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# **Men's experience of domestic abuse in Scotland: An Update**

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## Executive Summary

- In 2013, Brian Dempsey completed a [literature review](#) to identify and explore research that was relevant to understanding men's experiences of domestic abuse in Scotland. His intention at the time was to provide a reference point for the development of both policy and future research; specifically, he hoped it would be a starting point to furthering how we work with men in Scotland who have experienced abuse, the friends, family and children of these men, and also the needs of the perpetrators of such abuse. Dempsey's review covered the literature up to 2012 (with some reference to new literature in 2013).
- Five years on from its publication, the aim of this current literature review is to consider the literature published, and policy changes that have occurred since 2013 with an aim to reflect on the recommendations made in the 2013 report.
- The updated Scottish Crime and Justice Survey presents data that show there are a significant number of men who experience domestic abuse within Scotland. The data also highlight the type of abuse they experience, the impact this has, and also that many men do not recognise their experience as abuse.
- The academic literature since 2013 exploring men's experiences further highlights the range of physical, psychological, sexual, and financial abuse that they experience. The more recent literature has also contributed some new understanding, for example around aspects of controlling behaviour such as 'Gaslighting'.
- More recently there has been recognition of "legal and administrative aggression", and this is seen within the more recent literature. This involves one partner abusing the other through the use of legal and administrative systems and can include behaviour such as: false accusations to authorities of physical or sexual abuse of the partner, making false accusations that around abuse of children, withholding contact with children, financial manipulation, and ruining partners' reputation at work or in the local community.
- Whilst the SCJS data suggest some men are reporting their experience to service and criminal justice agencies, the literature also describes a number of barriers that prevent other men from doing so. This includes fear of legal and administrative aggression from their partners (e.g., through false allegations, parental alienation), fear of not being believed, and barriers relating to socially constructed masculine gender roles.
- It is clear that even within the more recent research, there is still a strong influence of gendered stereotypes within service and practice. These stereotypes often govern the response men get when they attempt to report or help-seek and becomes a barrier to these attempts too. This often leads to men being viewed as, or certainly at least being assumed to be, perpetrators.
- Methodological limitations in the existing literature likely mean that the figures we see are an under estimate of the prevalence of male victims of domestic abuse. Some crime victimisation surveys require men to identify their experience as a crime, which they often do not. Removing this requirement and asking about specific behaviours increases the reporting rates by a factor of 16 (Straus, 1999). Whilst we know more about men's

experiences than we have before, there is still a bias in method that focuses on help-seeking samples, and those where men have identified as victims.

- There are still gaps within the existing literature that prevents us having a full understanding of men’s experience. For example, the majority of the intersectional groups that Dempsey highlighted as needing more attention are still lacking this research. To allow us to respond to the diverse range of needs that male victims have, we need to understand the experiences of those from different cultures, age groups, geographical locations, and social classes. We need to understand more the way in which men with disabilities experience domestic abuse, BME men, those within LBG relationships, and those who identify on all areas of the gender and sexuality spectrums.
- Whilst we are starting to understand more about men’s experiences of abuse within relationships, we still know very little about the way this abuse changes or escalates once the relationship has dissolved. Ongoing divorce procedures, residence negotiations, and child contact arrangements present opportunities for ongoing harassment and abuse.
- The current review concludes with some recommendations, namely, there is a need for:
  1. men’s voices to be more a part of the policy and practice narrative within Scotland
  2. more research that works with different groups of men (e.g., older men, BME men) to understand experiences of this heterogeneous group
  3. more research to form a more detailed understanding of the barriers that men experience to be able to tackle them more effectively
  4. work to challenge the “public story” around domestic abuse.

## Introduction

In 2013, Brian Dempsey completed a [literature review](#) to identify and explore research which is relevant to understanding men's experiences of domestic abuse in Scotland. His intention at the time was to provide a reference point for the development of both policy and future research; specifically, he hoped it would be a starting point to furthering how we work with men in Scotland who have experienced abuse, the friends, family and children of these men, and also the needs of the perpetrators of such abuse.

Dempsey's review covered the literature up to 2012 (with some reference to new literature in 2013). Some of his key findings included:

*Absent voices of men within the literature:* his review revealed an absence of research attention that focused on the lived experiences of abused men within any of the political and policy debates, as well as the wider academic literature. Specifically, he challenged the notion men in this group are "hard to reach" and pointed to the work of Denise Hines and colleagues in the United States as evidence that men's experiences can be accessed.

*Men's reporting of abuse:* acknowledging the difficulties of getting accurate statistical representations of domestic abuse generally, but men's experiences in particular, Dempsey evidences figures that show significant numbers of men are coming forward to report their abuse. He quotes figures from the Scottish Government (2012) that showed 9,569 reports to the police of a domestic abuse incident where the victim was male and perpetrator female, and a further 659 reports where the victim and perpetrator were both male. These men formed proportionally 15% of victims recorded by the police, but this ranged from 9% to 21% for some police force areas.

*Reported Impact of domestic abuse on men:* whilst the impacts of men's experiences are similar to those reported by women, Dempsey discussed the reluctance of some men to take their abuse experiences seriously. The Scottish Government (2011) referenced men reporting problems with sleeping, depression, low self-esteem, fear, anxiety, panic attacks, and isolation from friends and family. However, "abused women were far more likely than abused men to say they considered the abuse perpetrated against them to be a crime and abused men were far more likely than abused women to take the view that the abuse they were subjected to was "just something that happens" (Scottish Government 2011)." (p8). Dempsey pointed to the literature that indicated a significant consequence of domestic abuse for men was around self-harm including the misuses of alcohol, and suicide. He also made recommendations for more work to explore the barriers men face in understanding and recognising their experience.

*Resilience, help-seeking and screening:* Very little literature was found in Dempsey's review that explored coping methods and help-seeking of men in Scotland. Research from further afield indicated coping by concealing abuse through misusing alcohol and spending long hours at work. Those who sought help tended to seek help from friends, counsellors or relatives rather than official support or police services. Of particular relevance here was the issue of "screening" or "risk assessing"; Dempsey acknowledges the significant issues this presented for men wanting to be believed when disclosing, and states that, "No robust justification has been provided for screening men (and women in same-sex relationships) but not women in mixed-sex relationships and in the interests of appropriate service provision it is imperative that the issue be addressed openly as a matter of urgency." (p8).

