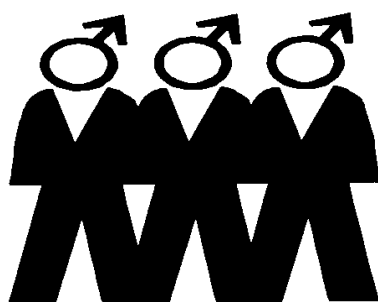


The Male Link

www.mensproject.org/malelink.html



Men's Attitudes and Values Research



Report prepared by
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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Male Link (TML) is a cross-community, cross-Border, voluntary network of men and women, individuals and organisations, who share a common belief that it is important to increase awareness of the issues facing males in the north of Ireland and who wish to initiate practical action to meet this need.

From the outset, TML's Steering Group recognised that although men's work/issues in the north of Ireland is still under-developed, there is a growing interest in this field. Whilst this is positive, it also brings certain dangers. Perhaps the most obvious of these is that future programmes may be developed by well-intentioned people based upon hearsay and stereotypes rather than upon knowledge and understanding. In reality, we know very little about what males think about a range of issues. There has never been a large-scale survey of men's attitudes and values conducted within the north of Ireland - except by commercial companies eager to increase their sales.

It was hoped that conducting this research would serve four main purposes:

- 1) Provide baseline feedback on men's views about themselves and the world they live in.
- 2) Highlight key issues and inform the focus, direction and implementation of future practical programmes for men across the north of Ireland.
- 3) Provide a lever to exert pressure for increased resources in this area.
- 4) Raise the public profile of men's work/issues.

The research process was begun in Spring 2000 and this report presents the outcomes of this study. The report is also available in Portable Document Format (PDF) for free downloading from the internet at: www.mensproject.org/tmlatts.html

In many ways, the completion of this research is an important landmark for everyone in the north of Ireland. We hope that it may help to begin the process of having informed debate on men's issues/needs. However, it also proves that belief in the need for action can overcome adversity - even apathy and lack of funding!

This report is the result of a team effort ... Thanks go to all members of TML's Steering Group who helped to meet the cost of this initiative/access respondents; to all the groups and individuals who helped to distribute/complete questionnaires; to the Blind Centre NI for putting the questionnaire onto audio format and publicising it. Very special thanks go to **Paula Devine** from the **Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey Team** who freely gave her time and expertise to the process of inputting data, generating results, analysing these findings and presenting the key outcomes for this report. Thanks also go to **Maureen Wynne** from NILT who helped with the inputting process. Without their generous help, this project could not have been completed within the current timescale.

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November 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ♂ This research was undertaken by The Male Link (TML) between Spring and Winter 2000.
- ♂ TML is a cross-community, cross-Border, voluntary network of men and women, individuals and organisations, who share a common belief that it is important to increase awareness of the issues facing males in the north of Ireland and who wish to initiate practical action to meet this need.
- ♂ This study sought to: provide baseline feedback on men's views about themselves and the world they live in; highlight key issues and inform the focus, direction and implementation of future practical programmes for men across the north of Ireland; provide a lever to exert pressure for increased resources in this area; raise the public profile of men's work/issues.
- ♂ 632 men took part in this survey. They came from a wide variety of personal backgrounds:
 - 79% lived in Northern Ireland, 21% in the Republic of Ireland
 - 34% lived in a city, 38% in a town, 11% in a village and 17% in the countryside
 - Ages ranged from 15 to over 70
 - 4% of respondents were gay, while 2% were bisexual
 - 59% were in a relationship or married, 34% were single, while the rest were either separated, divorced or widowed
 - More than half of those who responded said that they had children
 - 69% were employed, 10% unemployed and the remainder were students, retired, in training or out of work due to ill health. Two men were full-time carers
 - 48% were Roman Catholic, 32% Protestant, 2% came from another religious background and 15% came from no religious background. A further 3% of respondents did not wish to answer this question
- ♂ Respondents supported the idea of being in touch with, and expressing, their feelings:
 - Nearly 80% of men disagreed with the statement that real men don't cry
 - Almost the same amount agreed that it's good to show your sensitive side
 - 86% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that talking about your feelings is OK
- ♂ Despite being positive about their feelings, nearly two thirds of men agreed, to some extent, that "sometimes you don't do things in case you fail". Subsequently, acting upon these feelings is difficult.
- ♂ Nearly two thirds of men agreed or strongly agreed that nursing is a good career for a man, although one quarter of them were undecided.
- ♂ Only 18% of men agreed that the man should be the chief breadwinner in a household.
- ♂ There was support for the idea that it is more difficult for men to take on traditional female roles than vice-versa and that there is pressure on men to behave in a certain way.
- ♂ 40% of respondents felt that the media portray men in a negative way and almost two thirds believed that men are discriminated against on the basis of their sex.
- ♂ Support for equality was very evident: there was overwhelming support for the statement that men and women should always be treated equally, and a strong feeling that straight, gay and bisexual men should all be treated equally.
- ♂ Respondents felt that men can care for children equally as well as women. This supports the general feeling against the statement that after separation/divorce children should always stay with their mother.
- ♂ However, 58% of men felt that family law upholds the rights of women more than men.

- ♂ Most men felt that they should be more proactive about attending to their health - nearly three quarters felt that men's lives would be better if they looked after themselves more. Despite this, 60% of respondents still saw going to the pub as a good way to relax. There was also general disagreement with the notion of only going to the doctor when there is something seriously wrong. However, there was no obvious consensus as to whether or not Health Services take men's health seriously.
- ♂ Worryingly, although the vast majority of men disagreed that sometimes suicide is the only escape from life's problems, 17% showed some agreement.
- ♂ While men generally supported the idea of being in a relationship, there was acknowledgement of some of the problems that this may bring:
 - 42% of men felt that women don't understand them
 - Over three quarters (77%) of respondents agreed that some men are abused by their partners
- ♂ Attitudes to the statement "being gay or bisexual is as natural as being straight" were very mixed, with 38% showing some agreement, 18% being undecided, and 44% showing some disagreement.
- ♂ Men acknowledged that they need emotional support:
 - Nearly three quarters of men disagreed that men need less emotional support than women
 - 86% disagreed that men shouldn't ask for help even if they've got a problem
- ♂ Respondents agreed that support was needed from other men, other fathers, and men's groups - as well as from religion.
- ♂ There was strong agreement that support services are geared towards women.
- ♂ It was felt that men can, at times, be their own worst enemy - 73% of respondents felt that men use their power to threaten each other.
- ♂ There was overwhelming support (87%) for the statement that men should be involved in improving their local community.
- ♂ This report recommends strategies and highlights potential areas which need to be addressed if men's work and issues are to be positively supported in the future.
- ♂ The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey Team have decided to build upon the findings in this report and have included a "Men's Life and Times" module in their 2000 survey. Results will be available before summer 2001 at www.qub.ac.uk/nilt
- ♂ This report is available in Portable Document Format (PDF) for free downloading from the internet at: www.mensproject.org/tmlatts.html

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MALE LINK

1.1 Formation of The Male Link

From October 1998 - March 1999 Colin Fowler, Development Worker with The Men's Project, toured the north of Ireland trying to make contact with people who have an active interest in men's work/issues. During this period he met over sixty individuals or groups. However, he noticed that establishing these contacts was more to do with luck and perseverance than having a plan.

Throughout this period a lot of information was gathered about the perceived needs of local men and the actions needed to meet these needs. There was a strong sense that men are seriously at risk of becoming socially excluded. Feedback indicated that many of them feel that every aspect of their manhood has been castigated; that society is anti-men; that they are associated with violence, abusiveness and hostility; that they are struggling to cope with the conflicting demands of a rapidly changing world; that they are branded as "winners" even when they may be "losers" or the victim; that their expectations and behaviour are limited by society's norms; that they have no place ...

However, there was also a strong desire among many groups to meet other people interested in this field and to hear what they are doing. Most people felt that there is enthusiasm to do something in this area, but little knowledge of where to start or how to develop ideas further.

