

## **Support for Male Victims of Domestic Abuse**

### **(A) Same support as for female victims**

The types of support and approach that male victims need is on the whole the same as those for female victims. These requests for support are therefore similar to those made by SafeLives and Women's Aid to Police and Crime Commissioners.

#### **1) IDVA Provision**

Please ensure there is sufficient Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) services to support male victims. While there is recognition that some services may specialise on female victims, there is still a need to ensure there is enough funding to support IDVA services for male victims either as part of existing services or separate stand-alone services. This also ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

#### **2) Support for Specialist Services**

Please ensure that specialist domestic abuse services in your region, such as male refuges/safe houses, helplines, drop-in services and charities are supported and promoted by the police.

#### **3) Believe Him**

Similar to the points made by Women's Aid, please make sure that police officers believe men when they come forward to disclose domestic abuse and to take the relevant action against the perpetrator. Some men who call our helpline still feel that when they have contacted the police, because they are a man, they have not been believed. We recognise progress has been made on this over the past decade so this is not as prevalent as it once was.

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### **(B) Nuanced support for male victims**

#### **1) Communication and Awareness Campaigns**

Male victims are over twice as likely not to tell the police than female victims<sup>1</sup> and we believe police forces can do much more to encourage men to come forward and report to the police. This includes ensuring their websites, information, posters, leaflets and imagery are not exclusively focussed on just female victims\* and are

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<sup>1</sup> ONS BCS Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences 2014/15 <http://bit.ly/1p8CGl0> Table 4.28 on <http://bit.ly/1M1diC5>

therefore male victim friendly. The communications approach should in practice be gender inclusive not gender exclusive.

This also includes not downplaying male victims so phrases such as “*while men can be victims the overwhelming majority of victims are female*” should not be used. While also not factually correct, this will also only reinforce the view that many men hold that there is no support for them and also they will not be believed when they try and access that support.

\*This of course does not count if a campaign is purposely aimed at female victims as there is an expectation that a reciprocal or parallel campaign would be launched for male victims. This would also ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and also ensure a gender inclusive approach is taken.

## **2) Police and Action Plan, and, specific Domestic Abuse Policy**

It is vital that when domestic abuse policy is set including within the Police and Action Plan that this includes full and equal recognition of male victims of domestic. This also includes ensuring that it is explicitly clear that all domestic abuse policy and guidelines apply to male victims as well as female victims. This ensures that there this is a strong inclusive message to the whole police force that male victims should be supported on the same basis as female victims based on their individual need.

This also avoids the issue raised in (1) above whereby phrases such as “*while men can be victims the overwhelming majority of victims are female*” effectively relegate male victims to being second class victims.

## **(3) Inclusive Training**

Please ensure that all domestic abuse training that police officers receive is male victim-friendly and inclusive.

This is to ensure that male victims are equally recognised and receive the same support as a female victim based on need and in the same situation. Much of the domestic abuse training that the police receive in our experience is not inclusive which also includes on-line training packages (we are developing our own specialist online training for male victims in response to this).

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