



Government  
Equalities Office

# Engaging with Men and Boys about Gender Norms: Engagement Toolkit

Engagement toolkit prepared by Stephen Burrell, Sandy Ruxton and Nicole Westmarland, Durham University, for the Government Equalities Office

January 2020



**This research was commissioned under the previous government and before the covid-19 pandemic. As a result the content may not reflect current government policy, and the reports do not relate to forthcoming policy announcements. The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the government.**

## Acknowledgements

The research team is grateful to Fiona Grist, Orla Mackle and Lauren Probert from the Government Equalities Office for their support and guidance throughout the development and delivery of the project. We are thankful for support at Durham University from student intern Lydia Booth and research administrator Maria Aznarez. An expert panel was created to support the project and we are grateful for the generosity that was given from a group of people as passionate about change as we are: Sé Franklin (Men's Development Network), Nikki van der Gaag (Promundo), Daniel Guinness (Good Lad Initiative), Nathan Hamelberg (MÄN / MenEngage Europe), Rachel Marcus (Overseas Development Institute), Christopher Muwanguzi (Future Men), Ippo Panteloudakis (Respect), Anthea Sully (White Ribbon UK) and Martin Tod (Men's Health Forum). We are also very appreciative of the contributions of everyone who took part in the key-informant interviews and online survey as part of the research.

### Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse

The Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) is a community of researchers dedicated to improving knowledge about interpersonal violence and abuse, and professional and societal responses to it. You can find out more via our website: [www.dur.ac.uk/criva](http://www.dur.ac.uk/criva), e-mail: [durham.criva@dur.ac.uk](mailto:durham.criva@dur.ac.uk), or Twitter: [@CRiVADurham](https://twitter.com/CRiVADurham).

### Research team

**Dr Stephen Burrell** is an ESRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology at Durham University. He is a member of the Durham CRiVA steering group. Stephen recently completed a PhD on engaging men and boys in the prevention of men's violence against women in England.

**Sandy Ruxton** is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology at Durham University. He has undertaken research contracts for a wide range of organisations, including the European Institute for Gender Equality, European Commission, Oxfam, the Open University, the British Council, and the Government Equalities Office. He is a member of the steering group of [MenEngage](http://www.menengage.org) Europe.

**Professor Nicole Westmarland** is Professor of Criminology and Director of Durham CRiVA in the Department of Sociology, Durham University. She has completed projects for a number of Government departments including the Department of Health, Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the Government Equalities Office. In 2014/5 Nicole was Special Advisor to the Joint Committee on Human Rights for their Inquiry into Violence against Women and Girls.



# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>                                       | <b>2</b>  |
| Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse            | 2         |
| Research team   | 2         |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>2. What are gender norms? Why do they matter?</b>          | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>3. Some steps we can all take...</b>                       | <b>10</b> |
| Personal  | 10        |
| Peer groups   | 10        |
| Work and community  | 11        |
| Social change   | 11        |
| <b>4. Starting points for conversations with men and boys</b> | <b>12</b> |
| <b>5. Good practice pointers</b>                              | <b>14</b> |
| Strategies for shifting norms                                 | 14        |
| Engaging effectively  | 14        |
| Differences among men and boys                                | 15        |
| Approaching work with men and boys                            | 15        |
| <b>6. Some issues which might arise...</b>                    | <b>16</b> |
| <b>7. Examples of interventions with men and boys</b>         | <b>18</b> |
| 7.1 Early childhood   | 18        |
| 7.2 Education   | 18        |
| 7.3 Young men   | 19        |
| 7.4 Fatherhood  | 19        |
| 7.5 Older men   | 20        |
| 7.6 Men's health  | 20        |
| 7.7 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender men                | 21        |
| 7.8 Violence  | 21        |
| <b>8. Key resources</b>                                       | <b>23</b> |
| 8.1 Theory of social and gender norms                         | 23        |

---

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 8.2 Social and gender norms in practice             | 23        |
| 8.3 Working with men and boys                       | 24        |
| 8.4 Popular accounts of masculinity and being a man | 25        |
| 8.5 Videos for discussion                           | 26        |
| <b>9. Other useful toolkits</b>                     | <b>27</b> |
| Annex I: A to Z of engaging men and boys poster     | 29        |





# 1. Introduction

This toolkit has been created out of a piece of research for the Government Equalities Office, which included a rapid evidence assessment of previous literature, 17 interviews with experts, and a survey of 143 people doing work with men and boys. It is designed to be used by anyone interested in learning more about how to engage effectively with men and boys about issues connected to masculinity and gendered social norms. It is therefore particularly relevant for those who do some form of work with men and boys in a professional or voluntary capacity and are interested in thinking more about why and how to address masculine gender norms as part of that. It could also be utilised by those who are already involved in specialist work with men and boys focusing on gender-related issues, to gain new ideas and help develop their practice further. However, gendered social norms affect all of us and are relevant to all of our lives, so aspects of the toolkit could also be used by the general public more broadly to consider how to engage in critical conversations with men and boys about gender.