To meet this expressed wish, The Men's Project within Parents Advice Centre convened a meeting on Monday 15th March 1999 in Grosvenor House, Belfast. There was unanimous agreement at this gathering that some form of longer-term association was needed and a number of people volunteered to be part of a "Think Tank" group to refine this proposal further. "The Male Link" (TML) arose out of their deliberations.

1.2 Where the name came from

The name - "The Male Link" - was chosen to show that this body should, primarily, concern itself with keeping people in touch on issues relating to men. Thus, it is a network which links people who have an interest in this field.

1.3 Why have The Male Link?

There were many reasons offered as to why there should be a "Male Link". These included the need to ...

- have a sense of belonging to a bigger network and reduce feelings of isolation and marginalisation;
- find peer support;
- cross-fertilise ideas, establish practical partnerships and share experience;
- increase communication and coordination of activities while, at the same time, reducing duplication, rivalry and jealousy;
- provide a more unified focus for this work and increase awareness of men's work/issues.

1.4 Value base

The Male Link ...

- recognises the value of men;
- acknowledges that men are individuals who have different needs that must be met in a variety of ways;
- believes that the development of men and women is inter-dependent and complementary;
- sees the development of men as being fundamental to the process of realising gender equality.

1.5 Mission

To establish and sustain a network of people who have an active interest in men's work and who wish to raise awareness of the issues facing men.

1.6 Aims

To promote cooperative activity that will help to advance the quality and quantity of work with men/on men's issues by ...

- providing a collective focus for work with men which draws together diverse interests;
- ensuring opportunities for practical cooperation, referral and the sharing of information/experience/contacts/research;
- offering the possibility for people to come together to look at specific issues;
- supporting learning opportunities which may encourage innovation and exploration;
- reflecting the extent and diversity of work - so raising its profile;
- actively pursuing gender equality.

1.7 Membership

The Male Link is a diverse body of people who share a common belief that it is important to increase awareness of the issues facing men and boys in the north of Ireland and who wish to initiate practical measures to meet these needs. Members come from all backgrounds and interests - men's groups, physical and mental health schemes, education providers, family work agencies, research projects, counselling and support services, youth bodies, organisations to support older men, community groups ... Membership is open to anyone who has an active interest in men's work/issues and who can agree with the value base of this initiative. All members are asked to be "partners" and to actively use their contacts, resources and experience to promote this area of work and to support other members, where possible, in their endeavours.

1.8 Coordination

The Male Link is coordinated by a voluntary, inter-agency Steering Group drawn from a broad range of backgrounds. This body meets regularly to determine the focus and direction of initiatives. However, at the outset, it was recognised that there was a need for one agency to act as contact point and secretariat for this venture. The Men's Project (within Parents Advice Centre) fulfils this task at present.

2. RESEARCH PROCESS

2.1 The Male Link work plan 1999 - 2000

When The Male Link (TML) Steering Group first met, they set themselves five goals for the year 1999 - 2000. These were to:

- establish a web site (please visit it at: www.mensproject.org/malelink.html);
- produce and distribute a regular newsletter (called "Male Matters");
- convene a series of Focus Groups to look at the issues facing specific groups of men (report now available on-line at www.mensproject.org/tmlfocus.html);
- organise a major North-South conference to raise awareness of men's work and issues - held in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh, Co. Tyrone on Wednesday 18th October 2000. See www.mensproject.org/malelink.html for a copy of the conference report or contact The Men's Project;
- begin the process of researching the attitudes and values of males in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties (this report is now available on-line at www.mensproject.org/tmlatts.html).

2.2 Need for research

The Steering Group members recognised that men's work/issues in the north of Ireland is still under-developed and, often, uncharted territory. However, they also recognised that there is growing interest in this field. While this is positive, it also brings certain dangers. Perhaps the most obvious of these is that future programmes may be developed by well-intentioned people based upon hearsay and stereotypes rather than upon knowledge and understanding.

In reality, we know very little about what males think about a range of issues. There has never been a large-scale survey of men's attitudes and values conducted within the north of Ireland - except by commercial companies eager to increase their sales. Subsequently, the Steering Group felt that research into men's attitudes and values should be a priority area of work for The Male Link and that this could fill the vacuum. It was also felt that The Male Link was in an ideal position to begin the process of collating this information and that any data generated would be of use to the entire network.

2.3 Purpose of research

It was hoped that conducting this research would serve four main purposes:

- 1) Provide first-hand, baseline feedback on men's views about themselves and the world they live in.
- 2) Highlight key issues and inform the focus, direction and implementation of practical programmes for men across the north of Ireland.
- 3) Provide a lever to exert pressure for increased resources in this area.
- 4) Raise the public profile of men's work/issues.

2.4 Research Sub-Group

This proposed survey was one of five key tasks which The Male Link wished to undertake during the year 1999 - 2000. It was agreed that a Research Sub-Group should be established to move the proposal forward. This group was comprised of:

- **Nuala Brady** - Young Men and Positive Mental Health Project, Ballybofey
- **Shirley Ewart** - PhD Research Student, University of Ulster at Magee
- **Colin Fowler** - The Men's Project (within Parents Advice Centre), Belfast

During this project the Research Sub-Group met six times in addition to giving/receiving feedback at seven full Steering Group meetings. Further regular exchanges took place by phone, fax and email.

2.5 Research process

It was decided by the Sub-Group that the research process would involve:

- agreeing a series of pertinent headings for issues;
- identifying and classifying questions;
- devising a questionnaire as the tool to gather data;
- asking other researchers/academics to review the format and structure of the questionnaire;
- piloting the questionnaire among the contacts of the Steering Group before widely circulating it;
- administering the field-tested questionnaire (see Appendix 1);
- sharing the financial cost of producing and distributing the questionnaires among Steering Group members - with The Men's Project bridging any gaps;
- at least 500 participants;
- the responses being initially inputted into a Microsoft Access Database (common to all members of the Sub-Group) and later transferred into SPSS format;
- cleaning the SPSS format data;
- analysing the results;
- producing a report on the outcomes.

2.6 Question identification and design

The Male Link has a diverse membership and it was decided at the outset of this project that the range of questions should reflect this diversity. Colin Fowler from The Men's Project had already recorded a large number of pertinent issues/questions during his initial attempts to establish a network. However, The Male Link Steering Group also spent a considerable amount of time brainstorming on possible themes and questions. A number of key headings were then agreed to try to cover as many areas of interest as possible. These were:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ❖ Emotions and Feelings | ❖ Employment and Education |
| ❖ Equality | ❖ Family |
| ❖ Health: Mental and Physical | ❖ Leisure |
| ❖ Masculine Identity | ❖ Relationships |
| ❖ Sexuality | ❖ Society |
| ❖ Support | |

The Research Sub-Group had responsibility for refining questions and assigning them to particular headings. However, they recognised that such classification was subjective and, in reality, many questions could also have been located elsewhere.

2.7 Draft questionnaires and pilot phase

It was decided that the questionnaire should follow the format of a statement followed by five options - "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Undecided", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree" - and that respondents would be asked to choose which best represents their views. There was also a series of "open questions" at the end. Forms could be completed on an individual basis or in a group-facilitated environment - to overcome the danger that individuals may be excluded due to literacy difficulties.

The questionnaire was presented in five draft formats and discussed by the Steering Group before it was agreed that it should be piloted. In addition, other TML contacts - who had a background in research techniques - were consulted for their comments. This process helped to:

- simplify the language used;
- delete questions with "double meanings" and ambiguity;
- define the best order in which to present the questions;
- ensure that the questionnaire was as short as possible.

All members of the Steering Group were then asked to distribute five questionnaires to males that they knew and to record their comments on its length, layout, clarity of instructions, how they felt about answering particular questions etc. The Pilot Phase feedback was very positive. The only major recommendation was that there should only be one "open question" at the end instead of the five original ones. It was agreed that this question would still allow for any additional issues/comments to be aired.

