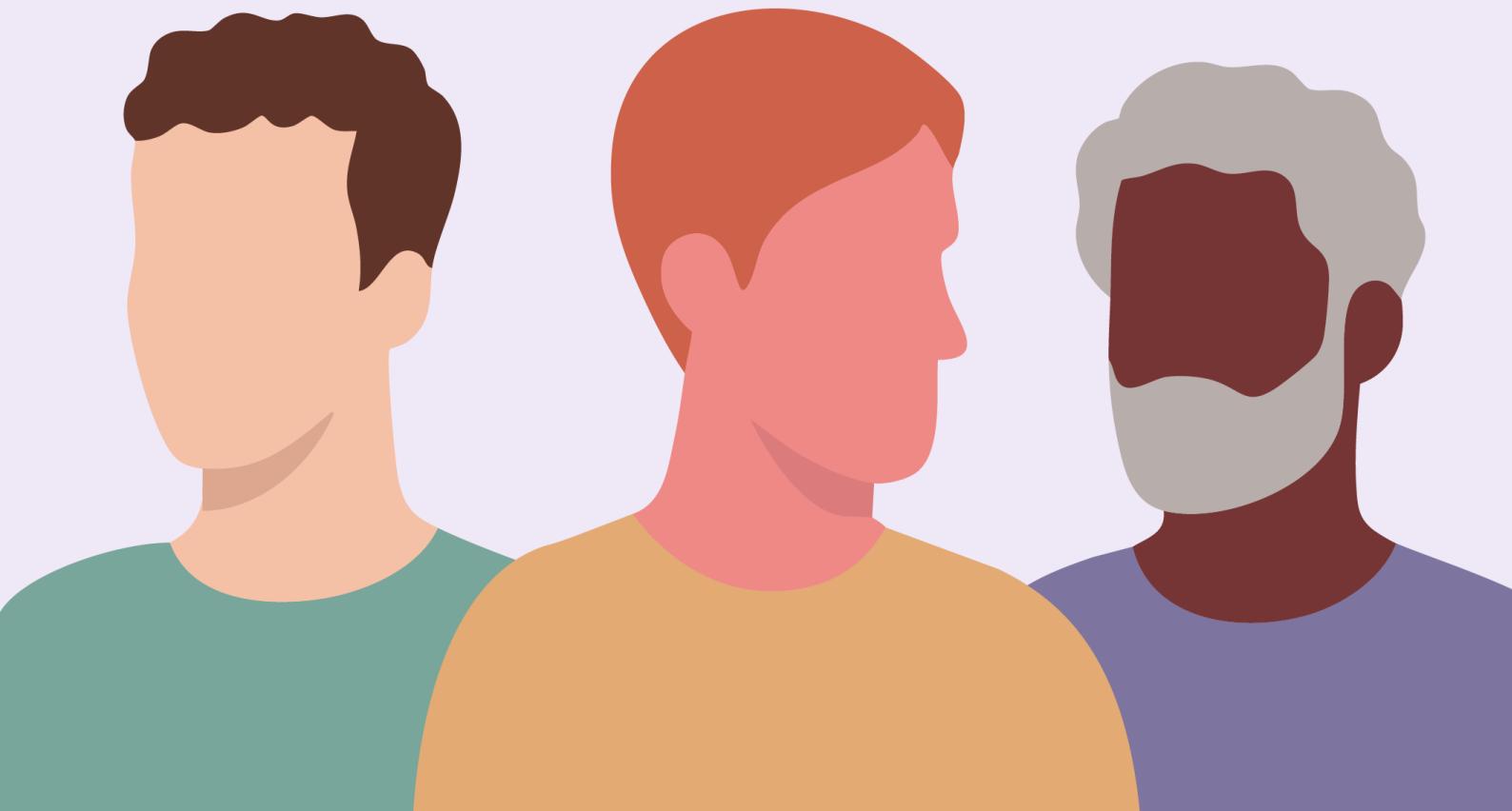




UK Government

# **MEN AND BOYS EXPLANATORY NOTE**

December 2025





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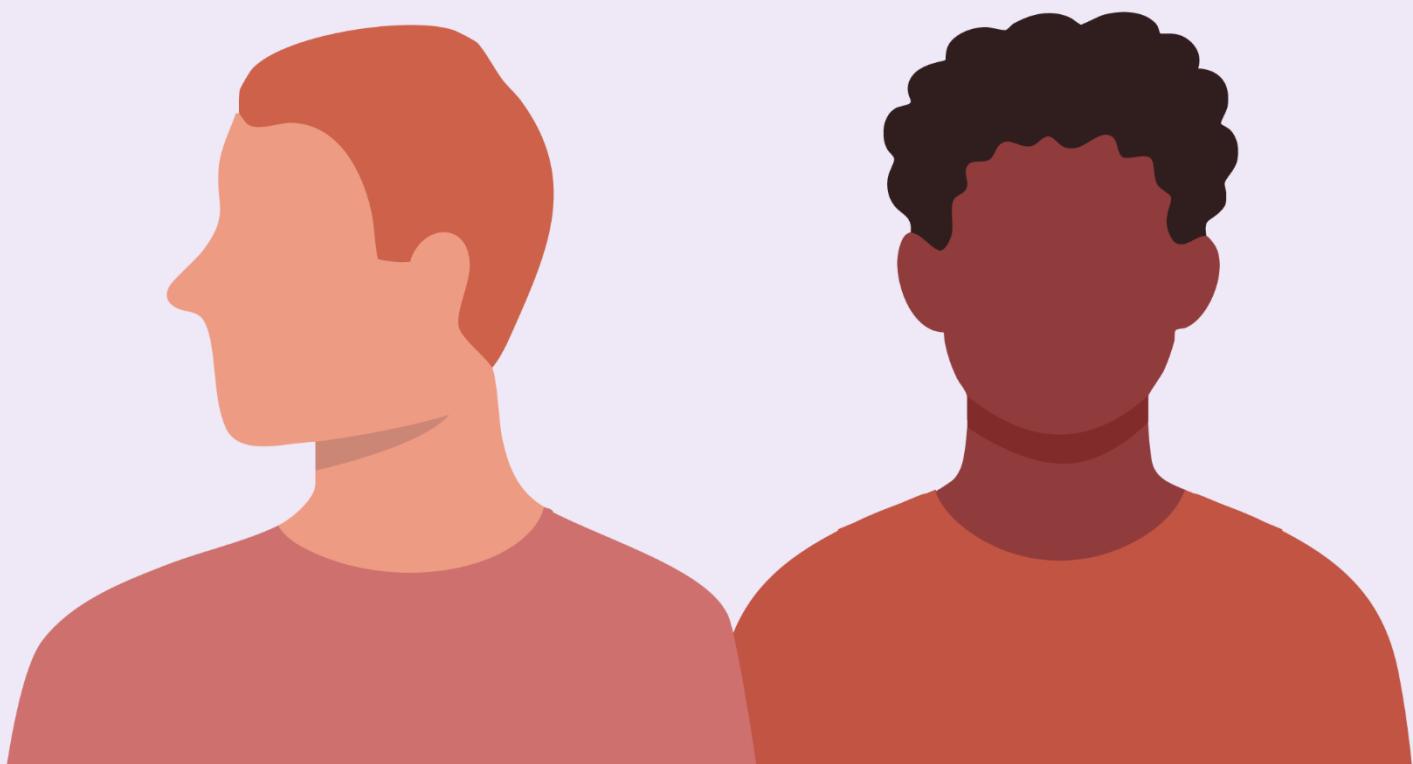
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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
A Strategy that recognises men and boys in their own right	4
The existing response for men and boys	5
<b>The Challenge</b>	<b>7</b>
The urgent need for further action for men and boys	8
The role of harmful expectations of masculinity	9
Harmful masculinity and wider violence	12
<b>Action for Men and Boys</b>	<b>13</b>
Advancing healthy masculinity and protecting young boys	14
Recognising men as victims and responding to the perpetrators	15
Family Court and supporting fathers	16
Service provision for men and boys	17
Delivering the change	18
<b>Support available for male victims and survivors</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>22</b>

Men and Boys Explanatory Note

# Introduction



## A Strategy that recognises men and boys in their own right

This Government recognises that men and boys also experience abusive and violent crimes, including but not limited to, domestic abuse, stalking, sexual violence, ‘honour’-based abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, and intimate image abuse. The ‘Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls’ (“the Strategy”) lays out this Government’s ambition and action to halve these abhorrent crimes in a decade. All victims, including men and boys, are considered and integrated into our response throughout the Strategy and our metrics to halve these crimes. The inclusion of men and boys in the Strategy speaks to its fundamental aim, to get the foundations right for all victims. However, we also understand that in recognising the disproportionate impact these crimes have on women and girls, men and boys can, and have been, overlooked.

This Explanatory Note is dedicated to all men and boys who have experienced this violence and abuse, and particularly those who have lost their lives as a result of them. It says clearly to every man who has experienced these crimes that we recognise them, and we will take action to build a future where the violence and abuse they have faced is no longer possible.

It explains how the Strategy considers and addresses the needs of men and boys. It highlights the existing work taking place to support men and boys, and underscores why more must be done, including the horrifying statistics on the abuse they face. This Explanatory Note brings to the forefront the dangers, stigma, and stereotyping behaviours driven by unhealthy expectations in society. It underlines how the Strategy speaks to men and boys, particularly by addressing the key issues that the male victims’ sector have raised with us as their priorities for change.