The recommendations within this toolkit are therefore based on findings which are discussed in the full research report from the project, entitled 'Changing gender norms: Engaging with men and boys'.

The online version of the toolkit, which includes a downloadable poster and videos asking experts why we should engage with men and boys about gender norms, can be viewed at <https://www.dur.ac.uk/criva/geotoolkit/>.

## 2. What are gender norms? Why do they matter?

- Gender norms are the accepted ideas of how women and men should be, and how they should act, within a specific society or community; they help to define what is understood as being 'feminine' and 'masculine' within a particular 'reference group'. Whilst the norms we seek to address through this toolkit tend to be those that are harmful, it should be acknowledged that some can also have positive effects.
- Gender norms change from culture to culture and over time, since they're based on the expectations of societies that are constantly evolving. For example, in the UK and other western societies most people usually consider pink to be a 'girl's colour', while blue is for boys – but until the turn of the 20th century, the reverse was the case.
- Gender norms are learnt early in life through the process of gender socialisation, which sets common standards and expectations to which girls and boys, and, later, women and men, should conform. These expectations are reinforced, often unwittingly, in various ways, for example through different play environments, toys, clothing, differential treatment in nurseries and schools, and gender-specific marketing.
- As a result, as they grow up boys define themselves in large part in terms of their difference from girls, and so have to avoid doing anything that is seen as 'the kind of thing girls do'. Instead, they are expected to be hard, cool, and competitive, and avoid showing any weakness. Those who are seen as failing to live up to these dominant norms are often criticised or ridiculed for crossing these boundaries.
- These norms are also reflected in the well-known concept of the 'Man Box' - a set of rigid and constraining expectations, which dictate that men should: be self-sufficient; look good; be the 'breadwinner'; be heterosexual and homophobic; display sexual prowess; be prepared to use violence; and control household decisions and women's independence<sup>1</sup>.
- Men subscribe to these norms to different extents (and some reject them completely), and their relationship to the dominant norms varies considerably depending on factors such as their ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, disability, or gender identity. For instance, older and/or disabled men often face a contradiction between the norms they may feel they are expected to live up to, and their inability to do so in practice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Heilman, B., Barker, G. and Harrison, A. (2017) *The "man box": A study on being a man in the US, UK, and Mexico*. Washington, DC and London: Promundo-US and Unilever - <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/man-box-study-young-man-us-uk-mexico/>

- Gender norms often reflect and reinforce unequal gender relations, usually to the disadvantage of women and girls - and to men and boys who do not conform to the prevailing expectations of masculinity.
- Whilst individuals have their own attitudes and values, norms are also embedded in wider organisations and social structures, and reflect the rules, laws, customs and ideologies of different societies. Changing gender norms is therefore not just about changing individual mindsets. It is also about taking into account broader social, economic and political processes and trends. These may include technological development, demographic change, globalisation, migration, conflicts, right-wing populism and religious fundamentalism.

## 3. Some steps we can all take...

Gendered social norms shape all of our lives, and it is difficult to live outside of their influence. All of us may contribute to some degree towards their reproduction in different ways. This also means that there are things that all of us – not just practitioners, but society more broadly – can do to challenge and change dominant gendered social norms, and shift them in more healthy and egalitarian directions. The following are some suggestions for ways in which we can start trying to do this.

### Personal

- Self-reflect on how our own attitudes, values and behaviours may be shaped by constraining, oppressive or harmful norms about gender, such as the expectations we place on intimate partners within relationships.
- Consider the messages we are giving to children and young people about what it means to be a man (and about gender more broadly) and how they might be contributing towards limiting their expectations, ambitions or opportunities. For example: avoid treating boys and girls differently in the types of behaviour you praise or discourage.
- Question unequal or stereotypically gendered divisions of labour within our family and work environments. For example: think about who takes responsibility for getting gifts for family members or colleagues.
- Encourage men and boys in our lives to become more actively involved in care work with children and others. For example: taking responsibility for day-to-day childcare tasks such as taking children to medical appointments.

### Peer groups

- Challenge the enforcement of gender norms among friends and within our peer groups. For example: if you hear comments suggesting that certain behaviours are not 'manly' enough, actively question them.
- Take the emotions, vulnerabilities and difficulties experienced by men and boys seriously and provide support where possible. For example: check in on how friends are doing if they seem to be struggling.
- Speak out about violence against women and girls and challenge the gender norms and inequalities which underpin it. For example: call out harmful and sexist ways in which women may be talked about among male friends or colleagues.

## Work and community

- Act to make our workplaces inclusive and equitable environments in which gender segregation and stereotypes are challenged wherever possible. For example: encourage your employer to do more to tackle the gender pay gap and to help male employees take up caring responsibilities.
- Get involved in community groups and activities and encourage male peers to do the same thing to try and reduce loneliness and social isolation among men. For example: make an effort to reach out to people in your community who you feel might be isolated.
- Support an organisation working with women and girls. For example: organise or take part in fundraising activities.