2.8 Distribution/return of questionnaires

The Sub-Group decided that the target number of responses should be 500 and the field-tested questionnaire was, subsequently, distributed on three levels:

1. TML Steering Group members were asked to target specific groups of males (e.g. men's groups, work places, football teams, youth clubs, schools, job training programmes, church groups, disabled men, rural/urban projects etc.) to ensure diversity and that people outside of "men's work circles" were reached. They were also asked to:
 - share the financial cost of producing and distributing the questionnaires - with The Men's Project bridging any gaps - and to print 100 copies (A₃ back-to-back);
 - take personal responsibility for the coordination/distribution/collection/return of these questionnaires;
 - give out no more than 20 questionnaires to any particular group and get the responses of at least 5 groups;
 - ensure that the questionnaires were returned in large batches.
2. Existing TML contacts were encouraged to take on a "partnership franchise" i.e. to take a number of questionnaires (maximum 20), distribute them to males that they knew and to coordinate their return.
3. Other individuals or groups - some unknown to TML - were solicited via advertising e.g. The Men's Project's "News Update"/web site, TML's "Male Matters" newsheet and via a number of community journals and newsletters. The Blind Centre NI provided a particularly valuable service by putting the questionnaire onto audio tape and publicising this through their "Talking Magazine" programme. Four people returned questionnaires in this format.

2.9 Inputting data

A Microsoft Access database was designed to hold the results generated. This package was chosen because all the Sub-Group members were responsible for inputting the questionnaires and this was the only database software owned by all of them. Additional inputting was carried out by Maureen Wynne - a third level student from the USA on placement with the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey Team (a joint initiative between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster).

2.10 Generating results and analysing data

Paula Devine, Co-Director of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Team, was asked by the Research Sub-Group to help with the process of generating results and analysing the data. She did this on a voluntary basis. Paula worked with Maureen Wynne to:

- convert the Access database into SPSS format;
- clean the data;
- run frequency tables and cross-tabulations on the data;
- prepare an “Initial Findings” report;
- highlight the main themes/issues arising from the research.

Paula also presented the statistics in this report.

2.11 Limitations of research

The Male Link is an independent body which is not owned or funded by any other organisation. All members participate in a voluntary capacity. TML has no tangible resources other than the limited time which members give and the practical expertise that they can bring to specific tasks. Subsequently, this research had to be conducted for “free” and all expenses were absorbed by members of the Steering Group.

Lack of money and dedicated personnel inevitably shaped what was possible in this study. It set the boundaries for how many respondents could be sought, the number of questions/themes addressed, how representative the sample of participants could be, the length of this report, how many reports could be produced in hard copy ...

From the outset, the Research Sub-Group acknowledged that the methodology adopted to select participants was not scientific. However, they also recognised that some of the limitations of this approach would be overcome by securing the responses of a large number of men from diverse backgrounds and by actively engaging males who were not already involved in men’s work.

2.12 Difficulties and missed opportunities

Conducting this research raised a number of difficulties for The Male Link:

- There was no budget to undertake this study and, so, voluntary groups - who are often already underfunded - had to meet the cost out of their own resources.
- Some potential partner organisations felt that this was a “stupid idea”.
- A number of the men who were asked to participate did not seem to take this study seriously.
- Peer pressure amongst men often dictated whether they would participate or not.

- Confidentiality was seen as a problem when asking males to complete forms. To overcome this, unused envelopes were given out so that completed forms could be sealed and returned.
- Only 139 respondents (22% of total number) offered any additional comments in the final “Open Question” section.
- A large number of the questionnaires were returned without the profile page being fully completed.

2.13 The future

Throughout this study, The Male Link received a high degree of practical support from the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey Team. This was greatly appreciated - especially given our experience of the general ambivalence among funders/decision-makers towards looking at men's issues.

NILT have now decided to build upon the findings in this report and have included a “Men's Life and Times” module in their 2000 survey. This module re-visits some of themes covered here and introduces additional ones. Their results will be available on-line at www.qub.ac.uk/nilt before summer 2001.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Personal Profile

This section reports on responses from the Personal Profile/Information section of the questionnaire. Frequency tables can be found in Appendix 2.

Responses were obtained from 632 men. Respondents lived throughout Ireland, with 492 living in Northern Ireland (79%) and 136 coming from the Republic (21%). 72% of respondents were urban dwellers (living in a city or town) while 28% were rural dwellers (from either a village or the countryside).

The vast majority (76%) of men were in the 19-49 year old age bracket. However, 9% were 15-18 years, 13% were 50-59 years, 2% were 60-69 and 1% were aged over 70.

In terms of sexual orientation, 94% identified themselves as being straight/heterosexual, 4% as being gay/homosexual, and 2% as being bisexual. Regardless of orientation, 34% of men said they were single. 59% of men were in a relationship or married, 6% were separated or divorced and less than 1% were widowed.

Although most questions had at least a few missing responses, this was only a major issue in the one which asked how many children/stepchildren the respondent had. Only 499 men answered this question, with nearly half of these (48%) reporting that they had no children. It could probably be assumed that many men who did not answer this question also did not have any children and overlooked it as irrelevant without seeing that the zero option was offered. 39% of all the males had 1-3 children, while 13% said they had four or more.

Household structure among the respondents was quite diverse. 16% of men lived alone, while others lived in various settings: with parents, with partner, with partner and children, with children only, or in shared accommodation with others.

The employment status of respondents varied greatly. The majority of men (69%) were employed or self employed (no distinction was made for the purposes of this survey) and 10% of men were unemployed. 9% of respondents were students, with a further 3% currently undertaking a training course. 3% of men were retired and 5% were out of work because of long-term health problems. Two men were full time carers.

The number of responses to the perceived background section was high - only 3% of men did not wish to answer this question. 48% of men said they came from the Roman Catholic community, 32% came from the Protestant community and a further 2% of respondents were from another religious community. 15% of men said that they belonged to no religious community.

The final question in this section asked if the respondents completed the questionnaire on their own or with the help of someone else. Only 2% of men required the help of someone else.

These results show that the 632 men questioned came from a wide range of backgrounds in terms of age, relationships, location, identity (religious and sexual), economic status, children and household structure. Although no form of structured sampling technique was used, the relatively large sample size and variety of circumstances identified means that the survey can be seen as being fairly representative of most groups of men in the north of Ireland.

3.2 Statements

This section of the questionnaire presented forty questions on a wide range of topics. Respondents were asked to state how they felt about these using a five point scale which ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Because of the small number of respondents, this section does not generally quote figures for men aged 70+, widowers, men from an 'other' background, men who did not wish to answer the background question and bisexual men. Where base numbers are less than 100, actual percentages are not quoted.

Q1 *Real men don't cry*

- There was very strong disagreement with this statement: half the respondents strongly disagreed while more than another quarter disagreed.
- Younger men (15-19) were more likely to be undecided (12%) and, while there was broad disagreement, only 42% of them strongly disagreed.
- Over two thirds of gay men strongly disagreed and only one gay man showed any agreement with this statement.
- Single men were also more likely to be undecided (15%) and less likely to strongly disagree, than men in relationships or men who were married, separated or divorced.
- Two fifths of men with no children strongly disagreed with this, compared to three fifths of men with children. However, this may be related to age and/or marital status.
- Men in employment and unemployed men were more likely to strongly disagree than men not in the labour force.
- Nearly two thirds of men from no religious community strongly disagreed with the statement. Catholic men were more likely to strongly disagree than Protestant men.

Q2 *Men can care for children equally as well as women*

- There was strong support for this statement - 71% of men strongly agreed or agreed.
- Older men (aged 50-69) were less likely than other age groups to agree and 21% of them were undecided.
- Gay men were more definite in their attitudes to this statement - only 4 disagreed in any way and none were undecided - while 14% of straight men were undecided.
- As might be expected (since these are the group most likely to be affected by custody and access issues) three fifths of separated or divorced men strongly agreed. Only 2 disagreed.
- Attitudes among men in employment and men not in the labour force were more diverse than among unemployed men. Unemployed men were the least likely of these three groups to agree: 40% compared to 60% of men in employment and 50% of men not in the labour force.
- However, Catholic and Protestant men showed a similar pattern of response.
- Surprisingly, having children made no difference to men's views.