*Intersections and some groups of men:* Assuming homogeneity of experience for a group of people experiencing abuse is both dangerous and ignorant. Assuming that experiences are the same for all

women, or all men, ignores specific experiences related to culture, disability, age, class and so on. Dempsey called for research that acknowledges the different aspects of men's experiences based on factors relating to fatherhood, culture and more. Specifically, he praised the innovative work done in Scotland around LGBTQ+ groups, and that this could serve as a model for understanding other groups' narratives within the wider group of "abused men".

*Responses:* Referencing the BIG Lottery Fund report (Johal et al., 2012), Dempsey discussed the lack of discourse that captured men's experiences, possibly through a lack of engagement in research attempting to document it. We do know there are significant barriers men experience in coming forward, but that organisations need to appear available and appropriate for men. He pointed to examples of good practice within some police and voluntary organisations, as well as the possibility of drawing from the literature on women's experiences to apply to men where appropriate. He further discussed in detail the criminal and civil law response to abused men and pointed to the tendency for some public sector organisations to replace "domestic abuse services" with "violence against women services". Whilst effectively (and quite rightly) supporting women, they either fail to serve men appropriately or seem inaccessible and inappropriate for men, presenting further barriers.

*Understanding perpetrators of abuse against men:* Dempsey challenged the nature and availability of provision for perpetrators of domestic abuse; specifically, he highlighted there were no programmes available in Scotland for either male or female perpetrators of domestic abuse towards men. Whilst unacceptable within service provision, it did provide the opportunity for one to be developed that could include the voices of abused men.

The breadth and depth of Dempsey's review was such that it allowed a better understanding of what we know about abused men's experiences within both the Scottish context, and that of the wider UK and international literature base. Drawing on the need for more work to be done in Scotland, Dempsey suggested:

*"If another such review is produced in five or ten [years'] time it is essential that it has significantly more Scottish material to draw upon and analyse. A crucial ingredient in that improvement will be the inclusion of the voices of men [who] have experienced domestic abuse." (p5)*

In the conclusion of the review, there were key recommendations:

- Policy responses to, and service provision for, men who experience domestic abuse should be evidence-based. Appropriate methodologies can be developed for both academic and practitioner research.
- The needs of children affected by abuse perpetrated against their fathers or other male carers must be addressed by central and local government and other service providers as a matter of the greatest urgency.
- As a priority, resources should be devoted to capturing and respecting the "lived experience" and the "voice" of men who experience domestic abuse. Attention should be paid to the potentially different experiences, challenges and strengths of a diverse range of men (e.g. older men, BME men).
- Research into, and policy responses to, the experiences of abused men should engage with insights from gender theory to explore how gender inequality and hegemonic masculinity negatively affect abused men. Insights from the work on gay, bisexual and Trans men's experience of domestic abuse should be developed.

- The role of the “public story” of domestic abuse in marginalising men who experience abuse should be considered in policy development and research. Domestic abuse campaigns should include reference to, images of men, along with information about support services specifically for men. Representation of domestic abuse in newspapers, magazines and television should be inclusive of men’s experiences.
- Those working in the legal system (including solicitors, police, procurators fiscal and the judiciary) should identify and remove barriers to men seeking to access legal protection, whether civil or criminal.
- Service providers should address their responsibilities under the Equality Duty and/or the charity regulator’s equality requirements by following good practice demonstrated by, e.g., Citizen’s Advice Scotland and Victim Support Scotland. Where services wish to make themselves available to abused men and their children that should be made clear by way of overt statements and inclusive imagery and case studies.
- Public sector service providers such as the NHS, local authorities and the police must, as a matter of urgency, review their compliance with their legal obligations under the Equality Duty and may draw on Children in Scotland’s project “Making the Gender Equality Duty Real for Children, Young People and their Fathers”.
- Police Scotland, the NHS and others should build on already existing good practice to seek ways to ensure that abused men are able to disclose their experiences.
- Where some men trivialise the abuse they experience as “just something that happens” that should not be used to justify lack of recognition and support. Awareness raising campaigns should be developed that make clear that domestic abuse in all its forms is not something that will be tolerated or ignored in Scottish society.
- Innovative service provision for both women and men who abuse their male partners should be developed.

Five years on from the publication of this review there is indeed new literature we can draw on, which does give us a more developed understanding of men’s experiences. The aim of this current literature review is to consider the literature published, and policy changes that have occurred since 2013 with an aim to reflect on the recommendations made in the 2013 report.

### **How is domestic violence and abuse defined within Scotland?**

When Dempsey wrote his original review, he used the definition that was developed and adopted from the Scottish Partnership on domestic violence which was established in 1998 and was still used in 2013:

“Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends)” *Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse (2000; p.5)*

This definition is not gender neutral; it implies that there are some behaviours only experienced by women and does indeed include “gender-based crime” as part of the definition. In contrast, the Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (2017) has chosen a gender-neutral definition:

“any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere including online” (p.2)

However, on the same page of this protocol, within the same section it goes on to say:

“it is acknowledged that domestic abuse as a form of gender based violence is predominately perpetrated by men against women. This definition also acknowledges and includes abuse of male victims by female perpetrators and includes abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people within relationships” (p2)

By stating domestic abuse is a form of gender-based violence they are suggesting:

“gender-based violence against women shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018).

This conceptualisation of domestic abuse fits within the Scottish Government and COSLA strategy Equally Safe (2017) that details a framework to tackle violence against women and girls; this strategy draws from the United Nations definition of gender-based violence that sees “Gender inequality is a root cause of violence against women and girls” (p32).

However, within this document there is a recognition that men and boys can also experience domestic abuse and other forms of violence:

“This is a plan to tackle violence against women and girls, and it is right that we take this focus – the evidence set out earlier indicates that these different forms of violence are overwhelmingly experienced on the basis of gender. It should be remembered that men and boys also experience these different forms of violence along with domestic abuse. We will therefore engage with stakeholders to explore how these different forms of violence impact on men and boys and discuss what more the Scottish Government and others could be doing in this area”

However, despite acknowledging men’s victimisation, the document goes on to describe 118 actions under 4 priority areas to ensure that Scottish society reject violence, and that women and girls should be safe; it does not at any point make any recommendations for men, boys, or wider groups of victims.