The Explanatory Note complements the Strategy and provides transparency and accountability on our work to support men and boys. It acts as a commitment to consider men and boys throughout the delivery of the Strategy. The Government reflected on calls for a separate Strategy for men and boys and concluded that this could lead to duplication and poor coordination across multiple strategies, weakening the overall response for men and boys. The Strategy represents a whole-of-society approach to tackling these crimes, one that will benefit all victims, and ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

We know that male victims are not one singular group. Their experiences, barriers and needs are diverse and the support and response they require may be different depending on their age, race and ethnicity, immigration status, faith and religion, sexual orientation, being transgender, Deaf, or disabled. The Strategy considers the needs and response for victims across the protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010, as does this Explanatory Note.

As part of developing the Strategy, we held a ministerially-chaired roundtable with representatives from across the male victims’ sector to consider the needs of male victims of these crimes and behaviours. Representatives from specialist services for men and boys attended other roundtables held as part of the development of the Strategy and we engaged with the lived experiences of men and boys through the Office of the Domestic

Abuse Commissioner. We are grateful to all those who have engaged and shared their understanding and experiences to help shape this work. We will continue to engage with victims, survivors, and the men and boys sector as we deliver on our commitments.

Throughout the Explanatory Note, we have included powerful cases, which highlight the experiences of men and boys who have been let down, overlooked, and made to feel invisible as they were failed by a system that did not recognise them as victims. These stories and others like them are the driving force behind the Government's ambition to halve these horrific crimes.

## The existing response for men and boys

Men and boys have been recognised as victims of these crimes in previous strategies and action plans aimed at tackling VAWG-related crimes over the past fifteen years. In 2019, the government published a 'Position statement on male victim of crimes considered in the cross-government Strategy on ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)<sup>1</sup> which accompanied the 2016 to 2020 Ending VAWG Strategy. This was then refreshed in 2022<sup>2</sup> to accompany the 2021 Tackling VAWG Strategy and the 2022 Domestic Abuse Plan.

These position statements reiterated the inclusion of men and boys in the respective VAWG strategies, presented the data regarding the prevalence of these crimes towards men and boys and the barriers male victims faced and provided specific commitments on engagement with stakeholders for men and boys and specific service provision.