## Social change

- Think critically about how different media sources may construct and reinforce certain restrictive ideas about gender. For example: support and consume more media content made by and about women and girls and LGBT people.
- Support businesses which take positive action to challenge gender stereotypes and inequalities. For example: promote them on social media.
- Get involved in local and/or national initiatives and activities to counteract the impacts of harmful gender norms and build gender equality. For example: start a campaign or discussion group to raise awareness about gender norms in your own community, organisation or workplace.
- Campaign for legislative change for to explicitly address and shift gendered social norms through policies. For example, put pressure on policymakers such as your local council or MP to do more to tackle specific examples of gender inequality and harmful gender stereotypes.

## 4. Starting points for conversations with men and boys

Talking to men and boys about masculinity can sometimes seem like a daunting task, or something which they will quickly turn off from. However, there are a wide range of different ways in which men and boys can be engaged with about gender norms and the impacts that they have. You may be surprised about the interest you receive when raising these important issues, which men and boys often don't have an opportunity to discuss (because to do so is frequently seen as 'unmanly' for example). The following are a series of points which can be used to help start conversations with men and boys about gender norms – whether that's in an organised engagement setting, or in an everyday one-to-one chat.

- Many of the things we take for granted about aspects of masculinity being 'natural' or 'normal' are in fact socially constructed (in other words, shaped and defined by society), and therefore can and do change.
- Gender norms can contribute towards significant harms experienced by everyone - from mental health issues for men, to violence against women and girls.
- Gender norms are not necessarily always harmful - some can have positive impacts. However, it may not be helpful to have any set of expectations for how people should behave based around gender, even if we see them as being positive or healthy.
- Gender norms are built upon and reinforce social inequalities which give men more power in society than women. However, individual men can still suffer in different ways as a result of them, and some men have more power than others as a result of those social inequalities.
- Men and boys should feel able to be whoever they want to be, and not feel constrained to behave only in ways which are deemed to be 'manly'.
- Many men and boys are already challenging dominant social norms in a variety of ways, and living their lives in ways which are kind, caring, egalitarian and peaceful.
- Often our peers do not approve of harmful or oppressive behaviours as much as we think they do - they are just waiting for someone to be the first one to step in and do something.
- It can sometimes feel challenging and uncomfortable to raise and confront these issues, both with ourselves and with other people, so one thing which can help is connecting with others who are doing similar work.
- It can feel overwhelming to see the size of the task that is needed, but small individual steps all contribute in important ways to changing the bigger picture.
- All of us contribute to reinforcing gendered social norms - and all of us can do things to change them. Stereotypes can help our brains to make sense of the world in simple and easy

to categorise ways, however sometimes we need to question the assumptions we hold if they place limitations on other people or ourselves.

## 5. Good practice pointers

There is a growing body of research evidence, including from this project, providing insights into how to develop impactful work with men and boys to shift gendered social norms. The following are some of the key principles which can contribute to effective interventions in this area:

### Strategies for shifting norms

- Wherever possible, interventions should be ongoing and in-depth rather than one-off or tokenistic.
- To have a lasting impact, interventions should be multifaceted and holistic rather than only focusing on one possible level of change. This could include addressing ways in which gender norms are reproduced at different levels and in different parts of an organisation, and involving people from across the organisation in creating change (for example, within a school context this is sometimes referred to as a 'whole-school' approach).
- Gender-sensitive and gender-transformative approaches are best placed to address issues connected to gender norms. This means both recognising and seeking to change the impacts of gendered expectations and inequalities as part of interventions.
- Where appropriate, influential figures and peers can be used to help instigate and model norm change.

### Engaging effectively

- Adopt a positive approach to men and boys rather than one which is condemnatory or 'lecturing' towards them.
- At the same time, challenge men and boys to take their share of responsibility for creating change in social norms, rather than patronising or holding low expectations of them.
- Provide safe, supportive and inclusive spaces for discussion, to help men and boys feel able to open up and talk honestly about difficult subjects which are highly personal.
- Whilst recognising the influence of wider society in cultivating unequal gender relations and norms, encourage men to take responsibility and be accountable for their own behaviour.
- Ensure women's voices and experiences are heard within work with men and boys. For example, it may be helpful to work in all-male groups sometimes, but it is still important to find ways for men and boys to listen to women's voices within such contexts.
- Be prepared for how you will deal with problematic behaviours or attitudes you may encounter when working with men and boys, such as sexist or homophobic comments, and avoid colluding in such behaviour.



## **Differences among men and boys**

- It is possible to engage with any men and boys about gender norms, however it is important to do so in appropriate and relatable ways which are relevant to the group you are working with.
- Take into account the differences among men and boys when working with them, especially in terms of power and inequalities based on, for example, social class, 'race' and ethnicity, sexuality, age and dis/ability.
- Work with boys from a young age in order to enable the best chance of creating long-term changes in social norms.
- Avoid separating yourself from other men and boys, as if you are in some way more enlightened than them or not capable of making mistakes too.

