in terms of gender inclusion, gender responsiveness, equality and fairness.

Specific support

28. The Police and Crime Plan sets out a number of proposals, which while the charity supports in principle, it is vital in terms of inclusion, equality and compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty) that the proposals include support for male victims.
29. Specifically, these should include:

- Ensuring there is a domestic abuse support service for male victims in every single London borough
- Ensuring there is a network of refuges/safe houses throughout London for male victims (these must include refuge/safe house support for male victims with daughters and sons). This should form part of the proposed workstream that states that the Mayor would work “*with the GLA and Local Authorities to improve availability of refuges and other safe accommodation for victims and survivors.*”
- Leading a public campaign raising awareness on male victims of domestic abuse to change societal views that only women can be victims of domestic abuse and to encourage men to seek help.
- Ensuring that the proposed review of the provision and funding of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors includes a sufficient level of provision and funding available for male victims.
- Ensuring that the delivery of the whole-school pilot for VAWG prevention includes ensuring recognition that prevention includes prevention of VAWG crimes against men and boys.

For further details, please contact: Mark Brooks, Chair of Trustees on chairman@mankind.org.uk and 07834 452357