This Government has committed to a range of activity to support male victims of these crimes directly, including:

- Uplifting the male victims of domestic abuse helpline by over £192k, to a total investment of £482k for 2025/26.
- Uplifting wider Home Office helplines which support male victims of these crimes, by over £1.8m to a collective total investment of £2.8m in 2025/26.
- Providing specialist support funding for all children affected by domestic abuse, including boys, to a total of £5.3m in 2025/26.
- The Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Fund of £2.59 million in 2025/26 provides support to all victims, including men and boys, of child sexual abuse.

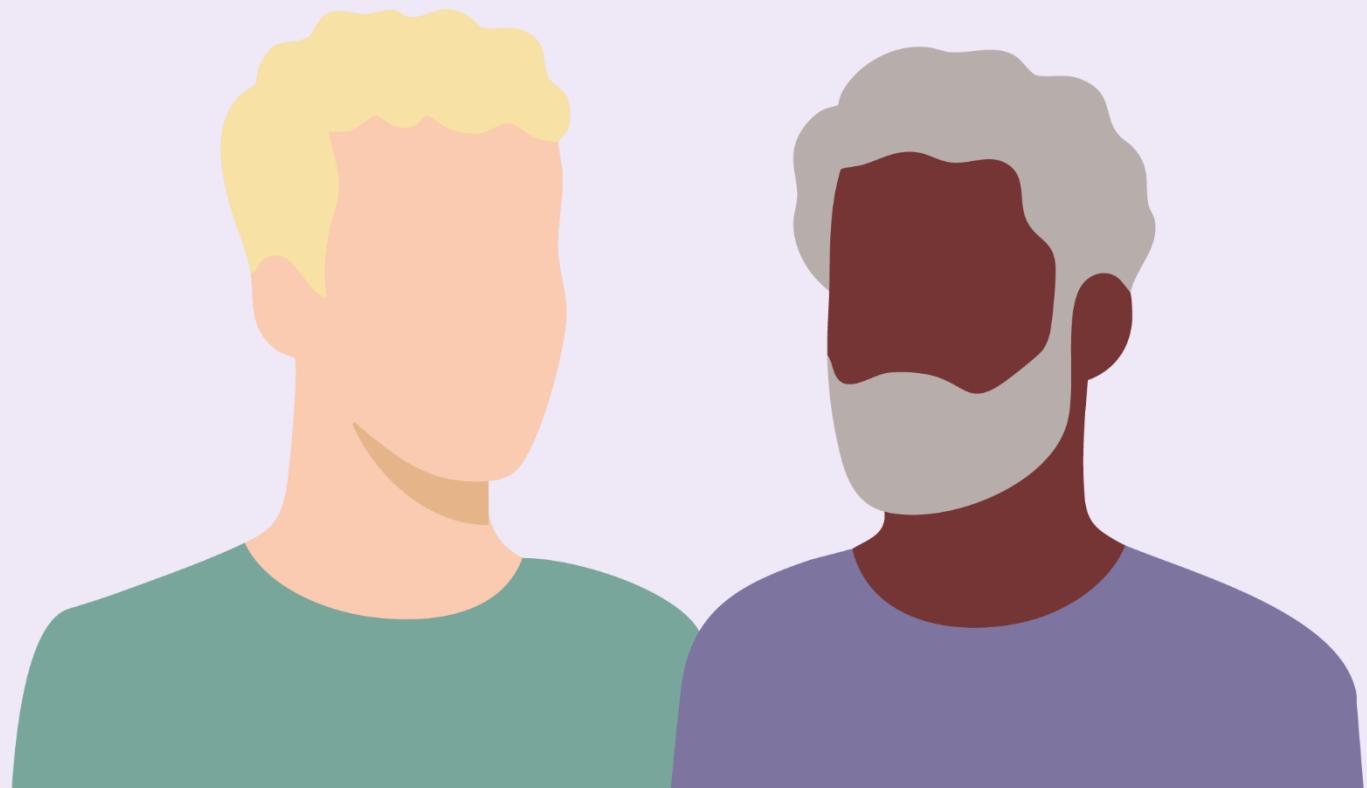
Furthermore, the Government has delivered, or has committed to delivering, a range of activity which is closely linked to these abusive crimes and will improve the response to male victims. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **The Men's Health Strategy.** We know these crimes can have a serious impact on the mental wellbeing of the victims and survivors who experience them, which is particularly important to recognise when acknowledging that 3 in 4 people who died by suicide in 2024 were men.<sup>3</sup> The Strategy sets out how we will improve the health and wellbeing of all men and boys in England and recognises men as both perpetrators and victims of abuse and violence. Alongside outlining how the health system will contribute to halving VAWG in a decade, the Strategy aims to tackle certain societal norms and engagement in unhealthy behaviours that may be linked to violence.

- **Delivering the Government's manifesto commitment to bring forward a ban on abusive conversion practices.** We recognise that LGBT+ men and boys can face abuse from many individuals and groups, including from family members or partners. To address some of these harms, we remain committed to bring forward a draft legislative ban on conversion practices.
- **A £1 billion investment in 2025/26 to reduce and prevent homelessness and the publication of the National Plan to End Homelessness<sup>4</sup>.** Domestic abuse can be a driving factor in fleeing from a home and increases the risk of becoming homeless.<sup>5</sup> In 2024, there were 3,853 men (83% of the total) sleeping rough on a single night in autumn.<sup>6</sup>

In November 2025, the Crown Prosecution Service published a statement<sup>7</sup> on male victims of domestic abuse, rape, sexual offences, stalking, forced marriage, 'honour'-based abuse, child abuse, prostitution, pornography, obscenity and human trafficking with a focus on sexual exploitation. The Government welcomes this statement, which seeks to enhance guidance and training to better identify and support male victims. This is through improving its support for male victims including tailored information for male victims, challenging harmful myths and stereotypes around male victims, and working across government, the police, and with male victims' services to improve their response. This builds on their existing activity since 2017, which includes work to focus on the suspect, not the victim, which has particularly benefited male victims; drawing from evidence from organisations supporting male victims; and updating their guidance to prosecutors to specially address misconceptions about male victims of rape and sexual assault.