Specifically considering domestic abuse within Scottish Law; Scotland's Domestic Abuse Bill was first introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 17th March last year and passed on 1st February 2018. The Bill takes a gender-neutral approach which defines domestic abuse against a partner or ex-partner as a criminal offence across each type of abusive behaviour: physical, sexual, psychological, financial, verbal and emotional. It is felt this new Bill captures the non-physical and coercively controlling behaviour that had previously not been captured. It strongly places the onus of assessment on what a “reasonable person” could expect, regardless of how it is perceived by the victim, or the period of time between events. Similar legislation that also enables the prosecution of non-physical abuse and coercive control was enacted in England and Wales on 29 Dec 2015. In the year ending 31 December 2017, of 235 convictions under this new law 233 were male, one unknown and one woman. As with other domestic abuse conviction data the difference that is seen within male and female figures is stark, but rather than representing actual difference in experiences it is

likely to be due to the barriers men face in reporting their experience, and the different perceptions held about men's and women's abuse experience (for more detailed discussion see p.14 below).

The Scottish legislation differs in several respects, for example, in the Scottish legislation the use of denial of child contact as a form of abuse has not been specifically excluded. The impact of the new legislation on male victims of abuse will take time to become apparent. The Bill is expected to become law on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

More widely in the UK, and in England and Wales during 2018, there was a consultation to inform the development of the new Domestic Abuse Bill. The consultation aimed to set out the government's approach to dealing with domestic abuse through four key stages: promoting awareness, protect and support, pursue and detect, and improve performance. From the initial consultation document that formed the basis of the consultation events and submitted evidence (see [Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse](#)), there was a gender-neutral definition of domestic abuse, but as in Scotland, it is placed within a gendered framework. It is placed under the Violence against Women and Girls strategy (Ministry of Justice, 2018) alongside the justification "we know that a disproportionate number of victims are women, especially in the most severe cases. This is why the government's approach to domestic abuse is framed within the Violence against Women and Girls strategy, which has proved effective".

What was further seen within this consultation documentation though was an acknowledgement of men's voices, including two quotes that reference recent work by Bates (in press):

*"She controlled my friendships and controlled my contact with my family. This would include logging onto my emails and sending emails to my family pretending to be me."*

*"She had control of my wages and gave me £20 per week from them"*

Whilst the document is framed within a gendered approach to domestic abuse, to see the voices of men, as well as other lesser discussed group (e.g., older people) is a demonstration that men's experiences are starting to become more recognised, which falls in line with Dempsey's recommendation. In response to the consultation, the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, Baroness Newlove made [14 recommendations](#) to the Government; in her response she details her concern that domestic abuse suffered by men is not properly recognised or identified. She therefore made a recommendation to the government to develop an 'Ending Intimate Violence against Men and Boys' strategy to better protect this vulnerable group of victims. This is a significant and powerful recommendation and in doing so represented a significant step forward in how men's experiences have been conceptualised at this level.

From the consultation, the [Home Office Select Committee](#) made recommendations to government about the way the new Bill and commissioner should be approached. They clearly reference evidence submitted by academics (e.g., Bates) and organisations that support men (e.g., ManKind Initiative), but do still recommend that domestic abuse is framed under a gendered framework, and that the new Bill be called the *Violence Against Women and Girl and Domestic Abuse Bill*. It is important to note that these recommendations around domestic abuse and any action the Government takes from them will not be seen within Scotland. If the English and Welsh Government do act on the recommendation to create a strategy to tackle violence against men and boys, the Scottish Government need not do the same.

## **What does the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey say?**

In his review Dempsey drew on statistics within Scotland that detailed the prevalence of domestic abuse from the 2011/12 police statistics bulletins. He described the proportion of male victims to total victims in particular police force areas in 2011/12 was generally around 15% but ranged from 9% in Dumfries and Galloway to 21% in Strathclyde (see Scottish Government, 2012).

### **What are the up to date prevalence figures?**

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) is a large-scale social survey which hopes to record people's experiences and perceptions of crime. It differs from official statistics as it includes crimes that have not been reported to the police or recorded in an official capacity. It is stated that the findings from the surveys are used by policy makers across the public sector in Scotland not only to help them understand the nature of crime, but to also target resources and monitor the impact of initiatives (Scottish Government, 2018a). The aims of the SCJS is to enable population-based reporting of experience, attitudes and other issues that are related to crime and the criminal justice system. It aims to provide a measure of adults' experience of crime and examine trends over time in Scottish crime (Scottish Government, 2018b). As a measure of victimisation, it offers evidence of a greater number of male victims of domestic abuse than the police statistics do, often because men do not report to the police.

It should be noted that the partner abuse statistics are not yet available for the 2016/17 SCJS, so the most up-to-date statistics available are from the 2014/15 SCJS and the reference for all the discussion and figures below is [Scottish Government, 2016]). Since the age of 16, 14.1% had experienced some form of partner abuse, however a higher proportion of women had experienced this (18.5%, compared to 9.2% of men). The figures suggest that women are shown as being at a higher risk of lifetime abuse than men for psychological abuse (16.5% and 7.5% respectively) and physical abuse (12.8% and 5.9% respectively). Whilst women are also at a higher risk of more recent abuse than men (in the last 12 months), although the difference here is much smaller, for both psychological abuse (3.1% and 1.9%) and physical abuse (1.5% and 1.4%). These figures are lower than those reported in the previous version of the survey. It is important to note that when explored by specific experience there were a number of behaviours that were experienced at similar rates by men and women (with no statistically significant difference between them), and a number where men reported higher rates. Even when there were significant difference showing women experienced more of some behaviour types, the actual difference in prevalence rates was quite small and showed more similar figures than the police statistics.

With regards to the prevalence by same- or opposite sex partners, the majority of men reported being abused by women (88%), and the majority of women abused by men (96.7%). These figures are a development on the data Dempsey used as here there is victim and offender gender in the breakdown, whereas it was only the offender gender in the previous data. This more recent data is much more useful in understanding the gender dynamics of domestic abuse.

When these figures are broken down and examined by behaviour type, there is evidence that both men and women experience a wide range of psychologically and physically abusive behaviours. These figures are comparable to those seen within the English and Welsh crime survey (Office for National Statistics, 2018) that shows 4% of those aged 16-59 had experienced abuse in the last year – with non-sexual (physical, emotional and financial) most common type. This could be seen to be 2.4% for men, 5.6% women had experienced non-sexual abuse from a partner in the last year.

## **What does the academic research say?**

Dempsey's (2013) extensive literature review explored the literature pre-2013 and focused on: the absent voice of men in the majority of the research; men's reporting of abuse; the types of abuse reported; the impact of this abuse; the intersections of different groups; and the responses from services and the public. His review contributed a significant amount in terms of pulling together the research that had been done to date. The next part of this current review will focus on the research that has been published from 2013 to 2018; it will focus on the following areas as those that have been seen within the recent literature: men's experience of domestic abuse; types of abuse reported; impact of abuse; help-seeking; and the perceptions of male victims.