Q3 *The media portray men in a negative way*

- This statement was obviously difficult to answer and over one third of respondents were undecided. 40% showed some support and 25% disagreed in some form.
- This pattern was reflected among most groups - although young men (15-29 year olds), straight men, single men, men with no children and men not in the labour force were more likely than men in other categories to be undecided.

Q4 Men and women should always be treated equally

- There was unequivocal support for this statement. More than two thirds (68%) of men strongly agreed, with another 14% agreeing.
- Gay and bisexual men showed more support than straight men - only one bisexual man and two gay men disagreed.
- More than four fifths of men who were separated or divorced strongly agreed with this statement compared to around two thirds of single men or men in a relationship/married.
- Catholic men agreed more strongly with this statement than Protestant men, although levels of disagreement and non-decision were fairly equal.

Q5 *The man should be the chief breadwinner in a household*

- Support for this was very low - less than two fifths (18%) showed any agreement. Nearly two thirds (66%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Levels of agreement rose by age: a quarter of men in the 50-69 year old age group agreed or strongly agreed with this statement compared with 15% of young men. However, over one fifth of respondents in the 15-29 year old age group were undecided.
- While the general trends among rural and urban men were similar, rural men were more likely to simply disagree rather than strongly disagree.
- This pattern was similar between straight and gay men, with gay men much more likely to strongly disagree than disagree. Almost all bisexual men strongly disagreed.
- Single men were much more undecided than other men. Nearly three quarters of men who were separated or divorced (66%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Attitudes among unemployed men were mixed: whilst 15% of them strongly agreed, 24% of them were undecided and 33% strongly disagreed. The corresponding figures for men in employment were 7%, 13% and 42%.
- Attitudes among Protestant men were also mixed - nearly a quarter agreed in some way, 22% were undecided and 29% strongly disagreed. The views of Catholic men and men from no religious community were more definite in their lack of support for the statement.

Q6 *Hard men are given a lot of respect in our community*

- Attitudes to this statement varied a lot: 40% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, and 47% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- While the general trends were similar among all age groups, those aged 50-69 were more likely to agree rather than strongly agree and to disagree rather than strongly disagree.
- Single men agreed more with this statement, as did men with no children.
- Men in employment disagreed much more than unemployed men and men not in the labour force.
- 31% of Catholic men strongly disagreed, compared to 19% of Protestant men and 23% of men from no religious community.

Q7 *Religion can be a source of comfort and support for men*

- Half of the respondents agreed to some degree with this statement, although 29% were undecided.
- Younger men were more undecided (around one third) and less likely to agree.
- More rural than urban men agreed with this, while urban men were more undecided.
- Gay men showed less support than straight men.
- Men in relationships/married men agreed more than others and were less undecided.
- More definite support came from men not in the labour force.
- Results among Catholic and Protestant men were almost identical. Interestingly, over one third of men from no religious community agreed.

Q8 Male friends should feel free to show physical affection to each other

- Approximately half the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this. 20% were undecided.
- Agreement was especially strong among gay and bisexual men, and among men from no religious community.

Q9 You should only go to the doctor when there is something seriously wrong

- Three fifths of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with this and 9% were undecided. Only one third agreed in some way.
- Results among all the different groups showed similar trends.

Q10 Going to the pub is a good way to relax

- Six out of ten respondents viewed this statement positively and 23% had a negative view.
- Support was strongest among the 15-29 year old age group - 38% strongly agreed.
- Views among gay men were more mixed.
- Single men agreed very strongly, as did men with no children.

Q11 After separation/divorce, children should stay with their mother

- Just over half the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this and another third were undecided.
- Unsurprisingly, separated or divorced men disapproved of this statement - 40% strongly disagreed. 39% of single men were undecided.
- Having children did not seem to make a difference to views on the statement.

Q12 It's good to show your sensitive side

- Over three quarters (77%) of men supported this statement and, while only 8% supported it, 15% were undecided.
- This pattern was consistent across all groups of men, although younger men, men without children, Protestant men and men not in the labour force were more likely to be undecided.
- Men from no religious community were very convinced that it's good to show your sensitive side - 51% strongly agreed and 35% agreed. Only 4% expressed any negative views.
- Bisexual men were less likely to agree than straight or gay men.

Q13 Women don't understand men

- Feelings were mixed about this statement, with 42% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 31% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 27% undecided.
- Younger men tended to agree more than older men.
- Gay men were more likely not to believe this statement than straight men.
- Not surprisingly, 29% of separated/divorced men strongly agreed with this statement and another 32% agreed. However, 24% were still undecided. Only 16% showed any disagreement.
- Unemployed men were more undecided on this matter (34%).
- A quarter of Protestant men disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement, as did 37% of men from no religious community.

Q14 *Work experience is more important than education when getting a job*

- Attitudes were mixed. Almost equal numbers agreed/strongly agreed as disagreed/strongly disagreed (36% compared to 38%). 26% were undecided.
- 42% of men in the 50-69 year old age group had negative views on this.
- Unemployed men showed more support (43%) and less indecision (21%), while men not in the labour force showed more disagreement (40%).

Q15 *It's good to talk to other men about personal problems*

- Whilst support was strong (65% of men agreed or strongly agreed), 23% of men were still undecided.
- 31% of men in the 30-49 year old age group strongly agreed and only 12% showed any kind of disagreement.
- Eight out of ten gay men supported this idea compared to just over six out of ten straight men.
- Separated/divorced men were much more supportive of this idea (82%), while single men were much more undecided.
- 43% of unemployed men strongly agreed, compared to 26% of men in employment and 23% of men not in the labour force.
- Although a slight majority of Protestant men were in favour of this statement (57%), this is less than for Catholic men (66%) and men from no religious community (76%).

Q16 *Men can be discriminated against because they are men*

- There was a lot of support for this statement - 61% strongly agreed or agreed.
- A further 21% were undecided.

Q17 *Support services are geared towards women*

- Two thirds of men agreed/strongly agreed with this and only 16% disagreed in some way.
- Young men (15-29 years) were more undecided about this statement (24%) than other groups, as were urban men in relation to rural men (21% and 15% respectively).
- One third of gay men were unsure about their attitudes to the statement.
- Men who were separated or divorced felt strongly about this issue - 42% strongly agreed and a further 40% agreed. Only 5% disagreed.

Q18 *Men's lives would be better if they looked after themselves more*

- Nearly three quarters of all men replying to the questionnaire supported this idea (73%). Approximately equal numbers were undecided or disagreed in some way.
- Younger men were less sure - only 60% agreed or strongly agreed compared to 84% of men in the 50-69 year old age group.
- Support was particularly strong among men who were separated or divorced - 42% strongly agreed compared to 30% of single men.
- Men not in the labour force were more mixed in their attitudes - 63% agreed/strongly agreed, 21% were undecided and 16% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

Q19 Talking about your feelings is OK

- There was unequivocal support for this statement - half the respondents strongly agreed and another 36% agreed. Only 7% disagreed in any way.
- This was a general trend across all groups. However, gay men, men who were separated or divorced, men with children, unemployed men and men from no religious community showed slightly stronger agreement than other groups.

Q20 Being gay or bisexual is as natural as being straight

- Attitudes to this statement were very mixed: equal amounts (19%) agreed and strongly agreed, 18% were undecided, 18% disagreed and 26% strongly disagreed.
- Attitudes among the different age groups were quite similar, although 32% of men aged 50-69 agreed/strongly agreed, compared to 44% of men in the 30-49 year old age group. However, all the men aged 70 and over disagreed in some way.
- Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of gay and bisexual men strongly agreed with this statement, although three men disagreed or strongly disagreed. None were undecided.
- Over one third of men who were separated or divorced were unsure, compared to 15% of men who were in relationships or married.
- Men with children were less likely to support this view than men without children (36% compared to 45%), as were men not in the labour force compared to men who were unemployed (35% compared to 46%).
- The largest disapproval for this statement came from Protestant men - 40% of whom strongly disagreed and 24% disagreed. Only 23% agreed in any way. In contrast, 45% of men with no religious community strongly agreed, 20% agreed and only 14% disagreed in any way. Attitudes of Catholic men fell between these two positions.

