



19 November

## PRESS RELEASE

### **International Men's Day survey reveals the 'Top Ten Men's Issues' for British men and boys**

A survey coinciding with International Men's Day<sup>1</sup> (19 November 2012) has revealed the Top Ten Men's Issues faced by men and boys in the UK with the top three being male suicide, violence and equal rights for mums and dads. The survey conducted this month asked professionals and volunteers working with men and boys in the UK what the most urgent social issues for the supposedly stronger sex were.

Other areas of concern according to those working in the UK's men and boys' sector include improving boys' education, addressing male health inequalities such as boys' lower life expectancy and tackling negative media portrayals of men.

The survey coincides with International Men's Day, a day of observance marked in more than 60 countries worldwide. In the UK, There are a range of women and men in organisations<sup>2</sup> across the UK celebrating the day including in Derby, Birmingham, Manchester, Preston, Belfast, London, Brighton and the Western Isles of Scotland.

#### **Glen Poole, UK Co-coordinator for International Men's Day said:**

"International Men's day gives everyone a chance to celebrate the contribution men and boys make to our society and also highlight some of the problems men and boys face. We tend to be less effective at understanding and addressing men's issues and what this survey highlights are a number of fundamental problems for government, policymakers and local communities to consider more carefully on International Men's Day."

International Men's Day is the male counterpart of International Women's Day which is held in March and is celebrated around the world. The aims of International Men's Day is to celebrate male role models and men's contribution to society, promote men's health and wellbeing, highlight discrimination against men and boys, promote gender equality and build a peaceful world for everyone.

The survey<sup>3</sup> asked those in the men and boys and sector what were the Top Ten Men's Issues that we need to focus on to help men and boys live longer, happier, healthier lives (this year's International Men's Day theme).

Also featuring in the top ten were issues such as beating male cancer and men's cancer inequalities, ending medically unnecessary male circumcision, tackling the higher rate of male unemployment and addressing the disposability and exclusion of men in society.

The survey was conducted by the UK's International Men's Day co-ordinating team in partnership the charity The Men's Network, host of the annual National Conference For Men and Boys which brings together a broad range of professionals and volunteers working with men and boys in areas like health, fatherhood, mental wellbeing, sexual health, mentoring, rites of passage, working with offenders, working with older men and social care.

### **Top ten men's issues voted by professionals and volunteers working in the UK's men and boys' sector**

1. Ending violence against men and boys (87.3%)
2. Stopping male suicide (87%)
3. Giving mums and dads equal rights (85.1%)
4. Giving boys a better education (84.9%)
5. Tackling negative media portrayals of men (84.6%)
6. Improving men and boys' health and life expectancy (84.4%)
7. Tackling male disposability (83.1%)
8. Ending medically unnecessary male circumcision (80.5%)
9. Beating male cancer and tackling men's cancer inequalities (79.8%)
10. Reducing male unemployment (79.6%)

Rankings are based on the percentage of respondents who rated each issue as 'very important' on a scale of 0 – 10 where 10 was very important.

See **annex 1** for full explanation of each issue.

## **ENDS**

Notes to editors

- 1 For information on International Men's Day UK, please link to:  
<http://internationalmensdayuk.wordpress.com>
- 2 The list of the organisations celebrating International Men's Day with events and initiatives include:

IMD Derby Community Group: [www.mensdayderby.co.uk](http://www.mensdayderby.co.uk)  
The New Testament Church of God: <http://www.ntcg.org.uk/men/>  
Creative Support: <http://www.ntcg.org.uk/men/>  
Men Beyond 50: <http://www.maturingmen.net/>  
Men against violence: <http://www.menagainstviolence.co.uk/>  
Man Matters: <http://www.manmatters.org/>  
CoolTan Arts: <http://www.cooltanarts.org.uk/>  
The Men's Network: <http://themensnetwork.org.uk/>  
Working With Men: <http://www.workingwithmen.org/>  
NHS Western Isles: <http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/>  
Men's Rites Of Passage: <http://www.malespirituality.org.uk/>

- 3 The survey was conducted between 11 November to 15 November 2012 via Survey Monkey

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**ANNEX 1 : Top ten men's issues voted by professionals and volunteers working in the UK's men and boys' sector**

**1. Ending violence against men and boys**

The majority of victims of violence in the UK are men and boys. Seven out of 10 murder victims are men and men are 70% more likely to be killed by someone they know and seven times more likely to be killed by a stranger. Male victims of domestic violence and sexual violence are less likely than their female counterparts to access help and support.

**2. Stopping male suicide**

Men are three times more likely to commit suicide and more than 10 men kill themselves every day in the UK.

**3. Equal rights for dads**

Unmarried fathers are not currently given automatic parental rights from birth and the amount of parental leave and pay new parents can qualify for is not equal for mums and dads. Campaign groups say law reform is needed to promote and facilitate shared parenting after separation and some are calling for an overhaul of the benefits system to support shared parenting. Currently when separated parents share care only one parent (usually mum) qualifies for support from the state through child benefit, housing benefit, child tax credits etc.

**4. Giving boys a better education**

One in ten boys, for example, leave primary school at 11 with a reading age of a 7 year old. Boys of all backgrounds are more likely to be excluded from schools ranging from white boys who are 2.4 times more likely to be excluded than a white girl to poor black boys with special educational needs who are 168 times more likely to be excluded from

school than richer white girl with no special educational needs. Only one in eight primary school teachers are male and one in four primary schools have no male teachers.

**5. Tackling negative portrayals of men in the media** and promoting male role models.

**6. Improving men's health and life expectancy**

Men of all backgrounds die on average 4 years younger than women with the gap between the poorest men and richest women rising to over 10 years. Men are less likely to access and benefit from health services. Men's health researchers and campaigners say services need to change and become more male friendly if we are to tackle men's health inequalities.

**7. Tackling male disposability**

The majority of homeless people, prisoners, children excluded from school, children put into foster care, unemployed people and isolated older people are men. More than 95% of people who die at work are men and the majority of soldiers killed in service are men. Some campaigners see this issue as a sign that we take men's lives less seriously than women's lives and conclude that men are treated as being more 'disposable'. For some campaigners this perception of 'male disposability' is further exacerbated by the unequal number of schemes and initiatives that are focused on supporting and helping women.

**8. Ending unnecessary male circumcision?**

Everyday, as many as 100 Unnecessary Male Circumcisions are performed legally on boys in the UK, often in non-medical settings without anaesthetic. This practice can and does cause death, disability, disease, pain and discomfort and physical damage.

**9. Beating male cancer and tackling men's cancer inequalities**

Men are 70% more likely to die from the cancers that affect both sexes, less money is spent on researching male cancers, more than 90% of the people screened for cancer are women, and girls are now vaccinated against some cancers but boys are not.

**10. Tackling male unemployment**

According to the ONS Labour Market Statistics for May 2012 there are 2.6 million people currently unemployed in the UK and 6 out of ten of them are men. A report by the Higher Education Policy Institute think tank found that male graduates are 50% more likely to end up unemployed