### **Men's experiences of domestic abuse**

Within the literature since 2013, there has been some research that has explored the prevalence of men's and women's aggression and control. This has served to highlight the prevalence of men's victimisation as had previous work (e.g., Archer, 2000). Exploration of the recent literature revealed no Scottish based studies within the last 5 years that had explored specifically the prevalence of men's and women's domestic abuse. It is unclear as to why this is the case, but it is likely to be influenced at least in part, by the gendered focus on domestic abuse within wider policy and practice. In the wider UK, and the international literature, there have been more recent studies and the findings of these are likely to also apply to men within Scotland.

There have been some wider UK based studies, for example Bates, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2014) tested the male control theory of men's domestic abuse by utilising a large sample of men and women who self-reported on their aggressive and controlling behaviour. They found that women reported being significantly more aggressive and controlling to their male partners, than men were to their female partners. Furthermore, they tested Johnson's (1995) typology to see the extent to which his findings about the different types of abuse and gender could be found; they found some support for the typology in that there were different types of abuse seen within the data, although these were seen more on a continuum than a distinct category basis. Additionally, they found that men and women were equally as likely to be categorised as being intimate terrorists, Johnson's category that represents the more serious and controlling aggression. He posits that this category is most likely to be made up of men, however his sampling approach rendered this inevitable by surveying men within prisons or programmes, and women in shelter settings. This finding has also been seen in studies using international data (e.g., Bates & Graham-Kevan, 2016). The notion of men being victims of intimate terrorists can be seen within other recent literature too, for example Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan and Matos (2017) found in their qualitative study of male victims in Portugal, that the behaviour they had experienced meant they would have also been likely to be categorised as being victims of intimate terrorism.

Other more recent research has explored the experiences of male victims through both quantitative and qualitative work. For example, in the Netherlands, Drijber, Reijnders and Ceelan (2013) explored men's experience and found they experienced significant physical violence with the most common forms being hitting, stabbing with an object, kicking, and biting. In Machado et al.'s (2017) study, they found men experienced multiple types of abuse; specifically, they report five types of "direct" violence, which they describe as violence perpetrated directly against them (rather than indirectly e.g., through the children) and included: psychological, physical, economic/financial, stalking and legal administrative aggression (see further discussion of this term below). The authors

further discussed the way in which men described the violence as a pattern and part of the relationship, rather than in terms of isolated incidents.

Bates (in press) discussed the tendency the current literature has to rely on help-seeking samples (e.g., those who have sought help and support from police, domestic violence organisations, health services, or national helplines; Hines et al., 2007), those who have identified they have been a victim of domestic abuse (e.g. Hogan, 2016), or on interview-based methods (e.g. Nybergh, Enander & Krantz, 2015). For many men, they do not identify as victims because of the societal discourse around abuse that dictates men are perpetrators and women are victims (e.g. Machado, Hines & Matos, 2016). Furthermore, some men experience feelings of shame or the fear of not being believed (e.g. Drijber et al., 2013) which would likely mean they would not feel comfortable either asking for help or taking part in research studies where they could be identified; indeed, the ManKind Initiative (an English charity that supports male victims of domestic abuse) found that 71% of their callers would not have made the call if the helpline was not anonymous (Brooks, 2018). Bates (in press) attempted to address these issues and use a method that would capture a wider spectrum of UK men's voices, including those who struggle to disclose their experiences in person; 25.6% of the men in this sample had never disclosed their experience to anyone. This study utilised an anonymous online survey and found that men had experienced physical aggression that was often injurious, but also significant experiences of controlling behaviour (also labelled emotional or psychological abuse). In this study, the men had reported experiences of manipulation (e.g. through children, use of false allegations, coercion around sex and pregnancy), being isolated from friends and family, and experienced fear in their day to day lives of living with this abuse.

### **Types of Abuse Reported**

Dempsey's review highlighted the range of abuse that men experience. He described research that highlighted the physical aggression men experience, as well as the controlling behaviour (including psychological and emotional abuse that capture very similar behaviours), sexual violence, as well as capturing behaviours that he described as "manipulating the system". He reviewed both the crime survey data and the research literature, including references to case studies that highlighted the breadth of abuse men experience, as well as the cumulative nature of some of it with many men reporting multiple types of abuse in their relationships or ex-relationships.

More recent research has highlighted similar findings, but also contributed new understandings. For example, whilst a common perception of women's violence is that it is not impactful or injurious, more recent literature has drawn attention to the fact that men are often assaulted with an object or a weapon; Drijber et al. (2013) found that in 54% of cases where there was physical aggression, there was an object used. This will significantly increase the risk for injury and go some way to compensating for the fact women are not typically as physically strong as men. Bates (in press) also found that there was frequently a weapon used in women's use of physical violence, but also that men reported assaults occurring when they were falling asleep or in the shower. With differences in men's and women's size and strength, it could be seen as an instrumental strategy; it could be that some women choose to act violently at a time they know the imbalance of strength is less. Bates (in press) also noted that 78% of the sample had never retaliated or hit back, and had often cited reasons that were reflective of being taught it was wrong for men to hit women. For example, quotes included: "I was raised never to hit a woman. Even in self-defence". Men's inhibition of unprovoked or retaliatory violence towards their female partners indicates a protective and chivalrous attitude in some cases; that could be seen to be reflective of a norm of chivalry (Felson, 2002).

Further new understandings from Bates (in press) involve the extent of men's experiences of controlling behaviour. The findings from the study see men describing experiences of control that we have seen in the previous literature (e.g., isolation, manipulation, control of basic freedom), but also the concept of "gaslighting". Gaslighting originates from the 1944 film "Gaslight" that saw the main character manipulate his wife's environment in a way to destabilise her and cause her to question her own memory and beliefs (Gass & Nichols, 1988). This has previously been seen within women's accounts, but this was the first study to describe men's experiences.

A further method of abuse or control seen within the more recent literature is something known as legal and administrative aggression, which involves one partner manipulating legal and other administrative systems in a way to be harmful to a partner (Tilbrook, Allan & Dear, 2010). Legal and administrative aggression was described within Dempsey's discussion about "manipulating the system" and the way the "public story" could be manipulated, although he did not use this specific term. In the US, Hines, Douglas and Berger (2015) developed a legal and administrative aggression scale; in their study they added on six items to the end of their self-report aggression measure (Conflict Tactics Scale; CTS2, see Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996) to explore "threats" of, and also asked men about how often these behaviours had actually occurred.