Q21 Football is a man's sport

- Men had mixed views about this statement, with nearly a half (48%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. 34% agreed in some way.
- Among the different age groups, the highest level of support came from men aged 50-69: 43% of whom were in support of the statement. In comparison, only 20% of men aged 30-49 supported it.
- More than half the gay men had negative views on this statement and only a quarter showed some support.
- In contrast, 41% of men not in the labour force agreed or strongly agreed.
- A majority of men from no religious community (58%) disagreed in some way. Protestant men were more likely to agree than men from Catholic, other, or no religious background.

Q22 It's more acceptable for a man to sleep around than a woman

- Exactly half the respondents disagreed to some degree with this statement and 15% were undecided.
- 44% of men in the 50-69 year old age group strongly disagreed with this statement, with a further 17% disagreeing.
- Rural men showed more disagreement than urban men, while gay men showed more disagreement than straight men.
- Exactly half the bisexual men strongly agreed and half strongly disagreed.
- Views among single men were very mixed and 20% were undecided. However, more than half the men who were separated/divorced (55%) disagreed in some way and only 8% were undecided.
- Attitudes among Catholic and Protestant men were quite similar, while men with no religious community showed more disagreement. 46% strongly disagreed and 18% disagreed. Only 5% were undecided.

[Note: Several respondents were not sure if the question was asking if they, personally, thought it was more acceptable for a man to sleep around or whether society, in generally, viewed it as more acceptable]

Q23 *Sometimes suicide is the only escape from life's problems*

- Attitudes to this question were quite definite - only 9% were undecided. There were strong negative feelings towards this statement: 59% strongly disagreed and a further 15% disagreed. Worryingly, 8% strongly agreed and 9% agreed.
- Views among men of different age groups were quite similar, although younger men (15-29 year olds) tended to be more undecided than men aged 50-69. However, men in the oldest age group (70 and over) were almost unanimous: five out of these six men strongly disagreed.
- Groups more likely to show agreement included men who were separated or divorced (24%), unemployed men (32%) and men from no religious community (23%).
- In particular, two fifths of gay men and half the bisexual men expressed some agreement.

Q24 *It's useful for fathers to talk to other fathers*

- Approximately four out of five men agreed to some degree with this statement, with only 8% disagreeing in some way.
- There was little difference by age group, location or sexual orientation.
- Single men were more ambiguous in their views - 23% were undecided. In contrast, men who were separated or divorced showed almost unanimous support (84%) and only 3% were undecided.
- Men with children were particularly positive - 51% strongly agreed and a further 36% agreed. Men with no children were less supportive of the idea and 17% were undecided.
- Men who were unemployed or not in the labour force were slightly less supportive and more undecided than men in employment.

Q25 *It's harder to be seen as a "real man" if you are disabled*

- Feelings were mixed on this issue - 48% agreed or strongly agreed and 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 17% were undecided.
- Younger men supported this statement less than men in the older age groups, but were more likely to be undecided.
- The attitudes of gay men were more definite, with only one man being undecided. Approximately the same number of gay men agreed as disagreed.
- Nearly two thirds of men who were separated or divorced agreed in some part with this statement and only 24% disagreed.
- A majority (57%) of men from no religious community also agreed and only 6% were undecided.

Q26 *Men should be involved in improving their local community*

- There was very strong support for this statement - over half the men (54%) interviewed strongly agreed and another 33% agreed. Only 4% disagreed in any way.
- There were no major differences when analysed by the background variables.

Q27 *Men need less emotional support than women*

- Almost two thirds of men expressed some disagreement with this statement. Only 21% showed any kind of agreement and 14% were undecided.
- Younger men were slightly more undecided than other age groups, but the general trend was the same.
- Nearly nine out of ten gay and bisexual men disagreed.
- Men who are in a relationship or married were more likely to express some level of disagreement than men in other marital status groups.

- Men in employment were also more likely to express disagreement than men not in the labour force (68% compared to 54%). However, over one fifth (22%) of the latter group were undecided.
- The greatest level of disagreement was expressed by men from no religious community - 83% disagreed in some way and only 12% supported the statement. In contrast, 57% of Protestant men disagreed in some way and 23% expressed some level of agreement.

Q28 *Men use their power to threaten each other*

- Nearly three quarters (73%) of men agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Only 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Younger men, urban men and gay men were more likely to agree with this statement than older, rural or straight men. However, rural men were more likely to be older.
- It is interesting that nearly half of the unemployed men strongly agreed with this statement compared to one third of all men.
- Background or having children seemed to make little difference to the response given.

Q29 *There's a lot of pressure on men to behave in a certain way*

- 73% of men agreed to some degree with this statement, with little variation by age group.
- Urban men were more likely to agree than rural men (76% compared to 66%).
- Nearly all gay men (21 out of 24) agreed or strongly agreed - and most of these strongly agreed.
- Over two thirds of separated or divorced men strongly agreed or agreed.

Q30 *It's better to be on your own than in a relationship*

- There was strong disagreement with this statement by 40% of respondents. Over two thirds either disagreed or strongly disagreed - less than one in ten showed any agreement.
- Older men (50-69) were less likely to be undecided than other age groups and 48% strongly disagreed.
- Straight men disagreed more than gay men.
- As may be expected, separated or divorced men were more likely to agree than single men or men in a relationship or married. However, over a quarter (29%) of single men were undecided, as were men with no children (28%) - although these are likely to be the same people.

Q31 *Straight, gay and bisexual men should all be treated equally*

- There was large-scale support for this statement: over two thirds of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (with 46% strongly agreeing).
- The age group most likely to strongly agree with this was the 30-49 year old group (51%).
- Unremarkably, eight out of ten gay and bisexual men strongly agreed with this compared to four out of ten straight men.
- Separated and divorced men were less likely to disagree/strongly disagree with this statement than single men or men who are married or in a relationship.
- Religious background seemed to influence the responses to this statement: 47% of men from a Roman Catholic background strongly agreed with this compared to 29% of men from a Protestant background. 12% of men from a Roman Catholic background disagreed or strongly disagreed compared to 34% of men from a Protestant background.

Q32 *Sometimes you don't do things in case you fail*

- Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and two fifths (40%) agreed. Only 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- The three age groups had fairly similar patterns of agreement, although the 50-69 year olds were less likely to strongly agree.
- Unemployed men were more likely to be in agreement and less likely to be undecided than those in employment or not in the labour force.

Q33 *Family law upholds the rights of women more than men*

- Nearly three fifths (58%) of men agreed or strongly agreed with this - with over half of these strongly agreeing (30%). However, 28% were undecided.
- The youngest age group were less likely to strongly agree, followed by the 50-69 year olds. However, nearly one third of the youngest age group (32%) were undecided. This, perhaps, reflects that the 30-49 year old age group were those with most knowledge (direct or hearsay) of family law.
- Nearly half of the gay men were undecided compared to just over a quarter of straight men.
- Unsurprisingly, over half of the separated/divorced men (55%) strongly agreed and another 24% agreed. None were undecided.
- 38% of men with children strongly agreed. 36% of men without children were undecided compared to 22% of men with children.

Q34 *Nursing is a good career for a man*

- Nearly two thirds (65%) of men agreed with this, although 23% were undecided.
- The youngest age group was less likely to agree (22%) than the other two large age groups (both around 29%).
- No gay men disagreed or strongly disagreed with this, although 24% were undecided.
- Separated/divorced men were nearly twice as likely to strongly agree with this statement than single men.
- Whilst 30% of men from a Roman Catholic background strongly agreed that nursing is a good career for a man, only 18% of men from a Protestant background thought so. However, the latter group were more likely to be undecided.

Q35 *Some men are abused by their partners*

- Over three quarters (77%) of men agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Only 6% of men disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- There was little difference by age group, although the youngest age group was less likely to strongly agree and more likely to be undecided than the other groups.
- Straight men were more likely to be undecided than gay men, as were men from a Protestant background compared with those from a Roman Catholic background.