# The Challenge



## The urgent need for further action for men and boys

Violence against men and boys is a substantial component of the abusive crimes laid out above.

In the year ending March 2025 the Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that approximately 2 million men had experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking in the last year, equating to 8.4% of all men aged 16 or over.<sup>8</sup> In the year ending March 2024, 4.1% of men experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, data from the joint Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) shows that just under a third of cases (29%) to which they provided advice or support in 2024 related to male victims and survivors.<sup>10</sup>

The Strategy recognises that there are rapidly evolving and emerging forms of abuse. We are seeing deeply concerning new forms of sexual violence and exploitation online, particularly financially motivated sexual extortion (known as 'sextortion'), in which victims are intimidated into paying money to a perpetrator who is threatening to share nude or semi-nude images of them. Cases of financially motivated sexual extortion among under 18s reported to the Internet Watch Foundation have increased 8-fold in the past year (from 21 to 176), and 91% of the victims are boys.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, 89% of the 1,165 reports of sextortion to the Revenge Porn Helpline in 2024 involved male victims.<sup>12</sup>

We are clear about the major consequences of these crimes for boys.

In year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that in around a third of households where there was a victim of partner abuse, there was at least one child under the age of 16 living there at the time of abuse.<sup>13</sup> Children who witness domestic abuse are more likely to suffer serious emotional and physical harm both immediately and later in life.<sup>14</sup> Childhood exposure to these crimes has also been linked to further involvement in violence and abuse later in life, either through victimisation or perpetration, creating a dangerous intergenerational cycle.<sup>15</sup>

In its worst form, these harms shatter lives and can lead to tragic loss of life. In the year ending March 2024, there were 25 male domestic homicides, making up 6% of all adult male homicides.<sup>16</sup> A recent review, led by the Domestic Homicide Project and funded by the Home Office, identified that from April 2020 to March 2024 there were 277 male domestic abuse related deaths (including suspected victim suicides following domestic abuse), making up 27% of all the domestic abuse related deaths identified. Of the domestic homicides and suspected victim suicides cases only, 115 involved a male victim with a female suspect, and 84 involved a male victim with a male suspect.<sup>17</sup> The Strategy is clear that this Government is determined to learn the lessons from every domestic homicide, including from the recommendations made in Domestic Homicide Reviews, and the missed opportunities which cost their lives.

Every instance of these behaviours and crimes is wholly unacceptable and must be challenged. These figures amplify our understanding of the extent and pervasiveness of these crimes and affirms our belief that there is a moral imperative for each and every one of us to tackle the scourge of these crimes in all its forms. These statistics are not just data

points; they represent real lives lost, and real families, friends and communities left devastated by the harm these men and boys experience, and the lives lost.

## **Claire, Jack, and Paul Throssell**

Women's Aid Survivor Ambassador Claire Throssell's two sons, Jack, 12, and Paul, 9, were both killed by their father, despite her warnings that he was a danger to them.

Claire has described Jack as gentle and kind, a good friend, and a proper gentleman. She describes Paul as a complete ball of self-confidence, and a gifted athlete, with a strong sense of right and wrong.

Their father lured the boys to the attic to play with trains he had bought them, before setting fires around the house. He then barricaded them inside. He had been granted access to his children for five hours a week, despite their mother's evidence that he had previously threatened to kill them and himself.

Since losing her children, Ms. Throssell has campaigned tirelessly alongside Women's Aid's Child First campaign to stop dangerous parents having unsafe access to their children.

## **The role of harmful expectations of masculinity**

Victims have been clear that there are barriers to being recognised as, or disclosing that they are, a victim of these abusive crimes. We know that this can leave male victims hidden and invisible. This includes not being believed because of out-dated and inaccurate beliefs that 'men cannot be victims' of these abusive crimes.<sup>18</sup> Harmful gender stereotypes around masculinity have inhibited male victims from reaching out for help, leading men to feel humiliation, shame, and that they won't be believed.<sup>19</sup>

## **Daniel**

Daniel (30) described himself as a 6ft, well built, man who is socially active and having a large, tight knit friendship group. In 2018 Daniel was raped by Reynhard Sinaga. The investigation into Reynhard was the largest rape inquiry in British history. Below Daniel reflects on the shame men face when they are a victim of sexual violence:

"to say, as a man, I've been raped... it is hard thing. There is just this element of shame in there. I'm a man, I should be strong, you know.

It makes you feel so vulnerable.

When I thought about doing the interview [BBC 2 “Catching a Predator”], some peoples first reaction was ‘You’re not going to show your face’.

But then I thought, well that’s the point, because I’m not ashamed of myself, I’m not, because if we’re going to talk about it then we’ll talk about it.”

Male victims have raised concerns about how such stereotypes have been perpetuated by frontline professionals.<sup>20</sup> This can lead to men being less likely to disclose abuse than women, keeping their abuse hidden. While women are more likely to have experienced sexual abuse during childhood (13.9% of women compared with 4.1% of men), in the year ending March 2024, the Crime Survey for England and Wales that only 29.3% of men who experienced sexual abuse as a child say they told someone at the time compared with 47.0% of women.<sup>21</sup> We also know that disclosure can be more difficult for older men, who were raised within specific cultural contexts which had stronger expectations of men being ‘strong’ and a culture of stoicism.<sup>22</sup>

## Laurence – Anonymised

Laurence (62) attended an appointment in relation to increased seizures. During this appointment Laurence was asked by a nurse if he was okay, and at this point he began to cry and disclosed the domestic abuse he had been experiencing from his current partner. Laurence had experienced long-term abusive behaviours from his partner, which included psychological, economic, physical abuse, and coercive and controlling behaviour.