These items were (see Hines et al., 2015, p301):

- Make false accusations to authorities that the partner physically or sexually abused the other
- Make false accusations to authorities that the partner physically or sexually abused the children
- Leave and take the children away
- Leave and take all the money and possessions
- Ruin the partner's reputation at work
- Ruin the partner's reputation in the community

In their study, men reported being victims more often than they reported perpetrating this behaviour. These behaviours are seen within the other literature too, for example Machado et al. (2017) include Portuguese men's descriptions of experiencing their partner making false allegations. Similarly, in the US, Tsui (2014) found threats of divorce, threats to report the partner to the police and threatening to withhold access to the children within men's accounts. Bates (2018a) also described UK men's post-separation abuse experiences and found evidence of false allegations and manipulation of the parental relationship.

Indeed, the use of the children as a weapon is something else seen more within the recent literature. It has led to organisations like ManKind Initiative and academics recommending that parental alienation be added into the definition of domestic abuse (see ManKind, 2018). Parental alienation is a result of a child becoming separated or alienated from the parent; this can be through behaviours such as abuse or abandonment by a parent but can also occur through one parent manipulating the child as a way to control interactions with the other (target) parent (Gardner, 2002). Gardner also describes the term parental alienation syndrome; he describes it as a childhood disorder that results from the alienating parent "brain washing" the child, where in the most severe cases the child engages in manipulating and abusive behaviour towards the target parent. Whilst there is evidence that parental alienation can occur to mothers and fathers, some argue that is a behaviour more engaged in by mothers because they are often in a stronger position through having residence (e.g., Lowenstein, 2013). The legal system can have a role in promoting this sort of alienating behaviour because lengthy litigation and family court processes allows time for

manipulation and alienation to occur (Viljoen & Van Rensburg, 2014). Bates (2018b) describes UK male victims' accounts of the impact of domestic abuse on their relationships with the children with many of the men describing a loss of contact and being alienated from their children, as well as the impact this had on them as fathers.

This evidence contributes to the growing body of literature that evidences men's severe and significant abuse experiences. The range of behaviours and the complexity of the abuse points to a need for professionals (both in criminal justice services and domestic abuse agencies) to understand and respond to these dynamics when working with victims. Furthermore, some of these behaviours seem to be experienced more significantly by men due to the gendered nature of some services and responses. There is a need to acknowledge the impact these experiences have on men and be able to respond in a gender-responsive way.

### **Impact of experiences**

To consider first the SCJS data, for psychological effects, overall women were more likely to report psychological effects (at least one – 74.4% women, 52.1% men; no psychological effects experienced – 17.9% women, 43.5% men). When explored by behaviour type, many of these impacts were reported at higher levels for women. However, there was no differences found for some indicating men and women experienced these at similar rates: "isolation from children in household", "tried to kill myself", "doing things that were not good for me to help me cope" and "isolation from family or friends". This data indicates a significant impact of the abusive experiences on men with particularly high figures around low self-esteem, depression and isolation from friends and family. In respect to physical impact, there were no significant differences between men and women in the physical impacts.

Dempsey's review considered the impact of men's experiences; he described research and data that had detailed the physical and mental health consequences of being a victim of domestic abuse. He further discussed impact in terms of the shame and embarrassment many men felt. Since Dempsey's review, there has been more research that has explored the impact of men's experiences on their health and well-being. For example, Lagdon, Armourer and Stringer (2014) performed a systematic review exploring the impact of being a victim of domestic abuse and the different factors that impacted. They highlighted significant effects of being in an abusive relationship, suggesting there are significant adverse effects on the mental health of victims compared to those who have never experienced domestic abuse. The findings were conflicting around gender though – they found:

- Some studies suggesting that women had higher levels of depression and anxiety compared to men
- Four studies suggested physical violence had affected men and women similarly in relation to symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, depression and suicide ideation
- Other studies suggested women were more likely to report PTSD symptoms than men
- Studies suggesting anxiety and depression as a result of psychological abuse
- Two studies that suggested men had higher rates of anxiety compared to women
- Anxiety was associated with disturbances in sleep for men and women
- For men and women, the severity of the abuse was associated with an increase in mental health symptoms.

This conflicting evidence likely reflects difference in methodology, samples and analytic strategies. Taken as a whole though, it presents a picture that demonstrates the mental health consequences of being in an abusive relationship regardless of gender. Similarly, Costa et al. (2015) found amongst 3496 men and women across 6 European cities that experiencing physical and sexual abuse is negatively associated with health-related quality of life. In the US, Galovski, Blain, Chappuis and Flecher (2013) evaluated gender differences in recovery from PTSD linked to interpersonal violence (not necessarily always domestic abuse) and demonstrated male survivors may warrant additional attention to understand and address important clinical consideration.

A significant issue that arises out of the literature that compared men's and women's outcomes in this way lies in the lack of recognition around the fact men and women often cope with psychological distress differently. Men are more likely to externalise their distress and behaviour (e.g., by using alcohol and drugs) and women are more likely to internalise theirs (e.g. Afifi et al., 2009); for example, women experience these internalised symptoms at nearly twice the rate as men in the wider populations (Hines & Douglas, 2009). This renders gender comparisons unsuitable and unhelpful. Recommendations often include comparing men who are abused to men who are not, to understand more appropriately the differing outcomes. For example, Hines and Douglas (2015) worked with a US help-seeking sample and a population sample; they found men who sought help had significantly poorer health, specifically PTSD, depression, high blood pressure, STDs and asthma, and these remained after controlling for other differences.

Research that has just worked with male victims has further highlighted the adverse outcomes. Machado et al. (2017) found men described physical injuries, suicidal ideation, social isolation, sleep deprivation, loss of self-worth, loss of weight, as well as adverse consequences on their children. Entilli and Cipolletta (2016) found in their sample of Italian men that physical violence was severe but they indicated the psychological violence was more damaging. Bates (2018b) found UK men's experiences impacted on their physical and mental health, the development of future relationships, and their relationships with their children. In this study, Bates further explored the impact of societal attitudes towards male victims and found the men in her study were significantly impacted by these and felt society did not believe men who described these experiences, often perceiving them as "weak" or in fact "abusers".