Q36 *A man gets stick if he doesn't drink alcohol in the pub*

- Responses to this question were quite mixed - 43% agreed or strongly agreed compared to 39% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Age group had a definite effect upon response: 49% of 15-29 year olds agreed or strongly agreed compared to 32% of 50-69 year olds. 11% of the former age group were undecided compared to 23% of the latter.
- Gay men were more likely to support this statement and less likely to be undecided than straight men.
- Around one quarter of men (24%) not in the labour force agreed/strongly agreed, while only 12% of men in employment did.

Q37 "Men's Groups" are only for weak and sappy men

- There was little support for this statement: only 15% of men agreed or strongly agreed, while 70% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Out of the three large age groups, the strongest disagreement came from the oldest group: 46% for 50-69 year olds compared to 40% of 15-29 year olds.
- More than half of gay men strongly disagreed.
- However, more than half the unemployed men strongly disagreed compared with just over a third of men not in the labour force.
- Men from a Roman Catholic background were more likely to disagree/strongly disagree (73%) than men from a Protestant background (65%).

Q38 It's more difficult for men to take on traditional female roles than vice-versa

- Over half the respondents (53%) agreed/strongly agreed (20% strongly agreed) while a quarter disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- More than one quarter of younger men (15-29 years), single men and men with no children were undecided (28%, 28% and 27% respectively). However, the younger men were also more likely to be single and/or have no children.
- Men from a Protestant background were more likely to agree/strongly agree (59%) than men from a Catholic background (49%).

Q39 Men's health is not taken seriously by the Health Services

- There was a mixed response to this statement: 36% of men agreed/strongly agreed and 40% disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- Older men (50-69) were much less likely to be undecided than men in the younger categories. Only 23% of men in the 15-29 year old age group agreed/strongly agreed compared to 44% of men aged 50-69.
- Over a third of gay men were undecided about this statement.
- Over one fifth of men who were separated or divorced strongly agreed with this compared to 13% of men overall.

Q40 Men shouldn't ask for help even if they've got a problem

Only 10% of men showed any sort of support for this statement and 86% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This trend was reflected across all categories.

3.3 Discussion by themes

At the outset of this study, The Male Link Research Sub-Group identified eleven themes and categorised the questions under these, as shown in the table below. However, this classification is not definitive - some statements could easily fit under a number of headings. This section gives a brief overview of the results within the framework of these themes.

Themes	Relevant Statements
1. Emotions and Feelings	1, 12, 19, 32
2. Employment and Education	14, 34
3. Equality	4, 16, 31
4. Family	2, 5, 11, 33
5. Health: Mental and Physical	9, 18, 23, 39
6. Leisure	10, 21, 36
7. Masculine Identity	25, 28, 38
8. Relationships	8, 13, 30, 35
9. Sexuality	20, 22
10. Society	3, 6, 26, 29
11. Support	7, 15, 17, 24, 27, 37, 40

Theme 1: Emotions and feelings

This theme explored four statements relating to emotions and feelings - traditionally viewed as a 'no go' area for men.

Results from three of the statements (Q1, Q12 and Q19) would suggest that there is strong support among men for being in touch with and expressing their feelings. Interestingly, younger men tended to be more unsure about this issue. In contrast, gay men, men with children and men from no religious community were extremely supportive.

However, despite endorsing being in touch with their feelings, responses to the final statement in this group (Q32) showed that most men still have a deep fear of failure.

Theme 2: Employment and education

This theme included two statements: Q14 and Q34. Attitudes to both these statements were mixed and approximately one quarter of respondents to each question were undecided. It is interesting that unemployed men showed more support for the value of work experience than employed men and men not in the labour force.

However, although many respondents felt that nursing is a good career for a man, results from statement 38 (discussed in Theme 7: Masculine identity) show that more than half the respondents felt that it is more difficult for men to take on traditional female roles than vice-versa.

Theme 3: Equality

This theme consisted of three statements (Q4, Q16 and Q31) which explored the idea of equality - both in terms of between the sexes and on the grounds of sexual orientation. Generally, there was a definite feeling that all people should be treated equally whether male or female, straight, gay or bisexual.

In terms of sex equality, more separated or divorced men supported the concept of sexual equality than single or married men. It would be interesting to know if they thought that it was men or women who were the group being treated unequally. However, given the responses to the statement that men can be discriminated against because they are men, and also to Q33 (family law upholds the rights of women more than men), many men probably see themselves as the party being unfairly treated.

There was strong support for the view that straight, gay and bisexual men should all be treated equally. However, this was one area where religious background had a strong influence on responses - Catholic men were much more likely to agree than Protestant men.

Theme 4: Family

This theme centred on the family - especially in relation to children - and included Q2, Q5, Q11 and Q33. Attitudes to these statements would suggest that the traditional image of the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the childminder was not supported.

There was strong support for the view that men can care for children equally as well as women. This attitude was especially strongly held by men who were separated or divorced. However, there was less clear consensus about whether children should stay with their mother after separation or divorce. Having said this, over half the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that this should always be the case and a further third were undecided.

However, despite men's feeling that they can look after children as well as women can, and with limited support for the idea that children should stay with their mother in the event of separation/divorce, there was still a definite belief that family law upholds the rights of women more than men. This perception was held by almost three fifths of men with a further 28% being undecided. This has far-reaching policy implications.

Theme 5: Health: mental and physical

This theme is currently very topical and, again, has pertinent policy implications. Three out of the four constituent statements (Q9, Q18 and Q39) explored men's use and experience of health services.

Overall, there was a very strong view across all groups that men should look after themselves more and, as part of this, that they should also visit their doctor for "non-serious" complaints. However, younger men were less sure than men in the 50-69 year old age group. This may reflect their lack of life experience.

Despite this positive endorsement for looking after themselves, there was some feeling that men's health is not taken seriously by the Health Services. However, quite a few men were undecided.

Although there was a strong negative reaction to the statement that "Sometimes suicide is the only escape from life's problems" (Q23), it is worrying that 17% replied positively to some degree with a further 9% being undecided. It would be useful to know if this is due, in some part, to the perceived lack of interest in men by health and support services.

Theme 6: Leisure

Three statements (Q10, Q21 and Q36) fell into the theme of Leisure; two of which focused on the “traditional” male pastime of going to the pub. Most men viewed going to the pub as a good way to relax, with strongest support coming from the 15-29 year old age group. However, responses to the statement that “a man gets stuck if he doesn't drink alcohol in the pub” were more varied - with nearly equal numbers showing agreement and disagreement. Younger men and gay men were more likely to support this statement. These figures, therefore, highlight a source of societal pressure upon men i.e. that going to the pub is a “good thing” and that a man should prove himself by drinking alcohol while he is there. In the future, it would be interesting to explore who applies this pressure.

The third statement within this theme relates to “football is a man's sport”. This, again, relates to the idea of men's “traditional” pastimes. The views expressed were mixed. However, there are two ways that participants may have interpreted this question: the first implies that only men should play football and the second implies that all men should be interested in football. Either way, respondents seemed to have no fixed attitudes to this statement.

Theme 7: Masculine identity

This theme included questions on what it means to be male or masculine in today's society (Q25, Q28 and Q38). Respondents were divided about how hard it is for a disabled man to be regarded as a “real man” - although nearly half agreed that it was difficult and 17% were undecided. Furthermore, over half the respondents were in support of the idea that it is more difficult for men to take on traditional female roles than vice-versa.

These responses suggest that there are at least some pre-conceived ideas within society of what a man is/should be and that changing from these may be difficult. This is compounded by the fact that nearly three quarters of the men completing the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that men use their power to threaten each other.

Theme 8: Relationships

This theme explored the issue of relationships - both sexual and platonic. The responses broadly show that men do not want to be alone, but recognise some of the inherent problems of relationships.

There was strong disagreement with the statement that “it's better to be on your own than in a relationship” (Q30). Less than 10% showed any form of agreement. Furthermore, the responses to Question 8 suggest that there is considerable support for the idea that male friends should feel free to show physical affection to each other.