## **Approaching work with men and boys**

- Working on gendered social norms is challenging, complex and long-term, but it is important to recognise that change is possible when engaging with men and boys, that norms can and do shift in positive directions, and that everyone has the potential to change.
- Collaborate with and be accountable to women and women and girls' organisations, to ensure that gender inequalities are not being replicated in work with men and boys.
- Help to build a movement – this work cannot be done only by relying on individual personalities or by working in silos, there needs to be a groundswell of efforts to create change.

## 6. Some issues which might arise...

Gender norms are highly personal for each of us and deeply embedded in our societies, our day-to-day lives, and our minds. We can be heavily invested in these norms, as our sense of identity and social status can be closely tied up with them. Challenging gender norms can therefore be difficult and can present a range of barriers which need to be overcome. This section offers suggestions for how to deal with some of the most common issues which can arise when engaging with men and boys about gender.

- **Defensive responses and backlash** – Try to focus on creating meaningful and productive dialogue. Some mediums are easier than others for doing this, for example individual face-to-face conversations are likely to yield more nuanced and constructive discussions than ones over social media.
- **Making it ‘all about men’** – Working with men and boys is important in and of itself, but should be done in reference to and in conversation with women and girls' organisations, and recognising the context of wider social inequalities.
- **Raising sensitive topics** – Discussing issues related to masculinity can bring out difficult issues and experiences for men and boys so it is important to be sensitive to this, support participants when they need it, and point them towards relevant services if needed (some of which are listed in the next section).
- **Blaming individual men** – Recognise that all men need to be involved in change, not only those engaging in the most unhealthy or harmful behaviours.
- **Blaming women** – Whilst all of society plays a part in reinforcing harmful gender norms, men must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- **Becoming despondent about possibilities for change** – This work can be difficult, so self-care and caring for others is a crucial aspect of it, as well as remembering and providing examples of how positive change can and does happen.
- **Problematic behaviours** – In the process of delivering this work harmful, prejudiced or oppressive attitudes and behaviours may be encountered, and it is important to challenge these where possible, rather than dismissing or colluding in them.
- **Challenges to messages** – Participants may not always agree with messages about changing gendered social norms, which is why encouraging a dialogue based upon critical thinking is so important. People may have personal experiences which differ from the broader picture, so it is important to illustrate how these fit into a wider context in which social structures and norms follow certain patterns in relation to gender, even if these do not always apply in the same way for everyone.
- **Unaccountable and unreflective practice** – Unfortunately there are examples of men involved in this field using violence and abuse themselves, or using women's ideas as their own and/or receiving more credit than women for doing the same work for example. It is therefore

important to continuously examine our own attitudes and behaviours too, and make ourselves accountable to others to ensure we are not replicating unequal gendered power dynamics.

- Lack of wider organisations or services – There might not be much support available in the local area for a specific issue. However, rather than expressing frustrations at women’s organisations for not providing particular services for men, encourage men to instead ask what would be needed for appropriate services for men to be available in a given area or for a particular issue.
- Work with men and boys being dominated by individual stars or personalities – This work should not primarily be about personal fame or benefit for men involved in it, so it is important to remember that it is a collective effort for social change rather than one defined by individual figureheads.

## 7. Examples of interventions with men and boys

Below is a list of organisations that were recommended by participants during the research project as examples of positive interventions with men and boys in the UK. Inclusion here does not, however, represent endorsement by Durham University or the Government Equalities Office. The list is not intended to be comprehensive, but to illustrate a sample of the range of work being done with or related to men and boys and gender norms in the UK.

### 7.1 Early childhood

- **Early Education** - national charity supporting early years practitioners with training, resources and professional networks, and campaigning for quality education for the youngest children. <https://www.early-education.org.uk>
- **Let Toys be Toys** - campaign calling on toy and publishing industries to stop limiting children's interests by promoting some toys and books as only suitable for girls, and others only for boys. <http://www.lettoysbetoys.org.uk>
- **Men into Childcare York** - network and support group aiming to encourage more men to choose childcare as a career option. <http://www.men-into-childcare.org.uk>
- **Men in the Early Years (MITEY)** - campaign and grassroots national network providing accessible information, resources and support for men interested in, or already working in, early years careers. <https://www.miteyuk.org>

### 7.2 Education

- **Changing Relations** - an art-based education and training Community Interest Company that challenges thinking around gender norms, gender equality and healthy relationships, using creative methods to provide original educational and training resources. <http://www.changingrelations.co.uk>
- **Everyday Sexism project** - catalogues instances of sexism experienced on a day to day basis. <https://www.everydaysexism.com>
- **Lifting Limits** - provides educators with the skills and resources to recognise and address gender bias. Whole-school approach integrates gender equality into the school curriculum, ethos and routines: equipping staff and pupils to recognise, discuss and challenge stereotypes and inequalities. <https://www.liftinglimits.org.uk>
- **Sapere** - national charity supporting Philosophy for Children (P4C). Promotes philosophical enquiry and reflection in education by providing high-quality P4C training and sustaining P4C practice through continuous professional development. <https://www.sapere.org.uk>