Laurence is part of the LGBT + community and was anxious to engage with services due to poor experiences previously, particularly in relation to his sexuality and being taken seriously. Being male, part of the LGBT+ community and an older person, he felt that services are not always welcoming or accessible for people like him.

Laurence was supported by Hourglass to develop safety plans and access recovery support. Laurence did not feel comfortable speaking to any family or friends regarding his situation; he felt a lot of this is related to feelings of ‘shame’. Therefore, speaking to a third-party professional was a huge support for him during this time.

Men’s experiences can be influenced by their religious, cultural, or ethnic identity and the expectations of men within these dynamics. This can include specific expectations of a “man’s role” and expectations of how they must “uphold” these values in the family dynamic.<sup>23</sup> These expectations can also be exploited by perpetrators. For example, Colin, who was a Mormon and not allowed to drink alcohol, said that his wife would give him alcohol and then bring members of the church home to see him drunk.<sup>24</sup>

Harmful expectations of masculinity also lead to marginalisation of gay and bisexual men and people who do not present or identify with the gender they are assigned at birth, because they can be seen to go against normative expectations of masculinity.<sup>25</sup> During Covid-19 male victims of domestic abuse reported being described as 'not a real man' or 'gay' as part of the abuse.<sup>26</sup> Social and cultural norms can produce dangerous expectations of gender identity and sexuality which can impact a person's mental wellbeing and embolden family members to inflict abuse on men to pressure them into acting a certain way.<sup>27</sup> On some occasions this can be alongside harmful interpretations of religious texts to coerce and control the victim.<sup>28</sup>

## Dr Nazim ("Naz") Mahmood

Naz was a 34-year-old British-born doctor who had spent years managing the expectations placed on him as a son within a culturally strict Muslim family. From childhood, he learned that admitting he was gay would be seen as dishonouring his family. Stricter religious and cultural interpretations created a form of homophobia that controlled his behaviour as an adult. He hid his long-term same-sex relationship for 13 years, fearing the social, cultural, and familial consequences of disclosure. Throughout Naz's experience, there was an absence of safe disclosure routes and limited professional awareness of Honour-Based Abuse affecting LGBT+ males.

Following a heated conversation about Naz getting married to a female, his mother asked whether he "liked men", Naz disclosed the truth. Her response - instructing him to seek a psychiatrist to be "cured" - reflected a belief that his sexuality was shameful and needed correcting. Two days later, Naz died by suicide.

In his memory, Naz's fiancé founded the charity Naz and Matt Foundation, Out and Proud Parents Day, and the Rainbow Chai Support Group for South Asian Parents of LGBT+ Children.

Social and cultural views can also demasculinise disabled men. Ableism presumes that able-bodied individuals are idealised and the norm. With harmful societal norms that associate disabled people as being asexual, passive, undesirable, dependent, invisible and unvalued.<sup>29</sup> Many disabled people have less education about sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, are overprotected from exposure to issues around sexuality by family, schools or services and are denied the opportunity to experience their own sexuality.<sup>30</sup> Because of this, when abuse does happen disabled men may be less likely to understand boundaries, recognise abuse, and know their rights and how to report it.<sup>31</sup>

We will act to support all male victims by challenging the concerning expectations that prevent male victims from coming forward, improve the identification and response of male victims, and ensure tailored, and specialist services are commissioned to support them.

## Harmful masculinity and wider violence

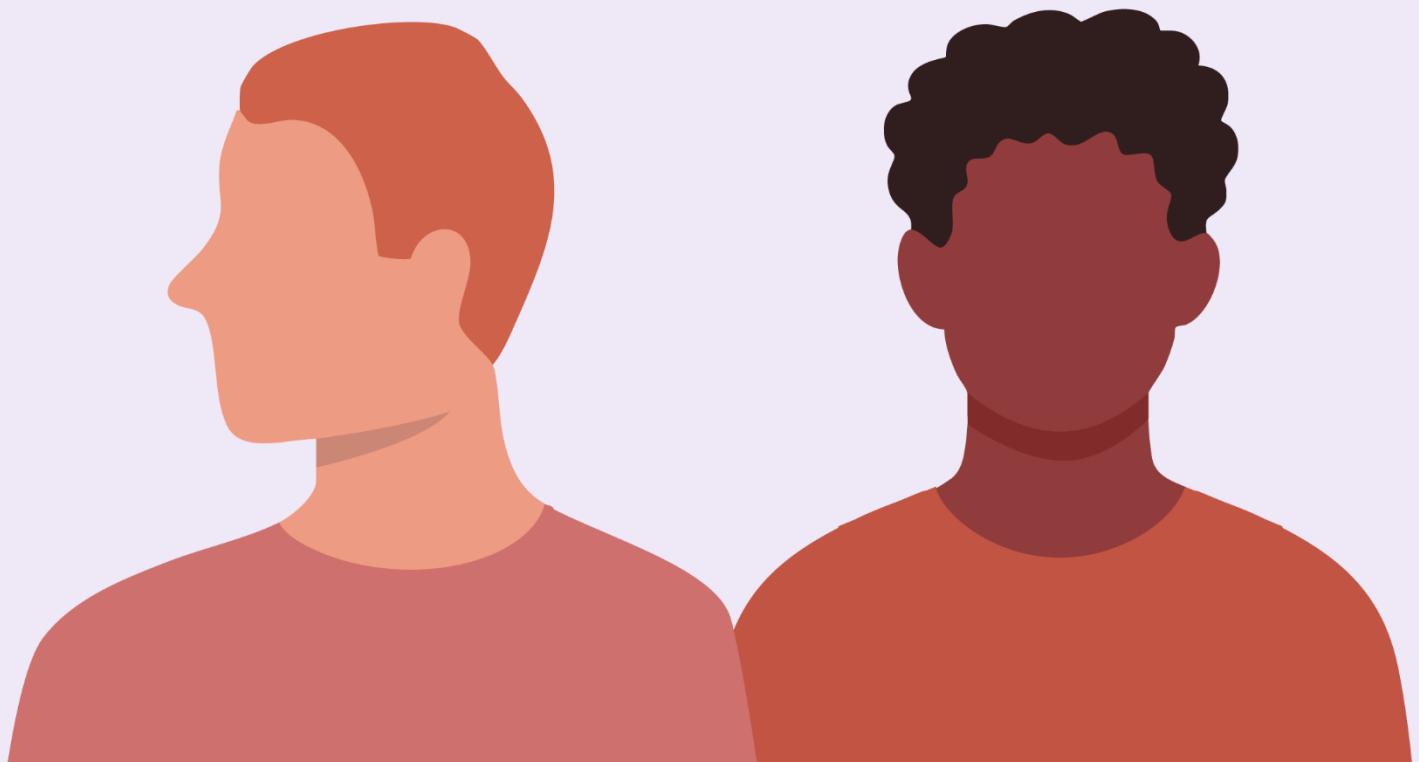
The 414 men being killed in the year ending March 2024 made up the majority of all homicide victims (73%) that year.<sup>32</sup> Males are very disproportionately likely to be victims of serious stabbings as defined by hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object, consistently making up around 90% of these hospital admissions.<sup>33</sup> Men accounted for a higher proportion of victims of violence with and without injury where the perpetrator was a stranger (1% of men, compared with 0.4% of women).<sup>34</sup>

