



PO Box 2220, Bath, BA1 1AA  
Tel: 07967 026163  
Email: [mike@j4mb.org.uk](mailto:mike@j4mb.org.uk)  
Web: <http://j4mb.org.uk>

Sandra Horley  
Chief Executive  
Refuge  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
International House  
1 St Katharine's Way  
London E1W 1UN

4 September 2014

Dear Ms Horley,

### **A public challenge**

I lead a political party which campaigns for the human rights of men and boys, and there are few areas in which men's rights are assaulted more than in the almost non-existent provision of support for male victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), given almost 40% of victims of IPV are men.

Women's organisations have long been utterly *shameless* in generating and propagating lying and misleading narratives about IPV which have little or no connection with what has long been known about IPV e.g. women are as physically aggressive as men towards intimate partners, or more aggressive.<sup>1</sup>

I was disappointed (but not surprised) by comments attributed to you in an *Independent* article<sup>2</sup> about the physical assaults by Kelly Brook of two former partners. The article states:

Sandra Horley, chief executive of national domestic violence charity Refuge, stressed that abuse of either gender should not be tolerated, although asserted that victims are still predominantly women.

"Domestic violence is always unacceptable," said Horley. "Regardless of age, background, gender or sexuality, there is no excuse for using violence against a partner.

"While both women and men can experience domestic violence, the majority of incidents are perpetrated by men against women. 89% of victims of domestic violence who report four or more separate incidents of abuse are women. Research shows that domestic violence perpetrated against women is also more serious and life threatening. Female victims are five times as likely to fear for their lives as male victims."

I am writing to you concerning the last three sentences in your quote:

**89% of victims of domestic violence who report four or more separate incidents of abuse are women.**

I believe the oft-quoted figure of 89% is derived from a report (Walby & Allen) published in 2004, which referred to individuals who'd been abused four or more times in the preceding year. Women's organisations have a long and inglorious history of using outdated reports, studies, and statistics to support their narratives, when more recent evidence *doesn't* support them. More recent and reliable statistics are to be found in the 2012/13 British Crime Survey (BCS) report,<sup>3</sup> given that we know that men are *far* less likely than women to report being victims of IPV. Appendix Table 4.12 provides data on 'Number of times victims (adults aged 16 – 59) of partner abuse had been abused by partner(s) in the last year':

|  | <u>Men</u> | <u>Women</u> | <u>All</u> |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>Once</b>                            | <b>22%</b> | <b>19%</b>   | <b>20%</b> |
| <b>More than once</b>                  | <b>27%</b> | <b>30%</b>   | <b>29%</b> |
| Twice                                  | 6%         | 9%           | 8%         |
| Three to five times                    | 13%        | 8%           | 10%        |
| Between 6 and 20 times                 | 4%         | 8%           | 7%         |
| Between 21 and 49 times                | 1%         | 2%           | 2%         |
| More than 50 times / too many to count | 3%         | 3%           | 3%         |
| <b>Don't know</b>                      | <b>19%</b> | <b>11%</b>   | <b>14%</b> |
| <b>Don't wish to answer</b>            | <b>32%</b> | <b>39%</b>   | <b>37%</b> |
| <i>Unweighted base</i>                 | 280        | 772          | 1,052      |

(Note that 51% of abused men and 50% of abused women either didn't know how often they'd been abused in the previous year, or didn't wish to answer.)

The Walby & Allen study provided data on people who'd suffered four or more incidents of partner abuse in the preceding year, and the nearest we can come to this figure in the 2012/13 BCS report is three or more incidents. 21% of both male and female victims suffered three or more incidents. The claim that 89% of victims of repeated abuse are women simply isn't supported by recent studies and statistics.

**Research shows that domestic violence perpetrated against women is also more serious and life threatening.**

We return to the 2012/13 British Crime Survey. Table 4.11 of the report has the following statistics for IPV victims who'd suffered at least one incident of physical violence in the preceding year:

|          | <u>Men</u> | <u>Women</u> |
|----------|------------|--------------|
| Force    |            |              |
| - Minor  | 20%        | 26%          |
| - Severe | 34%        | 28%          |

54% of both male and female victims of IPV were subjected to at least one incident of forceful abuse, and male victims were proportionately *more* likely than female victims to have been subjected to severe force.