When considering the impact explored within health settings, the more recent literature has highlighted men coming to the attention of practitioners and services. Thureau et al. (2015) in their French study, retrospectively explored medical certificates for victims who consulted with a violence specific clinic; 11% of the victims were men but the consultations were occurring less frequently for men. Hester et al. (2015) highlighted that men presenting to UK health services as perpetrators or victims of domestic abuse were more likely to have current symptoms of anxiety and depression; the authors suggest the presentation of anxiety and depression in men could be an indicator to practitioners that the man is experiencing domestic abuse.

These abuse experiences do not just affect the men who are being abused, but also their children. Berger, Douglas and Hines (2015) explored the impact of actual and threatened legal and administrative aggression on US male victims and their children. After controlling for other possibly influencing factors, actual legal and administrative aggression was associated with higher levels of PTSD and depression symptoms. Both actual and threats of this type of aggression were associated with higher levels of affective and oppositional defiant symptoms in the men's school age children.

## **Barriers to men's help-seeking**

Dempsey's review explored men's help-seeking and explicitly discussed the use of screening by some organisations that offer support to men. Within his detailed discussion, one of the issues that is raised by using this process is that it may lead men to feel they will not be believed and will not be treated fairly. This is one of many examples of the barriers men face in help-seeking for their abusive experiences. The more recent literature covered within this current review also highlights this problem.

Many men face difficulties in accessing help and support following an abusive experience (Dutton & White, 2013) and the barriers they experience occur on a number of different levels including personal, social and at a service level. For example, Drijber et al. (2013) found the most important reason not to report the abuse to the police was the belief that the police will not take any action. Many of the men in their sample felt they could not report it, but those that did felt they either were not taken seriously or were actually accused of being perpetrators themselves. Similarly, Tsui (2014) found the men in their sample were reluctant to seek help due to concerns of discrimination and disbelief, fear of being arrested, shame and concerns about services not being effective. Tsui felt perhaps of most concern from this study was that this lack of trust in the formal agencies was bidirectional, men's accounts included instances where the police also displayed behaviours that indicated they treated male victims unfairly.

On a personal level, one barrier men experience lies in the socially constructed gender norms that exist that dictate men should be powerful, self-reliant and emotionally controlled. This often prevents men from feeling able to seek help; indeed men who score higher in ideology that is related to traditional masculinity have more negative attitudes towards help-seeking (Berger, Levant, McMillan, Kellecher & Sellers, 2005), and men are often reluctant to ask for help (including being seen to be asking for help) because it presents challenges to how society constructs masculinity and masculine behaviour. This is still seen within the more recent literature, for example in Ireland, Corbally (2015) describes abuse narratives within male victims' accounts where the participants rejected the association that existed between their identities as men and their identities as someone who has experienced abuse. These conflicting identities and discourses left men at a disadvantage to identify their experience as abuse and in responding in an appropriate way. Similarly, within an Italian sample, Entilli and Cipolletta (2016) found that a strong endorsement of social and cultural values meant that men showed a protective attitude towards their female partners which could be seen to link to norms of chivalry (Felson, 2002). In the UK, Hogan (2016) saw within his sample the importance of maintaining a sense of masculinity consistently underpinned men's accounts; some felt shame and embarrassment for not having met expectations that exist for men in opposite sex relationships.

For some men who had attempted to get help, they reported that services were not always responsive in an appropriate way. Machado et al. (2017) found men experienced "gender stereotyped" treatment. They described experiencing secondary victimisation; this has been described as additional trauma experienced through victim-blaming attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Campbell & Raja, 1999) that can manifest through actions and statements that are distressing to the victim (e.g., Campbell, 2005). In Machado et al.'s study seeking formal help was negatively impacting on well-being and this was exacerbating their abuse victimisation. These gender stereotypes that are seen to exist within service provision are often likely to contribute to men's difficulties in getting help; for example, many health services will routinely ask women but not men about the possibility of their injuries having been the result of a domestic abuse incident (Dutton & White, 2013).

## The intersections of different groups

Dempsey's (2013) original review examined the dearth of literature that exists exploring some of the more diverse experiences of domestic abuse, as well as the need for services to be able to respond to the diverse range of needs. He identified several groups to focus on including: Fathers, men with disabilities, black and minority ethnic men, asylum seekers, men of lower socio-economic status, rural men and younger men. From an inspection of the literature, there has been no further research done to explore the experience of these groups. One other group that Dempsey recommended as an area for future research was around LGBTQ+ groups, and here there had been some more up to date research. Research that has been published since 2013 around domestic abuse within LBG relationships has highlighted that rates of abuse amongst LGB individuals are equal to or greater than those observed by those in opposite sex relationships (Stiles-Shields & Carroll, 2015). Gaman, McAfee, Homel and Jacob (2017) highlighted that there were different patterns of abuse within relationships of different gender orientations. Furthermore, in their critical literature review, Edwards, Sylaska and Neal (2015) highlighted that there are both similarities and differences that exist for victims in these groups (e.g., around help-seeking, recovery, disclosure) and that there is a need to improve domestic abuse service availability and provider sensitivity. Importantly, with the gendered and feminist paradigm still so influential within policy and practice, some critics have highlighted the heteronormative biases that exist within this paradigm that marginalise those in same-sex relationships (Cannon & Buttell, 2015).

A further group that Dempsey highlighted as requiring more research was around older men. Whilst there has not been any research that has explored this over the past five years, there has been one paper published that highlights the need for such research. Carthy, Bates and Policek (in press) explored the research that exists around domestic abuse and highlight both a gender and age bias in the research and practice; they highlight that the focus on young male perpetrators and young female victims has left the voices of older men excluded from the research literature. They go on to describe the way the funding cuts within the UK has placed pressure on delivering generic services that often "dilutes" the level of knowledge and expertise that is offered (Towers & Walby, 2012), with much of the support for victims being designed around meeting the needs of younger female victims. They conclude that "Moving away from gendered and age-based conceptualisations will assist the development of more adequate policy implications that will be more effective to service delivery and treatment."