Men make up the majority of perpetrators of crime, 84% of people arrested by the police in the year ending March 2025 were men.<sup>35</sup> The majority of homicide suspects who are convicted are men (92%).<sup>36</sup> Between 2020 and 2024, there were 32,710 convictions for men compared to 3,182 for women for possession of a knife. This means men accounted for over 90% of convictions in this period.<sup>37</sup>

This picture is mirrored when we look at children. A report from The Youth Endowment Fund highlighted that boys are more likely than girls to be affected by violence as victims and perpetrators.<sup>38</sup> In particular, they illustrated that in 2023/24 82% of children convicted or cautioned for violence and 91% of children hospitalised following a knife assault were boys.

Wider research also suggests that unhealthy expectations of masculinity can have harmful effects on men's mental wellbeing.<sup>39</sup> Men and boys face social pressure to present 'toughness', aggression, and risk-taking behaviour to demonstrate their masculinity. These social norms and expectations around masculinity are likely to be putting men and boys at risk and encouraging violent behaviour. This same narrative that men must be 'tough' is what drives the myth that men can't be victims of domestic and sexual abuse. This supports the narrative within the Strategy and is a critical point which we consider in our response for men and boys – we do not want boys being at risk of being a victim, nor a perpetrator, at any point in their life.

# Action for Men and Boys



As underscored in the Strategy, it is fundamental that we take a whole-of-society approach, ensuring that change is delivered for everyone. All perpetrators must be pursued relentlessly and all victims must receive the response and support that they deserve. Every commitment set out in the Strategy will consider men and boys, and government departments will be able to explain how specific commitments relate to men and boys as part of their ongoing engagement with the sector, victims and survivors and the wider public.

## Advancing healthy masculinity and protecting young boys

It is critical that we protect boys from online harms and the influences of unhealthy masculinities. As highlighted above, there is a deeply concerning rise of sextortion of young boys being exploited online by criminal gangs, who use shame and de-masculinisation as tools to exploit them. Nor can we ignore misogynistic and violent content online which is being algorithmically amplified to young boys and men, setting boys up for failure by further entrenching damaging and unrealistic stereotypes which can have damaging implications for their mental well-being and sense of self-worth, as well as for their relationships with others.

To respond to this, we will use the updated Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum to teach all children about healthy relationships and give them the tools they need to recognise dangerous and abusive behaviour in themselves and others. A comprehensive package of training and support for teachers will help them to teach children and young people the importance of consent, equality, and the dangers of sharing intimate images, how to manage their emotions and set healthy boundaries and how to develop positive concepts of masculinity and femininity.

We will increase safety controls for children online, preventing boys from accessing harmful content which may influence dangerous offline behaviours. Our commitments to do this include building the Online Safety Act 2023 to make the UK one of the hardest places in the world to access extreme, violent pornography. We are also committed to improving media literacy so that boys and young men have the skills to navigate the digital world confidently, recognise online risks, and know when to seek support from trusted adults. We will support this with an awareness campaign to strengthen parents' and caregivers' media literacy.

Through the Operation Encompass scheme, we will improve the information that police share with schools about domestic abuse incidents so that children, including boys, affected by abuse receive pastoral support and are recognised as victims in their own right.<sup>40</sup>

The recently published National Youth Strategy will improve opportunities for boys and young men by supporting them to build social connections, and we will harness the power of sport to ensure fewer boys and young men are left vulnerable to loneliness and isolation. We have invested in two programmes with Rugby League Cares to better understand how to reach and engage boys and young men at risk of loneliness to build their in-person connections and sense of purpose and belonging and improve mental health literacy.<sup>41</sup>

## Recognising men as victims and responding to the perpetrators

The Strategy outlines our unwavering commitment to relentlessly pursue perpetrators and strengthen our enforcement response. This ensures that we have a joined-up criminal justice system that delivers for victims. The initial response, particularly by police, is critical. Poor handling at this stage – including disbelief, minimisation, or lack of empathy – can lead to victims withdrawing from engagement. Male victims have reported feeling dismissed or not taken seriously, especially when the perpetrator is female, due to entrenched gender stereotypes.<sup>42</sup>

The Strategy lays out critical commitments regarding training of frontline staff to improve the identification and response to victims of these abusive crimes, including training for the police and social services. This work sits alongside enhanced referrals from GPs, a review of risk practices, and embedding specialist rape and sexual offences teams in every police force in England and Wales and domestic abuse specialists in 999 control rooms. We are clear that these initiatives and supportive training will include specific elements on male victims to address stereotypes and stigma which men and boys face and enhance operational understanding to improve the identification and response for men and boys. Alongside this, we will strengthen the section on men and boys in the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance and Controlling and Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance to further improve awareness and understanding of male victims.