However, against this support for relationships, is the acknowledgement that some men are abused by their partners (Q35). Over three quarters of men agreed in some way with this statement.

Approximately four of out of ten men agreed or strongly agreed that women don't understand men (Q13). Younger men were most likely to agree, while gay men and men of no religious community disagreed.

Theme 9: Sexuality

This theme looked at two important - although unrelated - issues around men's sexuality i.e. "being gay or bisexual is as natural as being straight" (Q20), and "it's more acceptable for a man to sleep around than a woman" (Q22). Responses to the first of these were very mixed, with slightly more men disagreeing. There was some increase in disagreement with age. While Protestant men were very disapproving of this statement, men from no religious community had more positive reactions. Exactly half the respondents disagreed in some way with the second statement in this theme. Only bisexual men showed any strong agreement.

Theme 10: Society

The four constituent statements of this theme (Q3, Q6, Q26 and Q29) explored men in society. The first of these examined if men think that the media portray them in a negative way. Over one third of respondents found this question difficult to answer and were undecided. However, 40% still showed some support. Attitudes to the second statement - "hard men are given a lot of respect in our community" - showed that almost the same number of respondents agreed as disagreed.

Responses indicated that men felt that there is a lot of pressure on them to behave in a certain way - nearly three quarters of them agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However, there was extremely strong support for the idea that men should be involved in improving their local community.

These results suggest that men are feeling uncertain about their role and portrayal in society, and that there is a lot of pressure upon them to behave in a certain way. It is extremely interesting to note the almost unanimous agreement that men should be contributing more to improving the life of their locality.

Theme 11: Support

This final theme - Support - was the largest and consisted of seven statements. The main focus was on the need for/sources of emotional support for men.

In terms of the need for support, nearly three quarters of men disagreed with the statement that "men need less emotional support than women" (Q27). This was a feature across all the different groups of men. There was even more unequivocal disagreement with the statement that "men shouldn't ask for help even if they've got a problem" (Q40). Having highlighted that men do need emotional support, and should be asking for this help, the next set of questions in this theme sought to identify sources of emotional support.

Other men were seen as possible support networks - nearly two thirds of men agreed that "it's good to talk to other men about personal problems" (Q15). Leading on from this, approximately four out of five men agreed, to some degree, that "it's useful for fathers to talk to **other fathers**" (Q24). Although half of the men interviewed agreed that "**religion** can be a source of comfort and support for men" (Q7), nearly 30% were undecided. Results varied by age, relationship status, location and sexual orientation - but not between Catholic and Protestant men. There was very little support for the idea that "**men's groups** are only for weak and sappy men" (Q37) - thus identifying another possible vehicle for emotional support. However, on the negative side, there was very strong agreement that "support services are geared towards women" (Q17). This perception needs to be addressed.

These responses suggest that men want and need to find support. Possible avenues are other men, other fathers, men's groups, and possibly religion. These would seem to endorse a "self-help" approach, perhaps due to the perceived lack of provision by external support services.

3.4 Cluster analysis

Cluster analysis is a statistical technique which is used to identify relatively similar groups of respondents whose attributes are close enough that they tend to 'cluster' together. In this study, cluster analysis was used to try to identify 'clusters' of men whose attitudes were very similar. This usefully identified two groups of men: Cluster A and Cluster B. Since only one man was identified as being in Cluster C, this was omitted, as were the men who did not give responses to all statements (Q1 to Q40).

Category	Number of men
Cluster A	246
Cluster B	310
Cluster C	1
Missing	75

An exploration of the background variables for these two groups identified the following features:

Cluster A	Cluster B
More like to be Protestant	More likely to be Catholic or from no religious community
More likely to be single	More likely to be in a relationship/married or separated/divorced
More likely to live in a town or the country	More likely to live in a city
More likely to be straight No gay men	Less likely to be straight - all gay men were in this group
Most likely to be in young (15-18) age group or over 50	More likely to be aged 30-49
More likely to be retired or a student	More likely to be employed/self employed

This confirms some of the points arising from the previous analysis of results. For example, attitudes for single men, younger men and men with no children were very similar - presumably because younger men are more likely to be single. Similarly, as reflects the general population, Protestant men tended to be older than Catholic men.

Examination of the attitudes of these two clusters shows that members of Cluster A tended to be more undecided about their attitudes. For example, 28% of Cluster A were undecided about their opinion to statement 35 (i.e. "some men are abused by their partners"), compared to 9% of Cluster B. Although attitudes between the two clusters were often similar, they especially diverged in relation to attitudes to sexuality. While 59% of men in Cluster B agreed or strongly agreed to statement 20 (i.e. "being gay or bisexual is as natural as being straight"), 70% of men in Cluster A disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, this is probably because all gay men were within Cluster B. 42% of Cluster A also disagreed in some way that "men need less emotional support than women" (statement 27), compared to 83% of men in Cluster B.

3.5 Open Question Responses

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to submit any other comments about men's work/issues. In total, 139 respondents offered some additional information. This represents approximately 22% of the total number of participants. Most of these comments are listed in Appendix 3.

The submissions made can be categorised under three broad headings:

- 1) Congratulations to the organisers on breaking new ground by conducting this study (not included in Appendix 3).
- 2) Miscellaneous comments about the structure and focus of the questionnaire itself.
- 3) Personal experience/feelings about men's work, needs and issues.

The most dominant themes which arose under the last heading were the need for support for men and a desire for increased equality of treatment/opportunity between men and women. These comments accounted for over half of all responses tendered. Classifying the information submitted under the themes utilised in Section 3.3 of this report - and quoting some of the Open Question responses - reveals that:

Emotions and feelings

There was general agreement that men need to move towards being more open and accepting about displaying their emotions and feelings if they are to *"find inner peace and happiness"*. It was felt that to do this men need *"to have more self-expression"* and, as one respondent said, *"I learn to be closer to myself when I engage in a respectful way with other men. I reduce my alienation brought on through competition. I risk my vulnerability and challenge my myths about being a man"*. For the future, there was a hope that there would be *"more groups for emotional support and more understanding that men have feelings too that they bottle-up"*. There was also a recognition that *"90% of men do not grow up"*. However, although there was a *"hope that men move away from all that macho, violent shite"* there was also an acknowledgement that *"it's drummed into boys that it is sissy to talk about their feelings"*.

Employment and education

One person argued that *"Leaving Certs etc. appear more important to authorities than experience"* and that *"being male, and not having any particular career plans, has left me feeling helpless, especially regarding savings, pension plans, etc. I think it is assumed that once someone has been ushered through school that afterwards they suddenly become driven"*. It was also obvious for some respondents that *"many men need education on life issues"*.

The traditional view that *"people value men's wallets more than the man"* was challenged by one participant, while others suggested that *"men need more breaks in their working life"* and that *"men in work situations have no confidential service to discuss problems"*.

However, a number of respondents focused upon how men felt uncomfortable and/or discriminated against in the workplace e.g. *"men ... feel wary about their actions around female staff as this is often mistakenly labelled as harassment. Harassment laws are so vague and one-sided that once harassment is 'called' it is difficult to prove otherwise"* or *"in my last job I was in confrontation with female, single, feminist colleague and treated unfairly. Management didn't see my side. She was treated differently as she was female. I was portrayed as a trouble-maker and treated accordingly"*. Another man commented that *"nursing could be a good career for a man if the female ethos was challenged"*.

Equality

There was general consensus that *“men and women should be treated as equally as possible”* and that *“it is very stupid separating men from women, because they are equal”*. This was argued by one person on the grounds that *“gender is a construction; men and women have much in common as humans”* and by another who said *“there should be less emphasis on either sex and more on people”*. This was seen to be the case since *“many real issues are of importance to men and women”* and there was a recognition that *“there is a role for both men’s and women’s groups, but they should coordinate and cooperate where appropriate”*. Equality should be real and, one person added, *“tokenism is fraud and counter-productive”*.

