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Sarah Newton MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

8<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Dear Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,

### **Intimate Violence against Men and Boys: Crime Classification and Strategy**

We are writing as leaders of a range of charities supporting male victims of sexual and survivors of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation, and, domestic abuse to ask the Government to take a more gender inclusive and responsive approach to supporting boys and men affected by these abhorrent crimes. This, we believe, would be through a parallel strategy to the welcome and successful Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) strategy and also through a parallel policy classification/categorisation.

As the Home Office is currently looking at the contents of its proposed Domestic Violence and Abuse Act, it also would be an ideal time to consider such reform as part of any policy change and debate.

As you know, current Government policy categorises male victims of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation, domestic abuse, stalking, forced marriage and “honour”-based violence as being victims of Violence Against Women and Girls’ crimes (VAWG) and the Home Office’s overarching EVAWG Strategy. In a country that rightly strives to be inclusive, equal and fair, this is becoming increasingly difficult to justify.

Current Government policy means that those brave men who recently spoke out about the sexual abuse and exploitation they suffered as young footballers are categorised statistically by the Crown Prosecution Service as being victims of crimes against women and girls. Policies supporting them through the Home Office also currently fall under EVAWG.

Current policy is not supporting male victims adequately which is why we believe the Government should take this opportunity to adopt a more nuanced and gender inclusive approach. It is our considered opinion that the current approach is not supporting male victims at a statutory or societal level in several respects, set out below\*:

- It is factually incorrect to class men and boys who are victims of these crimes as being women and girls;
- The above inaccuracy also contravenes the Government’s commitment to clarity and transparency in statistical reporting and freedom of information;
- The approach minimises and disrespects the lived experience of men and boys who suffer these crimes, contributing to their vulnerability;
- Reporting rates for male victims of these crimes continues to be far too low, which then has an impact on service provision and funding. It is our judgment that current policies act as a disincentive and barrier to reporting;
- Male victims of these crimes continue to be more invisible than they should be to society at large and current government policies contribute to this;
- The approach hampers the creation of nuanced and gender responsive statutory services and understanding at a national, regional and local level, and,
- There continues to be chronic underprovision of resources and funding at through national, regional and local bodies.

\* A number of these points were made in depth in a submission by the ManKind Initiative to the Home Office policy leads reviewing the proposed Domestic Violence and Abuse Act

The introduction of a parallel strategy and separate classification/categorisation would provide a pathway towards resolving many of these issues which have such a negative impact on the wellbeing of vulnerable men and boys in our society. This includes a lack of service provision, societal recognition and an improved response from statutory authorities. It would also ensure

that as a country we continue down the path of being fully inclusive, in keeping with the Prime Minister's vision of a society that works for everyone.

As long standing and experienced charities, many of whom already sit on a number of statutory-led committees, we would of course be available to discuss this further and also help with the development of such a parallel strategy and classification.

Lastly, and to be clear, we do not wish any new strategy to diminish the work undertaken to support vulnerable women and girls in these or any other areas, nor seek funding or focus to be taken away from them.

Thank you for your time and due consideration and we would look forward to an opportunity to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks, Chair, ManKind Initiative  
Duncan Craig, CEO, Survivors Manchester  
Fiona Ellis, CEO, Survivors in Transition  
Andy Connolly, Acting CEO, Survivors UK  
Bob Balfour, CEO, Survivors West Yorkshire  
Steve Canning, Project Worker, Operation Emotion  
Martyn Sullivan, CEO, Mankind  
Cas Beckett, Project Coordinator, First Step