- **Wise Guys Training** - supports those who work with boys and men to understand and engage with them more effectively. Provides workshops and training sessions. <https://wiseguys.training>
- **Gender Action** - a schools award programme which promotes a whole-school approach to challenging stereotypes and putting gender equality at the heart of policy and practice. <https://www.genderaction.co.uk>

## 7.3 Young men

- **Future Men** - (formerly Working With Men) specialist charity that supports boys and men along the path to becoming dynamic future men, whilst addressing stereotypes around masculinity and engaging in the wider conversation of what it means to be a man. Provides structured school programmes, youth hubs, individual one-to-one sessions, outreach work, support and advocacy. <https://futuremen.org>
- **Good Lad Initiative** - mission to promote positive, gender equal relationships; transform the behaviours, attitudes and skills of men and boys; and motivate them to become agents of positive change within their communities. Provide workshops to universities, schools and workplaces to engage men and boys in conversations about gender. <https://www.goodladinitiative.com>
- **YouthAction** - YouthAction Northern Ireland is a leading youth work charity. Aims to create opportunities for young men to have their voices heard; gain a better understanding of masculinity and its impact on young men; carry out research and pilot projects; work in partnership with locally based organisations; increase relevant knowledge and skills amongst those who work with young men; and inform policy makers and curriculum on issues affecting young men. <https://www.youthaction.org>

## 7.4 Fatherhood

- **Dad's Rock** - aims to improve outcomes for children across Scotland to ensure the best start in life by providing support to dads and families, through workshops, playgroups, work in schools, and mentoring for young dads. <https://www.dadsrock.org.uk>
- **Dads Work** - a community project in East Lothian working with fathers and male care givers. It provides support groups, positive parenting classes, workshops on the role of fathers, home visits, trips and outings for fathers and their children. <http://www.dadswork.co.uk>
- **Father's Network Scotland** - works with a wide range of organisations to help them support dads. Offers a range of services including training, consultancy, events, research and media work. <http://www.fathersnetwork.org.uk>
- **Fatherhood Institute** - national think-tank which provides research on fathers and their impact on children and mothers; reports on and develops approaches to engaging with fathers mainly in the health, education and family sectors; offers training, consultancy and

publications on father-inclusive practice; and lobbies for changes in law, policy and practice. <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org>

- **Lads Need Dads** - offers a male-led group Mentoring Programme; bush-craft survival training and outdoor activities; ongoing support and life-skills training; leadership and peer mentoring. <https://www.ladsneeddads.org>
- **Yorkey Dads** - aims to create a safe, engaging and supportive environment for dads, granddads, male carers and dads-to-be, and to connect dads in and around the York area through meet ups, activities, events and online support. <https://yorkeydads.wixsite.com/yorkeydads>

## 7.5 Older men

- **Age UK** - the country's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life, and providing companionship, advice and support for older people who need it most. Have initiated research and campaigns about older men's experiences. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk>
- **Men's Sheds Association** - provides support and guidance to individuals and groups across the UK in starting and managing Men's Sheds. Raises awareness of the social and health benefits of Men's Sheds in reducing isolation, loneliness and in empowering local communities. <https://www.menssheds.org.uk>

## 7.6 Men's health

- **Andy's Man Club** - groups for men across the UK to talk about mental health issues. Creators of the #ItsOKtoTalk campaign. <http://www.andysmanclub.co.uk>
- **Being Mankind** - aims to use men's stories to ignite conversations among young people around the meaning of masculinity, humanity and equality. <https://www.beingmankind.org>
- **Brothers in Arms** - awareness-raising website to represent men in Scotland and start the conversation about male suicide through digital tech, films and social media. <https://www.brothersinarmsscotland.co.uk>
- **The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** - charity dedicated to preventing male suicide. Provides a free and confidential helpline and webchat, supportive spaces in workplaces, universities, pubs, clubs and prisons across the country, and campaigns to spread awareness of suicide. <http://www.thecalmzone.net>
- **Heads Together** - a mental health initiative which combines a campaign to tackle stigma with fundraising for a new mental health services. Programmes include: workplace wellbeing; mentally healthy schools; working with the armed forces community; mental health innovations; and supporting maternal mental health. <https://www.headstogether.org.uk>

- **Men's Health Forum** - national charity undertaking research; raising awareness (e.g. through Men's Health Week); advocating for men's health; sharing and encouraging good practice; and providing health information and advice. <https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk>
- **Men's Development Network** - works with men in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland at various levels including one-to-one, developmental, parenting, behaviour change group work, training, phone line support and awareness raising. Projects include the Men's Development Programme, Men's Health Programme, Mend Domestic Violence Intervention Programme, Men's Advice Line and Men's Counselling Service. <https://mens-network.net>

## 7.7 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender men

- **Galop** - gives advice and support to LGBT+ people who have experienced hate crime, sexual violence or domestic abuse. Also supports lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people who have had problems with the police or have questions about the criminal justice system. <http://www.galop.org.uk>
- **LGBT Foundation** - national charity delivering advice, support and information services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities. <https://lgbt.foundation>
- **Switchboard** - provides a one-stop listening service for LGBT+ people on the phone, by email and through instant messaging. <https://switchboard.lgbt>

