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Registered Charity No. 1089547 – Company Registration No. 3869893
Honorary Patrons – Lord Cotter, Liz Lynne MEP, Ian McNicholl, John Penrose MP and Erin Pizzey

Response to: Safer Bristol

Violence and Abuse against Women and Girls- a strategy against gendered violence

(1) About the ManKind Initiative

- 1.1 The ManKind Initiative has been a charity for over ten years and supports male victims of domestic abuse. This is through a national helpline, training and information for organisations wishing to support male victims and campaigning to ensure that there are adequate support services and recognition for male victims. The charity is based in Taunton.
- 1.2 The charity works with local authorities, police forces, housing associations, charities and other groups. It recently had a training seminar in Taunton and a number of people from Bristol based organisations attended.
- 1.3 The charity does not believe or support the notion that domestic abuse is a gendered crime, especially as national figures show that one in three victims of domestic abuse are male. The charity believes domestic abuse is a crime against an individual and while their gender, race or sexuality are important issues, they are secondary to the fact that legally, constitutionally and morally, domestic abuse has to be primarily viewed and treated as a crime against an individual.

(2) Summary

- 2.1 The charity greatly welcomes the recognition given to male victims throughout the draft strategy. It is particularly pleased as many such strategic documents the charity reviews often relegate male victims to a mere footnote even if this is in breach of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 2.2 The charity, however, has concerns about the positioning of domestic abuse as a gendered crime (see 1.3 above) and being based on 'feminist analysis' as this suggests that the council's strategy is based on ideology not necessarily on facts. Ideology should not be relevant to tackling violence and abuse. In addition, the positioning of the strategy about gendered violence also suggests equal attention may not be given to male victims, which therefore runs counter to the recognition suggested in 2.1 above.

2.3 The charity also raises the issue that while there is recognition of male victims in the strategy, male victims are not always included in some of the initiatives when they should be.

2.4 The sections in detail are set out below by page number as suggested.

(3) Response

Page 1

- (i) The title of the strategy should be simply entitled **Violence and abuse – a strategy against violence**. By using the title Against Women and Girls, it automatically causes a tension and gives the perception that this strategy has no relevance and does not include men and boys, been though the initiatives apply to both genders.
- (ii) The concern about the use of gendered violence is set out in 2.2 above.

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- (i) As set out in 2.2 above, the charity has concerns about positioning the strategy as being based on 'feminist analysis' as it means the strategy is based on ideology rather than based on facts and practical support and initiatives for all victims across the city. It also creates the potential possibility of the strategy being given the wrong impression about its contents which would be a shame. We recommend the term 'feminist analysis' is dropped from the strategy.

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- (i) **Objective 1: Education** - There is no mention of men and boys in this section and it should be made clear that the initiatives include preventing women from committing violence against men and boys. This includes the teacher training and awareness training throughout Bristol. If these initiatives do not include men and boys then they should be rejected.
- (ii) This section as with others show the tension in calling the strategy 'women and girls' when the initiatives must be including 'men and boys' as well.

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- (i) **Objective 3: campaigns** – Considering that the government's own figures (British crime Survey) show one in three victims of domestic abuse are male and that male victims are twice as likely to under-report (British Crime Survey), it is disappointing there is no campaign aimed at encouraging male victims to come forward. The charity recommends this is created and added into the section. Failure to do so, may leave the council open to accusations that it is breaching the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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- (i) **How will we know if we are making a difference** – In the first bulletpoint there is no mention about 'Female violence against men being acknowledged'. If as the strategy sets out clearly that it will address male victims, then when measuring the effectiveness of the strategy it must also measure the effectiveness of reducing female violence against men and boys in the city. We recommend that this is made clearer so it says ' Male violence against women and female violence against men'

The ManKind Initiative
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