This is supported by a case study that appeared in the media over the summer of 2018 of an older man who had been supported by AMIS. Jim, who was 78 at the time he left the relationship, described almost 60 years of controlling behaviour. His case was described in a recent BBC (2018) article:

*"He said: "The year before I left, it had deteriorated. I was getting black eyes, I was getting bruising. I got battered, I got my tooth knocked out, I had my knee hammered and incidents like that.*

*"It was progressive over the years. I couldn't meet friends, I couldn't meet family. Psychologically, towards the end, I didn't know me anymore. I remember sitting at night and I asked myself who I was, why was I behaving like this, how had I let things become like this?"*

*Jim continued: "I was in the garden one day. And the cat wanted in. She was in bed so I knocked on the window and said would you let the cat in?"*

*"I continued cutting the grass, and then I went inside. And all hell was let loose: 'You did that deliberately, I was sleeping, you don't care about me' she said, and then physically she went for me.*

*"I came in and she battered me. There was bleeding. My nose was bleeding, my shirt was ripped. When things had calmed down, she said: 'Would you like a coffee?' She said: 'I'll make us a coffee, you change your shirt'."*

A Dempsey highlighted, the barriers that men face in help-seeking and reporting their abusive experiences are likely to be exacerbated by other issues faced by their other group membership. So here specifically, there will be barriers older people face in help-seeking for domestic abuse including availability and appropriateness of services.

### **Perceptions and responses from services**

The SCJS included questions around the extent to which respondents felt their experiences were a crime. The base rate figures are quite low but still indicate that men were less likely to consider their experience of psychological abuse and physical abuse to be a crime.

The data also revealed that 7.9% of all survey respondents had considered themselves to be a victim of domestic abuse since the age of 16 which is a figure lower than that of having reported at least one incident. This disparity between victim identity and having experienced at least one incident was clear for women (12.3% and 18.5% respectively) but was particularly pronounced for men. Only 2.9% of men indicated they had been a victim of domestic abuse since the age of 16, where 9.2% had reported at least one incident within the same period. Similarly, of those who had experienced at least one type of partner abuse since the age of 16, fewer than half viewed themselves as a victim – and again this figure was higher for women compared to men – 56.9% and 22.9% respectively. This difference can further be seen in reporting: those who had experienced some form of partner abuse in the last 12 months were asked about their most recent (or only) incident. Of these 62.8% had told at least one person or organisation. Women were more likely to (68.1% women compared to 55.2% of men). Respondents were most likely to tell friends or relatives (35.1% and 18.5% respectively), with 28% reporting they had not told anyone – men were more likely to not tell anyone compared to women (35.0% men compared to 23.1% women). Interestingly, there was no significant difference in terms of police reporting by gender – though again the low base rates mean these figures should be interpreted with caution.

In Dempsey's review, he explored the responses of various organisations to the needs to abused men and their children. He focused specifically on the gendered barriers that men experience in help-seeking and the implications of the recently introduced Equality Duty. He made specific recommendations at the end of this chapter including the need for service providers to review their practice considering the work he described around the barriers that exist for men in their help-seeking, to ensure these providers demonstrably take account of the needs of abused men and their children, and that more research should be undertaken around the way the media represent men's experiences of domestic abuse.

Dempsey described much research that has been undertaken around the perceptions and experiences of men who had come into contact with some of these agencies (e.g., NHS, courts, voluntary organisations). Since his review, there has been more research exploring the perceptions of men and how these perceptions impact on them. A Scottish study utilising the SCJS data explored

factors relating to police becoming aware of the incidents; MacQueen and Norris (2016) found that male victims, young victims, and victims in employment were among the least likely to come to the attention of the police. They found women were at three times greater odds of coming to the attention of the police and criminal justice systems compared to men. Whilst the authors of this paper argue that this fits within the feminist and gendered analyses of domestic abuse, they conclude that the data in this survey does not support it. Amongst their concluding thoughts is a comment about the fact the current adopted approach does not account for the differences that exist both within and across gender categories.

It is clear that even within the more recent research, there is still a strong influence of gendered stereotypes within service and practice. These stereotypes often govern the response men get when they attempt to report or help-seek and becomes a barrier to these attempts too. This often leads to men being viewed as, or certainly at least being assumed to be, perpetrators; In their UK based research, McCarrick Davis-McCabe and Hirst-Winthrop (2016) found this theme of “victims cast as perpetrators” within the accounts of the men they interviewed. They described this relating to experiences within the Criminal Justice System and wider society which created a cycle where their partners would capitalise on these gendered stereotypes and use them as a tactic of their abuse. Indeed, these societal perceptions impact on men; Bates (2018b) found the impact of these perceptions was seen within the UK men’s accounts including how they described the perception of men as abusers, their dislike of the term victim as it implied weakness, and the way these perceptions acted as an additional layer of victimisation.

This is seen within the international literature too. Storey and Strand (2017) found in their sample of Swedish police officers where they assessed 867 cases of male and female perpetrated abuse, that victim vulnerability was less influential within decision making for female-to-male cases of violence. Dutton and White (2013) describe the influence of gendered stereotypes in the criminal justice system (specifically referring to custody assessors in the US) as a “...a blueprint for a witch hunt” (p13).

The responses of the criminal justice system, services and domestic abuse organisations are often influenced by societal gendered stereotypes. Literature that exists pre-2013 detailed the perceptions that exist where men’s violence towards women is evaluated significantly more seriously than women’s violence towards men, men’s victimisation is less likely to be thought of as needing intervention, and male victims are more likely to be blamed. The research that exists since 2013 is in line with these perceptions and shows that there are still societal level biases that discriminate against male victims.

For example, Hammock, Richardson, Williams and Janet (2015) explored perceptions of domestic abuse within a vignette-based study and found in their first study that physical violence was evaluated as more serious than psychological, and men’s violence more serious than women’s. In the second study, they replicated the vignettes but also asked participants about their own experiences of abuse to see if these affected their perceptions. Despite replicating the findings from study one, these experiences did not consistently affect perceptions. Similarly, Hammock et al. (2017) found physical aggression was seen as more serious and evaluated more negatively than psychological aggression. Furthermore, participants revealed more concern for female victim than male victims, and men as perpetrators were judged more harshly than women as perpetrators. Sylaska and Walters (2014) found when the victim was male in their vignette-based study, it was seen as less serious and he was more responsible, but also of concern was the perception that they were more likely to ignore it. All three of these studies were US based.

The media is an important tool in shaping perceptions of social issues including domestic abuse. When exploring the way domestic abuse is represented in the media, in the US Carlyle, Scarduzio and Slater (2014) found an overt focus on physical violence, and a tendency for them to try and explain women's aggression (e.g., self-defence, infidelity) or describe it emotionally or as them acting out in the heat of passion or an argument. This representation is important, although simply presenting a representative picture of domestic abuse is not likely to be enough to challenge perceptions. In the UK, Bates, Kaye, Pennington and Hamlin (2018) found that domestic abuse was less likely to be identified as abuse when the perpetrator was female and the victim male in hypothetical scenarios. Furthermore, implicit attitudes were not impacted by stereotype priming indicating that often simply raising awareness of the prevalence of male victims is not enough to challenge the ingrained gendered stereotypes. These gendered stereotypes can be seen within public discourse about domestic abuse and can be seen to exist within service responses. These are known to be a significant barrier in both attempts to access help but also in the experiences of the support they receive.