## 7.8 Violence

- **Caring Dads** - a group intervention programme for men who have abused or neglected their children or exposed them to domestic violence. <https://www.caringdads.org>
- **Glow** - charity working throughout Staffordshire to end relationship abuse. Includes education programmes (Relationships without Fear), and a support service for men. <https://www.findtheglow.org.uk/home/>
- **Mankind Initiative** - helpline and support for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence across the UK. <http://www.mankind.org.uk>
- **Men's Advice Line** - confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members). <http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk>
- **Mentors in Violence Prevention Scotland** - a peer mentoring programme using the bystander approach that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. <http://mvpscotland.org.uk>
- **Respect** - UK domestic abuse charity, leading the development of safe and effective work with perpetrators, with young people who are abusive, and with male victims. Offers accreditation of specialist services; provides training for individuals and organisations working in the sector; works in partnership with others to innovate and develop practice; lobbies

influencers to improve policy and practice; supports research and fundraising. Also runs Men's Advice Line. <http://respect.uk.net>

- **Survivors UK** - information, support and counselling for men and boys who have been raped or sexually abused. <http://www.survivorsuk.org>
- **White Ribbon UK** - part of the global movement to end male violence against women. Works with men and boys to challenge male cultures that lead to harassment, abuse and violence. The White Ribbon Accreditation programme ensures organisations take a strategic approach to ending male violence against women. <https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk>
- **Zero Tolerance** - a Scottish charity working to tackle the causes of violence against women and girls by promoting gender equality and challenging attitudes which normalise violence and abuse. <https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk>



## 8. Key resources

The resources below are suggested as some starting points for further exploring and discussing issues around gendered social norms and masculinity. Again, this list is not intended to be comprehensive, but offers a range of additional materials which may be useful tools for those working with men and boys or interested in finding out more about specific issues related to masculine gender norms.

### 8.1 Theory of social and gender norms

- Cislighi, B. and Heise, L.C. (2016) *Measuring gender-related social norms*. Technical Report. London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - <http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/STRIVE%20Norms%20Report%201.pdf>
- Kedia, S. and Verma R. (2019) *Gender norms and masculinities*. London: ALIGN Platform - <https://www.alignplatform.org/masculinities-guide>
- Marcus, R. and Harper, C. (2015) *How do gender norms change?* London: Overseas Development Institute - <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9817.pdf>

### 8.2 Social and gender norms in practice

- Advertising Standards Authority (2017) *Depictions, perceptions and harm: Report on gender stereotypes in advertising*. Summary report. London: Advertising Standards Authority - <https://www.asa.org.uk/genderresearch.html>
- Culhane L. and Bazeley A. (2019) *Gender stereotypes in early childhood: A literature review*. London: Fawcett Society - <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/gender-stereotypes-in-early-childhood-a-literature-review>
- Edström, J., Hassink, A., Shahrokh T. and Stern E. (eds.) (2015) *Engendering men: A collaborative review of evidence on men and boys in social change and gender equality*. EMERGE Evidence Review. Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and Institute of Development Studies - [https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/7059/EMERGE%20Evidence\\_Report\\_final.pdf](https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/7059/EMERGE%20Evidence_Report_final.pdf)
- Heilman, B., Barker, G. and Harrison, A. (2017) *The “man box”: A study on being a man in the US, UK, and Mexico*. Washington, DC and London: Promundo-US and Unilever - <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/man-box-study-young-man-us-uk-mexico/>
- Heilman, B. and Barker, G. (2018) *Masculine norms and violence: Making the connections*. Washington, DC: Promundo-US - <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/masculine-norms-violence-making-connections/>

- Heilman, B., Guerrero-López, C. M., Ragonese, C., Kelberg, M. and Barker, G. (2019) *The cost of the man box: A study on the economic impacts of harmful masculine stereotypes in the United States*. Washington, DC: Promundo-US and Unilever.
- Jackson, D. (2016) *Exploring Ageing Masculinities: The Body, Sexuality, and Social Lives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jennett, M. (2013) *Breaking the mould: Challenging gender stereotypes*. London: National Education Union - <https://www.teachers.org.uk/equality/equality-matters/breaking-mould>
- Ragonese, C., Shand, T. and Barker, G. (2018) *Masculine norms and men's health: Making the connections*. Washington, DC: Promundo-US - <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/masculine-norms-and-mens-health-making-the-connections/>
- Samaritans (2012) *Men and suicide: Why it's a social issue*. Ewell: Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/middle-aged-men-suicide/>
- van der Gaag, N., Heilman, B., Gupta, T., Nembhard, C. and Barker, G. (2019) *State of the world's fathers: Unlocking the power of men's care*, Washington, DC: Promundo-US - <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/state-of-the-worlds-fathers-unlocking-the-power-of-mens-care/>
- World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe (2018) *The health and well-being of men in the WHO European Region: Better health through a gender approach*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe - [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/380716/mhr-report-eng.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/380716/mhr-report-eng.pdf)

