

P-04-540 Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse: Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair 10.11.15

William Powell AC/AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

10th November 2015.

Dear Mr Powell,

Petition P-04-540 Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse

Thank you very much for the copy of the letter that the Minister for Public Services (the Minister) sent to you on the 29th September last in response to my letter to you dated 13th January 2015.

I regret that the Minister's letter has been somewhat difficult to relate to the issues raised in my letter despite being some 6 months overdue. It is curious that the Minister has taken such a considerable time to largely ignore the issues so carefully raised. However, it is noted that the Minister makes some recognition of the significance of the effects of domestic violence and abuse (DA) on boys and girls, but is totally silent on the risks of intergenerational transmission and perpetuation of DA behaviours in Wales.

Protecting girls and boys in Wales is at the heart of Healing Men's (HM') petition to the Welsh Government (WG) since all instances and forms of DA must be recognised in order to develop effective interventions and strategies to break the cycle of inter-generational transmission of violent and abusive behaviours being learned by each subsequent generation of boys and girls in Wales.

Although the Minister touches on the significance of girls and boys in Wales experiencing or witnessing DA, the Minister is strangely silent on the irrefutable phenomenon of inter-generational transmission despite its obvious role in perpetuating the suffering and distress and the substantial economic burden that the nation and the people of Wales will continue to bear and which can be directly attributed to continuing DA in Wales.

- How can the Minister be silent on this issue when responding to tackling DA and also protecting boys and girls in Wales?

- How can the Minister develop effective strategies to tackle DA in Wales without openly acknowledging all instances and forms of DA?
- Is the Minister silent on this issue because of fear of a profound political backlash by entrenched and hugely influential supporters, both within, and acting on, the Welsh Government, of the radicalised “understanding”¹ of DA that makes men, and only ever men, responsible for DA²?

Healing Men protects boys and girls by drawing the Minister’s attention to the continually increasing, international, authoritative, respected and longstanding research and practice demonstrating that DA is a “... *gender inclusive and human phenomenon in which many men and women share both suffering and responsibility*”³. The evidence base for this must be beyond any sensible dispute and I invite the Minister to challenge this if he is in any doubt whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Minister’s response seems steadfastly stuck in the old, outdated and Marxist principles formulated 150 years ago or so.

- Isn’t the Minister’s response like proposing to drive down the M4 in 2015 in the horse and cart that Karl Marx may have used almost two centuries ago?
- Is this the best the Minister can do for his constituents and the people of the modern nation of Wales?

Healing Men protects boys and girls by drawing the Minister’s attention to the fact that girls and boys are at three times the risk of being victims of or exposed to DA when both parents are abusive

- Why is the Minister, again, strangely silent on this crucial finding and seemingly is ignoring this phenomenon despite its centrality to protecting boys and girls and tackling DA in Wales?
- Does consciously ignoring this distressing phenomenon constitute institutional child abuse by the Minister and the WG?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister’s attention to the fact that the highest incidence of reported physical abuse is perpetrated by mothers⁴. An allied phenomenon is that mothers are reported to inflict more abuse on their daughters than their sons and statistically speaking, a daughter is safer with her biological father than her mother. Yet again the Minister is strangely silent on these crucial dynamics in DA.

¹ Welsh Women’s Aid, letter to the Petitions Committee October 2014

² See previous correspondence from Healing Men – definitions and statements made by others

³ Healing Men – Petition to the Welsh Government 2013/14

⁴ NSPCC helpline report and others as cited in previous correspondence by Healing Men

- Aren't these crucial and challenging findings, which are brought to the Minister's attention by HM's petition, deserved of discussion and debate in the service of the people of Wales?
- How can any meaningful attempt to tackle or eliminate DA in Wales just ignore such a central and vital phenomenon?
- How will the nation of Wales tackle DA in Wales unless all instances and forms of DA are openly recognised and effectively addressed?
- Is the Minister silent on this issue because it is politically unpalatable to politically powerful vested interests?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the hugely informative and well documented experiences of the founder of the very first women's refuge in Chiswick, London in 1972. And yet the Minister is strangely silent on these powerful and highly relevant experiences by Erin Pizzey that are increasingly supported and internationally substantiated and which have not been discredited. Ms Pizzey emphatically states:

"Domestic violence is not and never has been a gender issue.

For over forty years men have been demonised and pushed out of family life often separated from their boys and girls and many men have killed themselves so bereft that they saw no other way out. For me it is recognising that violence in the family is a generational issue.

Children born to dysfunctional families, marinated in violence and sexual abuse will often grow up to repeat these patterns"

- Why is the Minister silent on these issues? Is it because Erin's findings are contrary to the old orthodox Marxist dogma and powerful vested interests that cannot allow any divergent views?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to barriers to equality being created by the Minister's and the WG's policies and dogma on DA. Girls and boys left with violent parents because of irrelevant and self serving political dogma creates barriers to equality and is contrary to the Gender Equality Duty required of the WG as well as being an affront to good government and the people of Wales.