We know that in the minority of cases where DV is one-way, the perpetrators are more likely to be women, and only 4% of female perpetrators cite self-defence as a motivation for their assaults. These points were made in a presentation given last year by Dr Nicola Graham-Kevan to the Mankind Initiative National Conference on Male Victims of Domestic Violence.<sup>4</sup>

It is true that more women than men are killed by partners or ex-partners. However, we note that on the home page of your website, you state this:

Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner.

This is simply untrue. An ONS report on homicide published on 13.2.14 shows that in 2012/13, 76 women were killed by current or former partners, a figure of 1.46 women per week. If you wish to use 'rounding' properly, it would today be more honest and accurate to say:

One woman a week is killed by a current or former partner.

The number of women being killed by current or former partners has been in decline for *decades*. In May 2013 the organisation 'Full Fact' cited ONS statistics and produced a graph showing that over the course of a decade (2001/2 – 2011/12) the number of women killed by partners had declined from 118 to 88 – a fall of 25.4%.<sup>5</sup>

If we add IPV-related suicides to IPV-related murders, more men than women die as a result of IPV.<sup>6</sup> Given the almost total lack of support for male victims of IPV, this should come as no surprise to anyone.

### **Female victims are five times as likely to fear for their lives as male victims**

Would you please supply me with the source of this statistic? Even if it's true, we have to ask why it is so. Given the murder rates of male and female partners and ex-partners, it's very clearly a wildly exaggerated fear. Does it result from women being more prone to anxiety than men, or the fact that in most couples the man will be stronger than the woman? Or does it result from relentless narratives about two women being killed by partners or ex-partners every week, when the reality is the number is less, and in rapid decline? Refuge and other organisations of a similar nature are actively and cynically *increasing* women's fears of being murdered by partners or ex-partners. Why would you do that? To us, the answer is all too blindingly obvious.

Returning to your website, there's much that is presented as factual which we'd challenge, but I'd like to point to one piece in particular:

#### **What causes domestic violence?**

There is no single cause of domestic violence. It comes from a combination of factors, including society's attitudes, community responses, and the individual psychology experiences of the abuser and the abused.

Domestic violence is the result of an abuser's desire for power and control. Women are considered less important by many in our society and this creates an imbalance of power between the sexes.

As a result male abusers are too often allowed to get away with their actions.

The second paragraph is a clear espousal of the 'male coercion theory' of IPV, which has been discredited, most recently by a team led by Elizabeth Bates at the University of Cumbria.<sup>7</sup> We refer to the theory as the 'Duluth model', and it's nothing less than a radical feminist invention. Given that you evidently believe the model to be valid, would you please provide links to peer-reviewed studies which provide evidence for its validity in the UK? Thank you.

I end this letter with a challenge, which I'm making public. I invite you to write to me or email me [mike@j4mb.org.uk](mailto:mike@j4mb.org.uk) stating that your organization, and you personally, will no longer make the following claims, which this letter has shown to be *demonstrably* untrue:

1. 89% of victims of domestic violence who report four or more separate incidents of abuse are women – this statistic comes from an old study, and modern studies and statistics paint a very different picture.
2. Domestic violence perpetrated against women is more serious than that perpetrated against men.
3. Two women a week are being killed by partners or ex-partners.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course. I'll be putting a link to this letter on our website, both in a blog post and on the 'banner'.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Buchanan

PARTY LEADER

### References

- <sup>1</sup> <http://j4mb.wordpress.com/domestic-violence-women-are-as-physically-aggressive-as-or-more-aggressive-than-men-in-their-relationships-with-intimate-partners/>
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/male-domestic-abuse-charity-disappointed-by-public-reactions-to-kelly-brook-punching-exboyfriends-jason-statham-and-danny-cipriani-9704651.html>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-violent-crime-and-sexual-offences--2012-13/rpt--about-this-release.html>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://j4mb.wordpress.com/2014/05/14/female-perpetrators-of-intimate-partner-violence>
- <sup>5</sup> [http://fullfact.org/factchecks/women\\_deaths\\_domestic\\_violence-28942](http://fullfact.org/factchecks/women_deaths_domestic_violence-28942)
- <sup>6</sup> <http://j4mb.wordpress.com/domestic-violence-more-men-than-women-die-as-a-result-of-it/>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://j4mb.wordpress.com/2014/07/29/a-study-on-the-male-control-theory-of-intimate-partner-violence/>