### 8.3 Working with men and boys

- EMERGE Practice Brief (2015) *Lessons in good practice from work with men and boys for gender equality*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice - <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/7176/EMERGE%20Practice%20brief.pdf>
- Featherstone, B., Rivett, M. and Scourfield J. (2007) *Working with Men in Health and Social Care*. London: Sage.
- Flood, M. (2019) *Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan - <https://xyonline.net/sites/xyonline.net/files/2019-05/Flood%2C%20Engaging%20Men%20and%20Boys%20in%20Violence%20Prevention%202018.pdf>
- International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) (2018) *It only works when everyone plays*. Washington, DC: ICRW - <https://www.icrw.org/publications/gender-equity-male-engagement/>

- 
- Marcus, R. (2018) *Programming to promote gender-equitable masculinities among adolescent boys: Key findings from a rigorous review*. Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. London: Overseas Development Institute - <https://www.gage.odi.org/publication/masculinities-among-adolescent-boys-policy-brief/>
  - Plan International and Promundo (2019) *9 tips for parents: Raising sons to embrace healthy positive masculinity*. Warwick, RI: Plan International USA - <https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/healthy-masculinity-tipsheet-for-parents.pdf>
  - Rus Funk Consulting (2019) Range of materials (including some free to access) on engaging with men and boys and promoting healthy masculinities created by US activist and community organiser Rus Funk - <http://www.rusfunk.me>
  - Ruxton S. (ed.) (2004) *Gender equality and men: Learning from practice*. Oxford: Oxfam GB - <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/gender-equality-and-men-learning-from-practice-133968>
  - Willis, P., Vickery, A., Hammond, J. and Jessiman, T. (2019) *Older men at the margins: Guidance for practitioners and services providing groups for older men*. Bristol and London: University of Bristol and Age UK - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/older-men-at-the-margins/guidance-for-practitioners-and-services-providing-groups-for-older-men.pdf>

## 8.4 Popular accounts of masculinity and being a man

- Asher, R. (2016) *Man Up: Boys, Men and Breaking the Male Rules*. London: Harvill Secker.
- Barber R., Blake V., Hearn J., Jackson D., Johnson R., Zbyszek L. and McEwan D. (2016) *Men's Stories for a Change: Ageing Men Remember*. The Older Men's Memory Work Group. Champaign, IL: Common Ground Publishing.
- Hemmings, C. (2017) *Be a Man: How Macho Culture Damages Us and How to Escape It*. London: Biteback Publishing.
- Jackson, D. (2016) *Unmasking Masculinity: A Critical Autobiography*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Perry, G. (2017) *The Descent of Man*. London: Penguin.
- Pinkett, M., Roberts, M. (2019) *Boys Don't Try? Rethinking Masculinity in Schools*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Urwin, J. (2017) *Man Up: Surviving Modern Masculinity*. London: Icon Books.
- Webb, R. (2017) *How Not to Be a Boy*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

## 8.5 Videos for discussion

- Axe: “Is it okay for guys...” - on how men have been told to behave, and the questions men ask - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WvSfa7x5q0>
- Good Lad Initiative: Working with boys in schools on gender norms - <https://www.bbc.com/ideas/videos/why-the-phrase-man-up-is-so-destructive/p06sdqg6/player>
- Jackson Katz: Violence against women - it's a men's issue - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTvSfeCRxe8>
- MenCare: A Global Fatherhood Campaign - <https://men-care.org/resources/?type=video>
- MenEngage Alliance: Male and female voices around the world on why gender equality matters - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVInNplYQ7A&t=2s>
- Open University: ‘Beyond Male Role Models’ project - [http://media-podcast.open.ac.uk/feeds/HSC-external-internet-podcasts/20150811T111022\\_nc\\_2015\\_beyond\\_male\\_vid002-640x360.m4v](http://media-podcast.open.ac.uk/feeds/HSC-external-internet-podcasts/20150811T111022_nc_2015_beyond_male_vid002-640x360.m4v)
- Samaritans: Real People, Real Stories Campaign to encourage men to seek help - <https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/real-people-real-stories/>
- Thames Valley Police: Consent and tea - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ>
- Tony Porter: A call to men (on the Man Box) - [https://www.ted.com/talks/tony\\_porter\\_a\\_call\\_to\\_men?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men?language=en)
- University of Bristol/Age UK: Videos on older men who are single or living alone; gay men and loneliness in later life; and older male carers and loneliness - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/older-men-at-the-margins-how-men-combat-loneliness-in-later-life/>
- White Ribbon Canada: Boys Don’t Cry campaign - <https://www.whiteribbon.ca/boysdontcry.html>

## 9. Other useful toolkits

A range of toolkits have been put together in recent years which address some of the specific issues related to engaging with men and boys about masculine gender norms in more depth. Below is a list of some of the most relevant ones which might be useful for those doing some form of work with men and boys.

