

Gaps in Support & Human Rights Protections for Male Victims of Intimate Violence in Northern Ireland

**SPLIT
THE
DIFFERENCE**
Redefining the Balance...

Split the Difference have been engaging Government Departments, Public Authorities, Arm's Length Bodies, NGOs and MLAs with concerns about gaps in support and protections for male victims in Northern Ireland. [Our report](#) highlights how pathways to protection for boys and men are being adversely impacted by intersecting issues across a range of public policy areas.

We are calling on the Northern Ireland Executive and relevant Public Authorities to take the following action to address the needs of male victims:

ADDRESS SIGNIFICANT GAPS IN SUPPORT FOR MALE VICTIMS

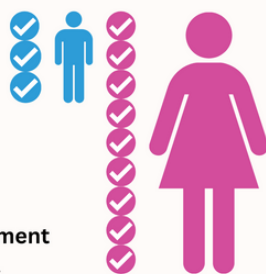
Gaps in services include a lack of practical advocacy and support, a lack of regional access to services, no specialist sanctuary accommodation or floating support, and a lack of tailored services..

The existence of these gaps, and the corresponding absence in investment in male accessible services, has been well understood for over a decade.

Despite this an equality assessment of the Executive's '*gender neutral*' approach failed to identify any adverse impacts for women or men.

Services Provided Across The Two Sex Segregated Sectors

- Counselling
- Signposting
- Anger Management
- Accommodation
- Floating Support
- Rights support
- Court advocate
- Education & development
- Services for children.



In Northern Ireland

1



1 in every 3 Victims of Domestic Abuse And Domestic Homicide Are Male



There is a Domestic Abuse Incident Every:



Police Service of Northern Ireland

NISRA

ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABLE LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

A consistent frustration we have encountered through out our engagement has involved establishing responsibility for addressing the issues raised.

We approached The Department for Communities with concerns that male children are being turned away from publicly funded refuges. It took six months before they were in a position to indicate that: '*as far as they are aware*' this practice does not occur. Even then, this came with the caveat that access criteria for such services: "*fall outside of their remit*".

Split the Difference do not promote or support positions that advocate removing resources from female victims to address the significant gaps in support and protections for male victims that we highlight.

HAVE REGARD FOR MALE VICTIMS EQUALLY IN ALL THEIR DIVERSITY

When the experiences of male victims are misunderstood or ignored by gatekeepers and protectors of human rights, the experiences of people from all sorts of diverse backgrounds are also misunderstood or ignored..

In The UK:



In The UK:



In The UK:



Research Commissioned By The NI Executive's Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Unit

ADDRESS CREDIBILITY ISSUES WITH SECTION 75 COMPLIANCE

The capitulation of responsibility and remit for access criteria for public services can circumvent responsibility to address adverse impacts arising from discriminatory and sex segregation practices.



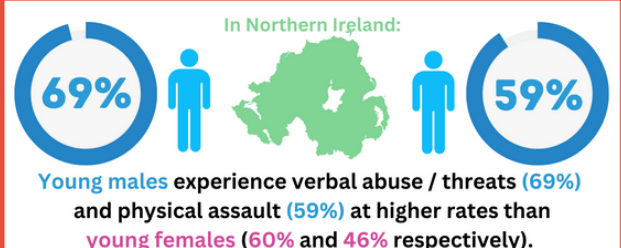
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESS ALIGNED STRATEGIES AND ADDRESS ADVERSE IMPACTS

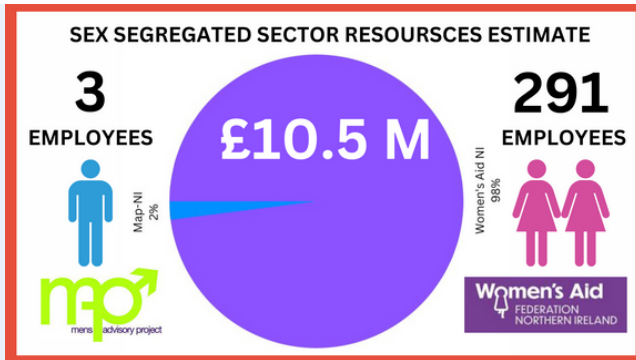
The Executive Office have still not published any Equality Impact Assessment outcomes relating to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy they committed to two years ago.

VAWG strategies in other UK regions have been shown to contribute to the marginalisation and invisibilisation of male victims..

The absence of aligned actions for male victims may create further detriments and chill factors for them.



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MITIGATE DETRIMENTS RELATED TO SEX SEGREGATED SERVICES

Public Authorities are extremely reliant on services delivered by strategic partners who openly discriminate against service users solely on grounds of their sex.

We are concerned that sufficient steps have not been taken to address adverse impacts arising from this reality. We are also concerned that discriminatory practices may have become embedded and normalised in some areas of public sector service provision.

ADDRESS DATA MONITORING AND RESEARCH GAPS

Steps should be taken to address significant gaps in research about male victims. All research used to inform public policy and legislative reform should be ethical and empirical evidence based.

“Tragically there were nine murders with a domestic abuse motivation in 2021/22.

Four of the victims were female.”

Gendered Data Analysis in Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy



Male victims are three times less likely to tell anyone than a female victim.

Nearly half of male victims fail to tell anyone they are a victim of domestic abuse.



ADDRESS CHILL FACTORS THROUGH INCLUSIVE MESSAGING

We ask all politicians, public authorities, and domestic abuse service providers to consciously commit to equitable best practice standards of working and to promoting clear and unambiguous messaging that they are committed to protecting the human rights of all victims and survivors.

ADDRESS GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE AND COMBAT STEREOTYPES

Public Servants should receive training on the needs and experiences of male victims in order to combat persistent myths, stereotypes and victim blaming.

Public Authorities should also ensure that policy makers, employees and service providers are provided with appropriate and accurate information on equality law and good practice.

“In twelve months, from Feb 2022 to Jan 2023, there were ten homicides with a domestic abuse motivation.

Four of the victims were female.”

Gendered Data Analysis in PSNI Domestic Abuse Update



PROMOTE EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We ask that the Departments of Health and the five Regional Trusts ensure that all partnership working arrangements are fit for purpose and that all health professionals adopt an informed and equitable approach to addressing the needs of victims.

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT ADVOCATES FOR MALE VICTIMS

We encourage Public Authorities to work with and support male victims, their families and advocates to raise awareness of their needs and contribute to relevant public policy conversations and consultations.

ADDRESS AN ABSENCE OF PROACTIVE PROTECTIONS

We are concerned about the apparent lack of proactive regard or advocacy for male victims communicated by gatekeepers in civil society and watchdogs such as The Equality and Human Rights Commissions.

COMPLY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

Public Authorities are required by law to protect service users from sex discrimination. They must also take proactive action to address adverse impacts arising from their policies, practices and approach to provision of services to members of the public.



HELP PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS BY ASSERTING THEM

We encourage male victims, survivors, their families and advocates to raise any evidence of human rights violations or discrimination with the relevant Public Authorities.

We are committed to supporting and advising victims seeking to protect and assert their rights. Visit our website for more details:

www.split-the-difference.com



READ THE FULL REPORT
www.split-the-difference.com