### **What is still missing from the literature?**

Dempsey highlighted within his review that there were gaps within the literature, and so gaps within our understanding of men's experiences of domestic abuse. Five years later, and with some significant and impactful research having been published, there are still areas where we need more research to help us understand the diverse experience of male victims, and also to inform service providers to allow them to respond in a needs-based way.

The majority of the intersectional groups that Dempsey highlighted as needing more attention are still lacking this research. To allow us to respond to the diverse range of needs that male victims have, we need to understand the experiences of those from different cultures, age groups, geographical locations, and social classes. We need to understand more the way in which men with disabilities experience domestic abuse, BME men, those within LBG relationships, and those who identify on all areas of the gender and sexuality spectrums.

Whilst we are starting to understand more about men's experiences of abuse within relationships, we still know very little about the way this abuse changes or escalates once the relationship has dissolved. Ongoing divorce procedures, residence negotiations, and child contact arrangements present opportunities for ongoing harassment and abuse. Bates (2018a) found that the end of the relationship was not the end of the abuse for the men within her interview-based sample; the men described ongoing manipulation and harassment, and for those who were parents, ongoing manipulation of the parental relationship including withholding contact. This small-scale study highlighted some similarities and differences with what we know about post-separation abuse from the women's literature and from some of the stalking literature. Similarly, Machado et al. (2017) found that within their sample, of the eight men who were no longer with their abusive partner, four of them continued to experience violence. There is a need for more research to explore this on a larger scale to capture the true extent of this for men in Scotland, the UK and beyond. What is inevitably going to emerge from such research is a better understanding of Parental alienation and the ways in which the parental relationship can be manipulated. As well as impacting significantly on male victims, this behaviour has an impact on the children who are often portrayed to be "witnesses" or passive within an abusive home environment. In contrast to this, other research has suggested that constructing children as passive within this environment negates the coping and

skills-based strategies that children have to develop to survive within an abusive home (e.g., Taylor, in press).

There are still significant methodological issues that exist in the research around men's experiences. A lack of refuge spaces makes working with a clinical sample of men more challenging than that of women (Dutton & White, 2013). Indeed, much of the early work exploring women's experience included shelter samples, which often create skewness; Straus (1992) showed shelter samples had 11 times the violence compared to community samples of women. Equally we find that people don't ask women in shelters about their own violence – McDonald, Jouriles, Tart and Minze (2009) found 67% of women in their shelter sample had used an act of severe violence against their partner. Some of the most cited research in the area such as the work of Michael Johnson (e.g., 1995) has utilised data that does not create a representative picture of domestic abuse. This research is often fraught within methodological issues such as the focus on only one partner reporting, more often than not women: as Johnson said, "I chose one question to determine whether the husband and/or wife had been violent, as reported by the wife" (Johnson, 2008, p. 20).

Some crime victimisation surveys require men to identify their experience as a crime, which they often do not. Removing this requirement and asking about specific behaviours increases the reporting rates by a factor of 16 (Straus, 1999). Whilst we know more about men's experiences than we have before, there is still a bias in method that focuses on help-seeking samples, and those where men have identified as victims. Utilising methods that allow for men's anonymity to be maintained, something that is an important factor for this group in particular (Brooks, 2018), is likely to allow us to capture the broader range of men's experiences, thus allowing the more diverse range of needs to be captured. These issues extend to the literature on LBG relationships, such as the primary focus on lesbian relationships, the difficulty in recruiting a representative sample, as recruiting through LBG sites and organisations biases those who are not as open about their sexuality (Stiles-Sheilds & Carroll, 2015).

### **Key recommendations:**

From this review, and reflecting on Dempsey's original work, there are some key recommendations that emerge:

- There is some progress within the English and Welsh domestic abuse policy that men's voices are being heard, but this is not the case within Scotland. For the whole of the UK, domestic abuse is framed as a gendered crime which creates significant issues and barriers for many victim groups including male victims and those in same-sex relationships. Viergever et al. (2018) discussed the fact that some victims of violence are not receiving appropriate support and made recommendations that all groups should be listed within policy and practice guidelines but also that similarities and differences in experiences should be explored to better inform practice and guidelines for professionals. A key recommendation here is that men's voices are heard much more within Scottish and the wider UK policy and practice. "Until there is a better link between research and practice and research and policy, then this field will continue to be influenced by an ideological and inappropriate model." (Bates, Graham-Kevan, Bolam & Thornton, 2017; p.27)
- Linked to this, there is a need for more resources to fund services that work in Scotland for men. Specifically here the recommendation would be about the need to provide funding for AMIS to be able to continue the much-needed and critical work that they do; they are the only

Scottish organisation dedicated to supporting men, and do in fact support most of the men within Scotland who seek help. This fits with calls from within the international literature that echo the need for a more accessible service and dedicated resources for male victims (e.g., Epinoza & Warner, 2016).

- We need to develop more research that works with different groups of men to understand their intersectional experiences, with a goal to ensure services can be responsive to these needs. The current research that exists has not worked with a widely diverse population and so specific groups (e.g., men with disabilities, older men, men from BME cultures) are not currently represented. Men who experienced domestic abuse represent a heterogeneous group, and in order to meet their needs we need to better understand their experiences.
- We see from the SCJS statistics that men are indeed reporting their domestic abuse victimisation to services, but we also see there are significant barriers that exist for many other men. There is a need for more research to unpick some of these barriers to develop a better understanding that might help organisations such as AMIS and ManKind Initiative to try and reach these men.
- Dempsey discussed the role of the “public story” of domestic abuse and the need for campaigns to include reference to, and images of, men to be more inclusive; this recommendation is still endorsed here, but it is possible it needs to be more than simply including pictures or statistics. The Bates et al. (in press) study above demonstrates that even when presented with this information, it is not affecting implicit and explicit attitudes about domestic abuse and gender. It is likely that this recommendation may need to involve working with younger people about being aware of domestic abuse at a younger age and could perhaps involve working with schools to develop a “healthy relationships” type programme. This is something already recognised by AMIS; as an organisation they have found that young people are particularly interested in their work and have experience of several who have sought more information about their projects. This is already spreading information in schools and AMIS have specific educational materials for this too.

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