We will ensure there is a response to female perpetrators, or male perpetrators in same sex relationships or familial abuse. Female perpetrators will be considered throughout our work on perpetrators, and we are clear that the Home Office Standards for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions must be upheld – including that interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap.<sup>43</sup> We will invest in a helpline for perpetrators of domestic abuse in England and Wales. This helpline will advise perpetrators, male and female, who are concerned about their behaviours. We will also fund a helpline for male victims of domestic abuse.

We also know boys can experience abuse in teenage relationships.<sup>44</sup> Boys have been considered throughout a programme of research this year to look at how different organisations like the police, schools, and social care are currently approaching peer-to-peer adolescent abuse, and what changes are required to strengthen society's response to it. The findings will help us establish evidence-based interventions to ensure that young people get the right support at the right time. Alongside this, we will update the Government's Statutory Guidance on Domestic Abuse to include bespoke information on teenage relationship abuse. We are conducting a review of the legal framework for domestic abuse, which includes a scoping review to consider the age limit in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and whether it should change to capture adolescent relationships.

Accompanying this work, we will be launching a new helpline for children who are concerned about their behaviour. This helpline will be accessible for boys and girls and accompanies the NSPCC Childline which any child can contact if they are concerned about abusive behaviours they are experiencing from a family member or their partner.

## Gareth Jones

Gareth is an NHS Manager and keen rugby player, who has been described as sociable and brave. In 2021 he met Sarah and moved in with her shortly after. Sarah soon became controlling and abusive, physically abusing Gareth and taunting him by making derogatory comments about his appearance and personality. Sarah wouldn't allow Gareth to take calls unsupervised; she controlled what he could eat and his finances. Gareth was forced to sleep on the floor, he was barred from using the toilet at home and only allowed to shower every few days. Sarah falsely claimed she was a victim on numerous occasions and told him she would report him to the police for assault if he tried to leave. Gareth became suicidal from the months of abuse to which Sarah subjected him.

Gareth described the significant challenges he encountered when seeking access to specialist support as a male victim and a lack of signposting to specialist male victim services. In March 2022 Gareth contacted the ManKind Initiative for support and reached out to the police. Gareth is now a champion, raising awareness for male victim's domestic abuse. He is an Ambassador for the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse and has spoken about his experience publicly in the hope of supporting more men to come forward.

## Family Court and supporting fathers

Some male victims report feeling dismissed as fathers due to outdated gender assumptions regarding childcare and being disbelieved in the Family Court, especially when alleging abuse from female partners.<sup>45</sup> We will support fathers by making paternity leave and unpaid parental leave 'day one' employment rights – providing time for fathers to foster strong and close bonds with their children. Alongside additional investment in family services and early years support, this will support parents and families to give their children the best start in life and address risks and vulnerabilities.

Our commitments to reform the Family Court will make it a safer, more trauma-informed space, better equipped to support all victims of VAWG crimes, including male victims. Everyone who uses the Family Court must be protected and have confidence in both the process and the outcomes. The Pathfinder pilot, by adding additional Designated Family Judge areas, will support decision-making based on a full understanding of domestic abuse and child welfare risks for Court proceedings regarding child arrangements orders. This will help to tackle any outdated stereotypes and assumptions, improving experiences for children and families of all kinds.

Family Court reforms are focused on ensuring that the welfare of any individual child remains the Court's paramount consideration, including repealing the presumption of parental involvement in the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014,

and legislating through the Victims and Courts Bill to automatically restrict the exercise of parental responsibility for those convicted of serious sexual offences. This will ensure that boys are better protected, and decisions about childcare are made in the child's best interest, with a full picture of any given family dynamic.

## Service provision for men and boys

Victims and survivors are at the heart of this Strategy. Experiencing an abusive or violent crime can have a profound and lasting impact on a person's life, yet the support available is often inconsistent. We recognise the different challenges that male victims may face that can often prevent them from seeking or accessing support – including stigma and shame. This is compounded by a lack of available specialist services, with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner reporting in 2022 that 82% of men found accessing support was difficult or very difficult.<sup>46</sup>

### Michael

Michael is a trainee psychotherapist, compassionate, caring and with a hunger for languages. A few years ago, Michael met a man on an online dating site, which later developed into a relationship. During their time together Michael was sexually assaulted by him. Michael expressed that this wasn't the 'stranger danger' scenario he had been warned about when engaging in the world of dating apps. Some of the first people he told struggled to understand his situation with questions about whether he'd told a friend, had he met the person in public, all which exacerbated the feeling of guilt and shame.

As male victim of sexual violence, he did not feel as though there was any support out there for him. He felt lonely, completely invisible and misunderstood - as if no one could help him. Michael reflects that majority of his own survivorship journey is a path he has walked on his own.

Michael is now a trainee trauma-informed therapist whose work in supporting the families of male survivors as they navigate the criminal justice system; driven by his own experience as a victim of sexual assault and his determination to contribute towards the support which never seemed available to him.