- Is the WG exposing itself to future legal action in following this radical ideology?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to Welsh Women's Aid's (WWA) exceedingly and hugely generous surpluses amounting to £1,306,638 generated from WG grants over a matter of a few months with a suggestion that an objective review may easily channel scarce and meagre resources into more modern and effective ways to address DA

other than the WWA's "understanding" and its deeply questionable effect on boys and girls

- How can it be acceptable to the Minister and the WG that Welsh Women's Aid has accumulated a surplus of £1,306,638 from WG grants in just 26 months of operations as a limited company and to remain silent when this is brought to the Minister's attention? Surely this is worthy of acknowledgement and response?
- How can the WG and the Minister demonstrate fiscal probity when half the money granted to WWA – ostensibly for the provision of refuge for those fleeing violence – goes directly into creating such a huge trading surplus and £493,468 in cash reserves at the bank?
- Shouldn't the WG recover this excessive surplus and put the money to better and more active use?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the fact that WWA and associated organisations prohibits boys from entering their refuges even if they are with sisters who are older.

- Why is the Minister silent on this issue that is so pertinent to safeguarding boys in Wales?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the overwhelming dominance of extreme radicalised members of the Welsh Assembly, the Welsh Government and associated radicals in other positions of power and control ⁵ and how this virulent sexual prejudice will damage the boys and girls of Wales and their relationships with each other.

- Why is the Minister silent on this issue that is so pertinent to the building of healthy relationships for the girls and boys of Wales and so important for the their children and later generations of boys and girls.

The Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the bias and discrimination practiced against the fathers of girls and boys by the DYN project and how this may create barriers to equality by unjustly stigmatising their fathers whilst refusing to even acknowledge the adverse consequences, especially for girls, of being left with the other parent who is abusive and may even be violent. The Minister's response is curious

- Is the Minister concerned about the contents of my letter to yourself dated 13th January 2015?
- Why has the Minister ignored the DYN Project's outrageous practice of screening male callers to its helpline whilst, if it is helpful, not applying the same criteria to female callers?

⁵ "Is Wales a One Party State?" Swayne O'Pie - Copied to all Assembly Members.

- Why has the Minister ignored the flagrant disregard of accepted UK wide helpline standards by the DYN project?
- Is the Minister unconcerned at men being abused in this way and which is supported and funded by the WG?
- Would the WG support other such radical bigotry if practiced by the comparably discriminatory British National Party or the National Front?
- How can it be acceptable that £5,000,000 to £6,000,000 and more be spent annually by the WG on charities mainly supporting women and £150k or less each year on services for men (including the DYN project)?
- Could this bamboozling be intentional? There is no effective support for men, therefore there are no male service users, therefore, (the radical extremists argue) there are no male victims.
- Isn't this a gross affront to social justice and equality in Wales where victims are intentionally made invisible to support radical politics? Would it be acceptable to treat Somalis, Muslims or women in this way? Why is it acceptable, then, to treat male victims of DA in this discriminatory way?

It is noted that that the Minister suggests that victims of DA are NOT gendered “ .. *the Welsh Government recognises victims can be from across the whole spectrum of society, irrespective of gender*”. This would seem to be in direct contradiction to the stated “gendered” policies followed by the Minister and the WG.

- Does this include heterosexual men – i.e. the Minister and the WG recognising men as the victims of female instigated DA? If so, isn't this akin to HM's petition and shouldn't this be opened and discussed?
- Has the Minister carefully considered his response to the Petitions Committee? Is it that the words used in the response to the Committee by the Minister are of little significance since the Minister is determined, in practice, to concede to the powerful and dominant radicals and continue to effectively devote all resources, facilities and money into providing and supporting those “gendered” organisations that support female victims and with which the radicalised elements are associated and male victims will continue to be effectively dismissed, mistreated or ignored?

Men form almost half the population of Wales and there is widespread and growing concern about the increasingly biased and discriminatory attitudes that are becoming seen as radical and extremist.

- Is it possible that career and personal interests have been put before the best interests of the Nation and the people of Wales?

- How long will it be before the awareness of the complexity and non-gendered nature of DA becomes critically important to the mothers of sons, partners of men and the daughters and sons of fathers and their collective worries become reflected in the ballot box?

It seems feasible that the Minister has little knowledge of, or interest in, the letter to which he has been asked to respond because the letter poses no immediate threat. However, the falseness of the currently dominant radicalised paradigm is now so well established in the academic literature that it is suggested that the Minister and the WG are becoming increasingly exposed to future accusations of negligence in respect of endangering boys and girls in Wales. These issues will not go away and, I am sure, will be ultimately be reflected by the people of Wales in the ballot box.

In any case I feel it is abundantly clear that the Minister is unconcerned about the WG's policies that will perpetuate DA in Wales and institutionalise the abuse of the current and future generations of boys and girls in Wales. I hope that you find that as reprehensible as I do.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Stott

For Healing Men