- AGENDA Wales: A young people's guide to making positive relationships matter - <http://agenda.wales>
- ALIGN Toolkits: Programmes on gender norms and masculinities, Overseas Development Institute - <https://www.alignplatform.org/resources/2019/08/toolkits-programmes-gender-norms-and-masculinities>
- Berkowitz, A., A grassroots guide to fostering healthy norms to reduce violence in our communities: Social norms toolkit - [http://socialnorms.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Social\\_Norms\\_Violence\\_Prevention\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://socialnorms.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Social_Norms_Violence_Prevention_Toolkit.pdf)
- Bicchieri, C., Why do people do what they do? A social norms manual for Zimbabwe and Swaziland - <https://www.alignplatform.org/resources/2019/08/why-do-people-do-what-they-do-social-norms-manual-zimbabwe-and-swaziland>
- Gender Action Resource Library: A collection of resources, reports and guidance on challenging gender stereotyping in education and early years settings - <https://www.genderaction.co.uk/online-resources#audioandvideo>
- IMAGINE Toolkit for engaging boys and young men to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence against women and girls - <https://mfj.se/assets/uploads/2018/06/imagine-report-v13.pdf>
- Let Toys Be Toys: Resources for schools - <http://lettoysbetoys.org.uk/schools/>
- Män, #After MeToo: Reflective groups for men - <https://mfj.se/assets/uploads/2018/12/reflective-groups-guide-man.pdf>
- MenEngage Alliance, Accountability training toolkit - <http://menengage.org/resources/menengage-alliance-accountability-training-toolkit-second-edition-january-2018/>
- Men's Health Forum, 'How to...' guides, including: How to make weight-loss services work for men; How to engage men in self-management support; How to make mental health services work for men - <https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/how-guides>
- Promundo-US, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Manhood 2.0: A curriculum promoting a gender-equitable future of manhood - <https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Manhood-2.0-Curriculum.pdf>

- REDMAS, Promundo, EME, Program P: A manual for engaging men in fatherhood, caregiving, maternal and child health - <https://men-care.org/resources/program-p/>
- XY Online, Engaging men in preventing men's violence against women and/or building gender equality: Practical guides, manuals, and curricula, <http://xyonline.net/content/engaging-men-preventing-mens-violence-against-women-and-or-building-gender-equality>
- Zero Tolerance, Just like a child: Respect gender equality in the early years – A guide for childcare professionals - <https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/resources/Just-Like-a-Child.pdf>

## Annex I: A to Z of engaging men and boys poster

# Changing gender norms: A to Z of engaging men and boys

**A**nte natal care is an ideal location to start exploring the impact of gender norms with expectant parents.

**B**ringing up boys free from restrictive gendered expectations is crucial to breaking men free from stereotypical definitions of what it means to be a man.

**C**hallenging gendered social norms is essential to create a more peaceful, happy and equal society.

**D**ifficulties men have in disclosing experiences of violence and abuse are linked to gendered social norms.

**E**ngaging men in difficult conversations can feel uncomfortable and challenging at times.

**F**atherhood norms are positively changing and one way this could be reinforced is through more paid leave for fathers.

**G**eneralisations about men are often made, but there are huge differences in their life outcomes based on where they are born and their family background.

**H**ighlighting opportunities for creating change through dialogue with men and boys is an important part of effective practice.

**I**t is not enough to encourage individual men and boys to change – change is also needed on a political level.

**J**oining community groups such as men's sheds can be one way of tackling loneliness and isolation among older men.

**K**nowing that gender norms are a problem isn't enough – every one of us needs to act to change things.

**L**imited sets of expectations and behaviours for boys and girls are reinforced through things like toys and clothing.

**M**en's mental health can suffer as a result of struggling to live up to unrealistic expectations around masculinity.

**N**either women and girls nor men and boys can solve the problem of gender norms by themselves.

**O**ne spaces could be used more to challenge gender norms and generate more positive debate.

**P**rivilege for men and boys works in complicated ways and intersects with ethnic background, religion, dis/ability, sexuality, and age.

**Q**uestioning heterosexuality as the norm should be a core feature of any intervention.

**R**ecognising that many gendered social norms can be detrimental to men and boys is an important step in engaging with them.

**S**chools should adopt a whole-school approach to gender norms involving pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

**T**raining to a high standard when engaging with men and boys is important to ensure that workers avoid inadvertently colluding with harmful stereotypes.

**U**nderfunding and undervaluing services for women and girls is a long term problem, and work with men and boys should avoid compounding this.

**V**iolence against women is connected to men's adherence to traditional masculine norms and a cause and consequence of gender inequality.

**W**hen boys are away from peer group pressures, they can be much more reflective on norms of masculinity.

**X**-rated sexually explicit material is contributing towards damaging gendered norms and expectations around sex and relationships.

**Y**oung men and boys should be given opportunities to learn the skills required for caring and domestic work and to explore and develop caring roles in their lives.

**Z**-generation young people and millennials are witnessing big changes in what it means to 'be a man', and there is space for them to continue and advance these changes.

To find out more visit: [durham.ac.uk/criva/geotoolkit](http://durham.ac.uk/criva/geotoolkit)

**Durham University**

**Government Equalities Office**







© Crown copyright 2019

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.