We are investing in a range of support which will be accessible to male victims. We will invest in a specialist helpline for male victims of domestic abuse in England – this complements provision in Wales by the Live Fear Free Helpline, which delivers its services with the Dynn Project. This will be complemented by the National Sexual Violence helpline for all victims, as well as wider helplines which will support male victims - including the LGBT+ Helpline, the Helpline for Older Victims, the Stalking Helpline, the Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse Helpline, the Helpline for Deaf and disabled victims, and the Helpline for victims of honour-based abuse. We will establish a new, dedicated Victims

Helpline and update the Victim Contact Scheme in the Victims and Courts Bill, to strengthen post-conviction communication and support for all victim survivors.

For England, the Safe Accommodation Duty for victims of domestic abuse, and the upcoming Duty to Collaborate for victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and serious violence, will be explicit in its guidance that men and boys must be considered in strategic needs assessments and commissioning strategies. Local authorities should work to ensure appropriate specialist service provision, which is tailored for victims' needs, is commissioned to provide the right support.

We are also publishing a cross-government statement on commissioning. Right now, support is scattered and uneven, making it hard for those who need help to find and access it. Victims fall through the cracks, and disparities remain. This statement will set out the role of government departments in local and national provision and the expectations of local commissioners, complimenting the guidance from the Safe Accommodation Duty, the Duty to Collaborate, and the Victims Code. It will introduce clear definitions of specialist services, including specialist services for male victims.

## Delivering the change

The publication of this Explanatory Note is an important milestone in our work to recognise, understand, and support men and boys who are victims of these awful crimes.

Across government, we will continue to work to ensure that men and boys are included in the work across all our commitments in the Strategy. We will continue to engage with victims, survivors, and the men and boys' sector to drive forward the change so desperately needed for men and boys, both now and in the future.

# Support available for male victims and survivors

1. [Respect](#) – an organisation that works with male victims of domestic abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators on 0808 801 0327 or visit [mensadviseline.org.uk](http://mensadviseline.org.uk).
2. [ManKind Initiative](#) – a specialist organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse and their children. Please call 01823 334244 to speak to them confidentially, open Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm.
3. [Rape Crisis](#) – a specialist organisation which supports all victims of rape and sexual abuse. Their 24 hour helpline, which is open every day of the year, can be accessed by phone at 0808 500 2222 or their live chat service can be accessed [here](#).
4. [Hourglass](#) – a specialist organisation aiming to end the harm, abuse, and exploitation of older people in the UK. Their helpline can be accessed by phone on 0808 808 8141, by text on 07860 052906, or by emailing [helpline@wearehourglass.org](mailto:helpline@wearehourglass.org).
5. [Galop](#) – a specialist organisation and LGBT anti-violence charity offering support to LGBT victims. Their domestic abuse Helpline is 0800 999 5428. Their email address is: [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk).
6. [Karma Nirvana National 'Honour'-Based Abuse \(HBA\) helpline](#) – a specialist organisation supporting victims of HBA including forced marriage. Their helpline is 0800 599 9247 and is open 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.
7. [Suzy Lamplugh Trust National Stalking helpline](#) – 0808 802 0300 9.30am to 8pm on a Monday and Wednesday, and 9:30am to 4pm on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
8. [Revenge Porn helpline](#) – open between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. 0345 600 0459 or [help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk](mailto:help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk).
9. [Sign Health Domestic Abuse Service](#) – a specialist domestic abuse service to support the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. Please text 07800 003 421, or email [da@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:da@signhealth.org.uk).

10. [Stay Safe East](#) – a specialist organisation providing support for disabled and Deaf victims of domestic abuse. Telephone or SMS/Text: 07865 340 122, or email [enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk).
11. [NSPCC](#) – The UK's leading children's charity working to prevent abuse, rebuild children's lives and support families. Their contact number is 0808 800 5000, 10am to 8pm Monday to Friday, or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).
12. [NSPCC FGM helpline](#) – 0800 028 3550 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday, or email [fgm.help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgm.help@nspcc.org.uk).
13. [UK Forced Marriage Unit](#) – 020 7008 0151, or email [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk). Providing support to victims and potential victims of forced marriage alongside professionals dealing with cases. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals).
14. [Southall Black Sisters](#) – an organisation providing support for ethnic minority victims and migrant victims. Their Helpline is 020 8571 9595, open between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday, or email [info@southallblacksisters.co.uk](mailto:info@southallblacksisters.co.uk).
15. [Aurora New Dawn](#) – provide specialist support for Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force personnel and their family members who are victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence or Stalking. It is open Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm at +44 (0)333 0912 527
16. [Sexual Assault Referral Centres \(SARCs\)](#) – SARCs provide medical, practical and emotional support, and forensic medical examination if required, to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused. You can get help from a SARC by booking an appointment with your nearest one: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/sexual-health-services/find-a-rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centre/>
17. [Broken Rites](#) – a group offering mutual support and information to separated and divorced spouses and partners of clergy, ministers, and Church Army Officers. Please e-mail [enquiries@brokenrites.org](mailto:enquiries@brokenrites.org).
18. [Legal Aid](#) – legal aid can help you get legal advice, mediation or representation in court or tribunal if you are eligible and cannot afford to pay for it. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/legal-aid>
19. [We Are Survivors](#) - Their 24/7 helpline offers support for male survivors of sexual abuse, rape, and exploitation (0808 500 2222).
20. [Naz and Matt Foundation](#) – a specialist charity who can provide support to LGBTQI+ individuals, or their parents, from religious or culturally conservative backgrounds.
21. [Mankind Charity](#) – is a specialist organisation which supports men who are victims of sexual abuse. They can be reached on their answerphone at 01273 911680

## **Wales-specific organisations**

22. [Live Fear Free helpline](#) – 0808 801 0800 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also text on 07860 077 333.
23. [Dyn Wales helpline](#) – an organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse. 0808 801 0321 or email [support@dynwales.org](mailto:support@dynwales.org) (support for male victims).
24. [BAWSO](#) – a specialist organisation dedicated to supporting ethnic minority communities. Their Wales-wide helpline can be contacted on 0800 731 8147 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# Endnotes

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