

“MEN : THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”

BRIEFING ON MALE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

(1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Men make up 24% of domestic violence victims in the past five years
- 1 in 6 men will become victims of domestic violence in their lifetime
- There are no male-only refuges in the UK as opposed to over 470 for women. There are five women’s refuges that have at most 11 places for men.
- There are only three small charities funded mainly by donations helping male victims whilst female charities receive huge state funding
- Local authorities receive £59 million per year in government funding to support female domestic violence victims and receive nothing to support men
- Local authorities are measured by the government on the support they give to female victims but are not measured on the support they give to male victims
- Society’s view, driven by the state, the courts and the media, is that only women are victims of domestic violence.
- It is time for the government and all elements of the state to officially recognise the problem and to produce, fund and implement a nationwide strategy to help male victims
- It is time for the media and society to recognise that domestic violence is a social problem and that it affects men as well as women

(2) BACKGROUND

Every year, thousands of men become victims of domestic violence only to find there is little support available for them.

Although British Crime Survey statistics¹ (2001-2006) show that 24% of all victims of domestic violence are men and that 40% (1 in 6 men² and 1 in 4 women²) will suffer from domestic violence in their lifetime, little overall recognition or support is given by the government, local authorities, the police, the health service, GPs or the courts.

The government gives local authorities £59 million⁷ per year (2005/06) to tackle domestic violence but this can only be used for female victims, no funds are made available for men. The government also measures the ability of local authorities to provide refuges and sanctuary schemes for domestic violence victims (Performance Indicator BV 225), again, this is only for women and children, there is no measure for male victims.

It is estimated that domestic violence costs the country £23 billion³ per year including a £3.1 billion cost to the state. It accounts for just under one fifth of all violent crime incidents and there are currently 64 specialist domestic violence courts.⁴

Male victims have few places to turn to:

- There are no male-only refuges in the UK as opposed to over 470⁵ for women. There are five women's refuges that have at most 11 places for men.

- There are only a few bespoke helplines run by small charities such as The ManKind Initiative and Men's Aid (who receive no state/lottery support) and one helpline supported by The Home Office. Female victims are supported by large charities such as Refuge and Women's Aid who are funded through local authorities, government and the Lottery;
- The over-riding social view driven by the government, the media and other organisations is that only women are victims of domestic violence;
- Many state institutions such as The Home Office, local authorities or the police offer no specialist support and often do not believe that men could be victims of domestic violence. Those who do offer specific support are in the minority.

Due to the lack of support, practically or emotionally, men find it hard to find places to turn to. Some men feel that it is not 'macho' to admit they have suffered domestic violence and some authorities react to such claims with incredulity. It is of course not just about the victims themselves but also their families and their children.

The Home Office produces annual strategies and funding to be implemented by the state institutions to deal with domestic violence. However, these are primarily aimed and focussed at female victims.

It is now time for the government to officially recognise the problem and to produce, fund and implement a nationwide strategy to help male victims and support the charities involved in helping them.

The government should also make sure that the local authority performance indicator (BV 225) includes measuring local authority support for male domestic violence victims. They have a duty under the Gender Equality Duty which came into force in April 2007.

It is time for the media and society to recognise the problem and not just concentrate on female victims.

It is right to say that there are more female victims and they need the support they receive but to ignore the needs of 24% of victims can no longer be tolerated.

(3) DEFINITION

The Home Office definition of a domestic violence incident is:

Any incident or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or are family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

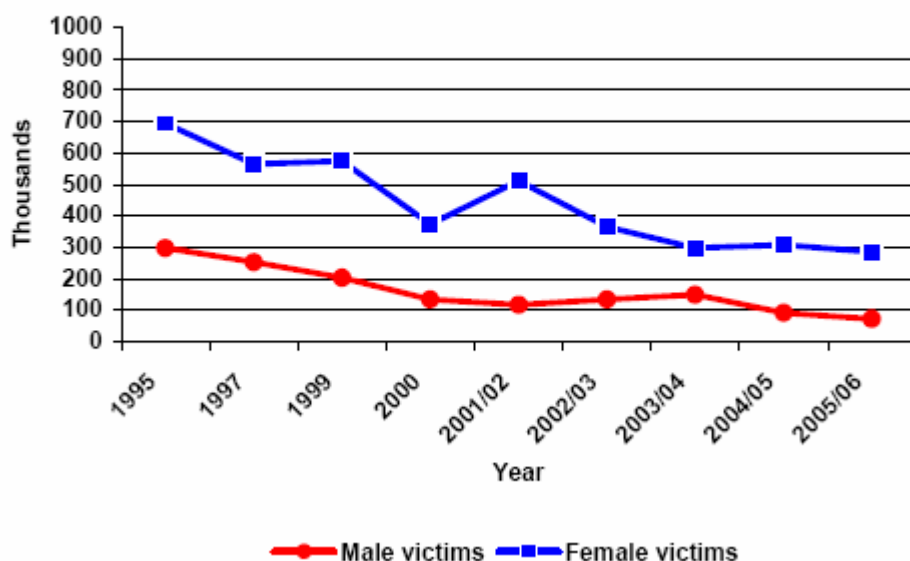
(4) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS

Statistics collated by Dewar Research¹ from the annual British Crime Surveys:

Thousands

Year	Total	Male Victims	Female Victims	% of Men
2001/02	621	117	511	19
2002/03	501	135	366	27
2003/04	446	150	298	34
2004/05	401	92	308	23
2005/06	357	72	285	20
Total	2326	566	1768	24

Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence



The Home Office² in a 2004 report estimated that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be affected in their lifetimes by domestic violence. This means that 60% of victims will be women and 40% men.

The report² also showed that in 2001 men made up 43% of people suffering from severe assault.

It can be argued that The British Crime Survey figures are an under-estimate as many men, especially younger men, do not view domestic violence against them, especially of a minor nature, as a crime and therefore do not report it (19% of men were victims of domestic violence in 2001 but the Home Office report with research from the same year showed 43.5% of men are victims of severe assault).

(5) PROSECUTION / THE COURT SYSTEM

The Crown Prosecution Service now has 64 domestic violence courts (SDVC).

Despite research showing that 24% of victims in the past five years are men, only 5% of women are prosecuted. The publicity and concentration of these specialist courts will be on the prosecution of men.

**Prosecutions for Domestic Violence
2006**

	No. of Defendants	as % of total
Total Prosecutions	56,402	
<i>of which</i>		
Male Defendants	53,452	94.8%
Female Defendants	2,950	5.2%
Convictions	35,813	63.5%
<i>of which</i>		
Male Defendants	34,037	60.3%
Female Defendants	1,776	3.1%
Unsuccessful Outcomes	20,589	36.5%
<i>of which</i>		
Male Defendants	19,415	34.4%
Female Defendants	1,174	2.1%

(6) FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Overall the cost to the state is estimated at £3.1 billion made up of costs such as refuges, police/court time, health services etc

Mainstream government funding is available via the Communities Department to local authorities and this comes under the Supporting People initiative. There is

also a Ministerial Group for Domestic Violence which comprises ministers from nine government departments and the three devolved administrations. The Local Government Association⁶ have commissioned a report on domestic violence services in the UK.

In 2005/06, £59 million was allocated to local authorities through the Supporting People initiative to provide services for people suffering from domestic violence.⁷ However, this money is only for “Women at Risk of Domestic Violence”. This money is not available to help male victims, local authorities have to fund any provision for male victims themselves and the majority therefore do not. In 2003/04 and 2004/05, the figures was £57 million respectively.

The government also measures the ability of local authorities to provide refuges and sanctuary schemes for domestic violence victims (Performance Indicator BV 225), again, this is only for women and children, there is no measure for supporting male victims.

In addition to the Supporting People funding, the government also funds capital projects for refuges and of course, extra monies are available for support through local authorities, health authorities, the police and, of course, private donations, lottery and corporate sponsorships. From April 2007, an additional surcharge of £15 was being placed on fines for those guilty of speeding offences that end up in court. This surcharge was to pay for services to help victims of domestic violence.

The key issue is that with little recognition and few small charities and one refuge specifically for men, this money is not filtering down to support male victims. The male charities are supported by volunteers and are funded through private donations and fund raising. Two of the three – The ManKind Initiative and Men’s Aid – receive no state/lottery or large corporate support.

