**Men’s Health Unlocked**

**Male Receivers of Abuse Consultation**

**Introduction**

30% of receivers of abuse are male (National Crime Survey) and 25 % of victims relating to police arrests are male. In a study it was found that only 4% of domestic violence service users were male, so the government asked services to look at male victims of domestic violence and do more work around this.

The feedback from these discussions twent to the Safeguarding Board.

1. **Presentation - Mark Brooks - The ManKind Initiative**

A lot covered here in a short space of time. The attached presentation covers the key points.

[Link to Mark’s presentation](https://forumcentral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MHU-Marks-Presentation-15-9-21.pptx.pdf)

British Crime Survey

•1 in 6/7 men and 1 in 4 women will be a victim in their lifetime

•760,000 men and 1.56 million women are victims of domestic abuse (500,000 and 1.2 million women – partner abuse)

**Who do men tell?**

•Male victims (49%) are nearly three times as likely than women (18%) not to tell anyone they are a victim.

•60% of Mankind’s male helpline callers have never spoken to anyone

•60% of our Mankind’s helpline callers would not have called if the helpline was not anonymous.

**Service Engagement**

•Less than one in 20 victims who engage with local support services are men (19/20) and are the same for MARACs

•One in four victims who report to the police are male (19/20)

**Mark outlined four key areas which create barriers to support:**

* Masculine (gendered) outcomes
* Societal Belief Systems
* Public Policy and Discourse
* Lack of Visible Services

**He recommended the following action to address this:**

* Take a Gender-Informed Approach
* Be professionally and personally curious
* Overcome any “Cognitive Bias”
* Apply the same standards as you do a female victim (DASH, referral pathways, laws?)
* Training – is the standard DA inclusive and/or seek specialist training
* Look at Male Domestic Abuse Network Service Standards to aid your approach: https://mdan.org.uk/service-standards/
* Do not place the emphasis on men changing – society and services’ responsibility
* Male-friendly communication campaigns

A key issue on refugees/safe houses is the new legal responsibilities councils including Leeds have and already have (Homelessness Act and Equality Act etc). Worth looking at this Guidance (in draft but not likely to change back): <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993825/Domestic_Abuse_Act_-_draft_statutory_guidance.pdf>

For more information on this, please see attached presentation.

1. **Presentation - Jackie Campbell & Joanne Holdsworth - Behind Closed Doors**

Jackie is the supervisor for the community team, she supports men and women in high risk cases that come from the police, Adult Social Care and MARACs etc.

Joanne's part of the service has received 13 referrals for men.

Jackie's part of the service:

* 85 referrals over the past year.
* Aged 18-86.
* 33 referrals in the last quarter compared to 3-4 for the same period last year.

They have found that:

* Men often question whether situations are abusive and often don’t realise they are being abused.
* Men also, in contrast to women, don’t often have health visitors that could flag up possible abuse.
* There are common issues around men feeling like they will be, or actually experiencing being, laughed at about their abuse, and having a lack of confidentiality at work.

Behind Closed Doors offer practical support around safety, housing etc. However, there are problems around resources for male victims.

When assessing men, Jackie does change questions geared towards women in the DASH assessment and uses her professional judgement - e.g. men might sometimes have a lower score on the DASH because questions don’t apply directly to them, but she will still refer for a MARAC if she feels it is necessary.

Mark said that there were a lot of issues around filling in DASH assessments with men and professionals’ prejudices, leading to men not getting the help they need e.g. police scoring women higher - We need more robust and accessible systems. Karen said that all professionals should have training to do the DASH, not just police.

Joanne said that they could do with male workers, however, when speaking with men they say that they just want to speak with someone who believes them and they don’t mind the gender.

1. **Breakout rooms and feedback**

* What barriers do men face when accessing support?
* How do we raise awareness of DA being an issue for men across Leeds?
* How do we increase uptake of DA services for men in Leeds?

**Compiled feedback:**

**Provision:**

* Need more men’s refuges.
* Need more services targeting men.

**Awareness raising:**

* We need to acknowledge and understand what abuse is and help men to recognise this.
* DV adverts are aimed at women and men often shown as the perpetrators - this reinforces negative stereotypes that can prejudice service approach and can discourage existing victims from seeing themselves as receivers of abuse.
* Need more information and staff training around DV affecting men.
* Need more campaigning and networking available.
* Need more info for younger people. Need education at schools re: healthy relationships.
* Recommended campaigning to encourage men to recognise abuse and know the services available to them.
* Need more gendered campaigns aimed at men. Need to think about where info is promoted - Is the GP a good place? Or pubs? Where will men notice this?
* Need to highlight needs of LGBTQ victims and other minority groups.
* A standalone men’s DV week would be really beneficial.
* We always need to acknowledge the cost to society caused by women in hospital and high risk cases as that is where funding goes.
* We could promote the idea of having DV champions at workplaces etc.
* Need to show that DV is not just physical abuse.
* Could promote case studies of real life men and their experiences.
* Women need to stand in solidarity - Empower men to take their own space on this and do this without diluting women’s spaces - avoid a ‘battle of the sexes’ and ‘whataboutism’

**Barriers to support:**

* Men have fears of counter allegations and not being believed.
* The Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) website is quite gendered - but that is being changed by LDVS to address this.
* In Leeds, an assessment tool is used by some services before support is offered to men (This assessment mainly applies to those referrals that are deemed medium or high risk cases, rather than other, non-crisis referrals.)
* Need to think of who men will speak to - Need male worker at ManKind - Though Professor White said there seems to be evidence regarding the preferred gender of facilitators etc - Jackie said it would be good for men to have this option.
* Men face societal prejudices around DV and are told to ‘Man up’ etc.
* Need to think about the fact men often want to stay anonymous.

Doing an awareness-raising campaign during 16 Days of Gendered Action Against Violence (16DOA) was suggested but this was contentious as some believe that this should be reserved for male violence against women.

Damian suggested it would be less contentious to run a campaign at another time, and would bring in a greater number of allies, albeit losing out on the exposure that goes along with the 16DOA campaign.

Damian closed by thanking the groups for a healthy discussion and underlining that none of these actions should demean the experiences of female victims nor advocate for their resources being reduced.