(7) REFUGES

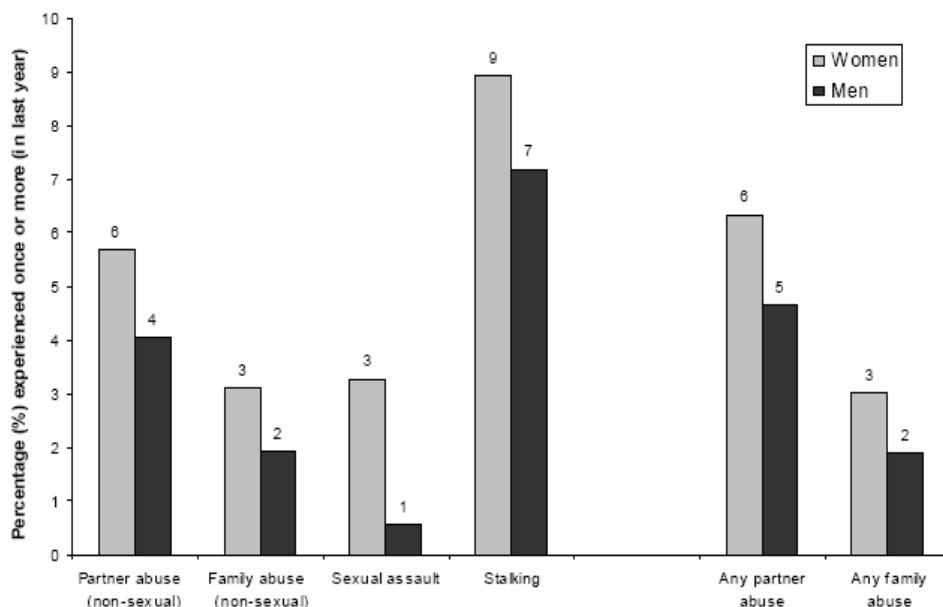
There are no male-only refuges in the UK as opposed to over 470⁵ for women. There are five women's refuges that have at most 11 places for men (places are in South West, South, Wales and West Midlands).

(the North-West, South West and the Midlands). The female places are mainly funded through grants to Refuge and Women's Aid via the Supporting People initiative.

(8) OTHER STATISTICS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Home Office produced a report in January 2007⁸ which provided a further breakdown of statistics on what is known as intimate violence. The figures based on the British Crime Survey for 2005/06 and are based on incidents experienced during that year.

The reason for raising this is that again, from a cultural/social context, while it is acknowledged that females are victims of these types of crimes the statistics prove that men are as well. The latter though is hardly ever recognised. For example, 9% of women feel they have been stalked in the past year but in media coverage this was the only figure highlighted; the 7% of men who were stalked was widely ignored.



(9) WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

The first stepping stone is for male victims of domestic violence to be recognised as people who are in need of help and need to be supported. This ignorance of the true situation needs to be overcome especially when the government itself produces statistics to show that 24% of domestic violence victims are men.

The media can also help in this and not continue to portray victims of domestic violence as solely being women.

Viewing victims solely as women is not only inequitable to men but ignores the plight of those children who have to live with violent mothers.

Government / State

All governments talk of personalising the public sector to the needs of individuals. Now is the time to put these words into action.

The government produces strategies⁹ and funding to be implemented by the state institutions to deal with domestic violence. There is also the Ministerial Group, local authorities, the police, the NHS and GPs. However, these initiatives are primarily aimed and focussed at female victims especially when looking at the £59 million + spent through the Supporting People initiative.

The government and the Local Government Association should produce, fund and implement a nationwide strategy to help male victims of domestic violence. There should be particular awareness of and support services for chronic and severely assaulted male victims, especially father victims.

The government should also make sure that the local authority performance indicator (BV 225) includes measuring local authority support for helping male domestic violence victims.

Help and funding is needed by the charities to provide support and also local authorities (individually or collectively) must look to provide refuges specifically for men. They have a duty under the Gender Equality Duty which came into force in April 2007.

These forgotten victims need help and it is time they now received it.

The Media

Often the media only concentrate on the female victims of domestic violence so society in general receives the impression that only females are victims. Often when covering the issue of domestic violence, the media automatically talk about female victims rather than either keeping the issue gender-neutral or talking

about men and women. This is in the same way that any media discussion about absent *parents* is automatically converted into absent *fathers*.

The reasons for this tend to be based on a cultural perception that only women could be victims and also because a number of female pressure groups such as Refuge, Women's Aid, the Fawcett Society and the government itself through its Women's and Equality Unit only promote female victims.

The media should now provide a more balanced picture.

(10) CHARITIES HELPING MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Mankind Initiative (TAUNTON HQ) - <http://www.mensaid.com/>

Men's Aid (MILTON KEYNES HQ) - <http://www.mensaid.com/>

M.A.L.E (DEVON HQ) - <http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk/about-male.htm>

Notes

1 Source : From British Crime Survey statistics collated by Dewar Research www.dewar4research.org

2. Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004) Domestic Violence, sexual assault and stalking : Findings from the British Crime Survey. Home Office Research Study No. 276. London : Home Office

3 Walby, S. (2004) The Cost of Domestic Violence . Report to the DTI Women and Equality Unit. London: Women and Equality Unit/DTI

4 <http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/DOMESTICVIOLENCE>

5. <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/downloads/FAQs.pdf>

6. <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/tacklingdomesticviolence.pdf>

7. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmhansrd/vo050110/text/50110w80.htm> ,
<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo040618/text/40618w10.htm> and
Freedom of Information Request for 2005/06

8 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb0207.pdf>

9. <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/dv/dv01.htm>