However, promoting equality issues was often seen as benefiting women only. Indeed, there was a strong sense among many respondents that *“society, as a whole, is being shaped more along feminine lines - often to the benefit of society, but undermining any sense that the male tradition is important too”*. It was stated that this may bring problems as *“there is a risk that positive discrimination in favour of women ... will lead to negative discrimination against men - particularly against those without the skills to represent themselves adequately”*.

There was a body of respondents who felt that men are unfairly treated:

- *“Very seldom has the law had compassion towards men and almost 90% of women get away with anything with a drop of crocodile tears”*.
- *“When it comes to being homeless, women will be helped more as it is okay for men as they are tough. That is the abuse of most government departments”*.
- *“I wish the legal profession would recognise men as human beings with rights and feelings, and would give them their human rights”*.
- *“There should be the same provisions made for the problems of males as those of females”*.

This sense of inequality was also exacerbated by the feeling that *“despite campaigning for equality, I feel many women who are involved in ‘women’s groups’ resent ‘men’s groups’ of any description”*.

Family

Many men recognised the significance of their role as fathers although there was also an acknowledgement that some men might not fully appreciate their responsibilities: *“I feel that men do not realise how important it is being a father to their children”*.

There was, however, a strong sense that men need support and equal treatment within the family arena if they are to play a fully involved part in the development of their children. This was reflected in comments such as: *“there is a disparity between maternity and paternity leave. I would hope there is an increase in the minimum wage, paternity leave and a reduction in the number of working hours. I also would like to see the needs of single male parents acknowledged”* ... *“Unmarried men need more advice about their paternity rights”* ... *“I feel strongly about Paternity Leave which isn’t long enough”* ... *“Men should have more family law rights”* ...

Health and leisure

The themes of Health and Leisure have been merged to reflect the nature of the comments which tended to associate these two strands. Overall, there was a sense that men need to/should look after their health more. However, there was also a recognition that men, themselves, must take some responsibility for this change and that information/structures need to be put in place to support this development. Typical comments included:

- “Men can be encouraged to 'shut up and get on with it' and not deal with any problems. This needs to be addressed for men to develop a sense of well being”.
- *“Need more men's groups, particularly promoting healthy life. Use leisure activities to improve general fitness/health. Need support services aimed at men. Men should take more interest in health, working together/sharing problems”.*
- *“Men do not go for regular cancer tests like women. There are many men under stress at work and home with very little help/guidance. Most magazines relate to women's issues not men's. Stress and suicide should be talked about openly to men and male teenagers”.*
- *“Doctors don't have hours on the weekend, so if we want to see one, we need to take time off work and we lose money. I think that this may keep many people from going to the doctor”.*
- *“There are plenty of Well Women's Clinics. What about a Well Man's Clinic?”*
- *“Men do not know there is so much help out there available to them unless they have a drink or drug problem. They keep it in to themselves. If it was better known it would help” ...*

Masculine identity

Overall, there was consensus that things should change/are changing for men in terms of how they see masculinity. This was articulated by one person as: *“the attitudes of men are constantly changing for the better: they are wheeling prams, taking children for a walk or to/from school. This would have happened very little in the past. I feel that men have come a long way, but have a long way to go”.* Another person recognised this development, but also sought to attribute some rationale to how some men get a sense of role/place: *“a lot of Irish rural males are what their mother made them - mother stayed at home and did all the cooking and cleaning. Current males are being taught differently”.*

Others recognised the problems that ‘traditional masculinity’ may present: *“men are slow to trust. They are taught from an early age what not to be. Feminine things are labelled as such”.* Simultaneously, others pointed out that even within this structure, not all males are seen as equal: *“disabled men are seen as being less than other men and come out bottom of the pile”.* However, there were also some positive messages for the future: *“hopefully one day all men will show tolerance and understanding instead of discrimination and aggression as a means to solve a problem”.*

Relationships

Although one person commented that *“I hope that men and women will look at each other with respect in the future”*, the vast majority of feedback requested more empathy and support for men in the area of relationships:

- *“Disabled men need more support with regard to relationships and other issues”.*
- *“Men can always look secure on the outside, but inside the hurt is always the same as a woman's. I am especially worried about my current relationship breaking up. It's not just women that worry about those things.*
- *“Men should have more support in marriage break-ups. They are not always at fault, but in most cases come out worse and lose homes and children. It seems that the law takes the side of women. Social services are biased when dealing with marriage problems”.*
- *“If a man hits a woman it's assault. If a woman hits a man it's funny. This is the common view of violence in a relationship. Cases are biased in favour of females as they are seen as the ‘weaker sex’. Yet males can be physically and mentally battered by their partner too”.*

Sexuality

Only two respondents commented upon this area. One saw being gay as *“a regrettable reality in the genes and these persons should be treated with respect”* while the other, even more offensively, suggested that *“all gays and bisexuals should be killed”*.

Society

One person pointed out that: *“our beliefs/attitudes are influenced by this sexist/racist society”*, while another suggested a way in which this might be remedied: *“leadership among key/visible/media men would help many others to break the mould”*. This desire for change in the way society perceives/treats men was echoed by a number of respondents through comments such as: *“hard men shouldn't be given a lot of respect in the community. Sadly, they are”* and *“in the future I would like to see men not seen as the bane of all problems - social, family, cultural and family break-up”*.

A number of hopes for the future were also articulated:

- *“I hope men will become better able to deal with domestic and social problems and will be supported by the community in which they live”*.
- *“I hope that society becomes more fair and that community groups become more male-friendly”*.
- *“I hope men show more social responsibility and self awareness”*.
- *“As young man, I feel society needs to address men's issues - men in marriage, as a father figure, in the workplace ... When the general public are mature enough to know the answers the human balance can be restored”*.

Support

This area attracted the vast majority of comments. As one person put it: *“everybody, male or female, needs support at some time - should it be a group or a single person”*. Yet, there was also a recognition of how difficult it is for men to admit this: *“asking for help can be frightening as well as humiliating. It takes a brave person to admit that something is wrong and an even braver one to change things. We should be less ready to ridicule and more willing to support those men who want fuller lives”*. However, there was also a definite sense that this support is, at best, unpublicised and, at worst, missing for men. This was reflected in statements such as:

- *“The only support groups that I know of are for men with problems”*.
- *“There is not enough support available to men and, if there is, it should be better advertised. There should be easier access to information on men's groups”*.
- *“Need more support geared specifically at men”*.
- *“The support available for men needs be promoted more and made public. The more we see and hear about these issues the easier it will be to talk about them”*.
- *“Men's groups - I have never heard of any. Where are they? What are they?” ...*

This frustration was accentuated by a sense that more support is available to/geared towards women: *“support groups e.g. bereavement counselling post-miscarriage are very much geared towards the woman - to the detriment of the male partner” ... “the female ethos, from personal experience, has deeply permeated ante-natal classes. Men should be included in a more supportive way”*.

A huge amount of respondents referred to men's groups as the main vehicle to deliver the support that they needed. One person asserted that *"men's groups do exist, but they're often dressed in different ways e.g. rugby/soccer clubs and teams; Masons; Orange/Hibernian Orders etc. These reflect a need for men to bond"*. However, many others felt that specifically designed men's groups could offer positive change such as: *"challenge traditional male behaviour" ... "bring men's issues to the forefront and bring equality to society and to the matrimonial law framework" ... "release anger and resentment which otherwise wouldn't be dealt with which can create havoc later" ... "act as an alternative to going to pubs or becoming a couch potato" ... "be a useful forum to share and listen to the views of others" ... "provide an outlet for personal/family problems" ... "give men a chance to express themselves and talk openly to each other" ... "provide a means of support and political lobbying" ... "give an opportunity for like-minded men to discuss issues in a safe environment" ...* There was a strong sense that these groups must be backed by government and policy-makers.

However, other respondents saw some of the limitations of/stigma attached to men's groups:

- *"There should be a need for men's groups, rather than just setting them up for the sake of it"*.
- *"Men's groups are needed - but some get carried away with unimportant things"*.
- *"Men's groups are not productive unless targetting specific issues. Men's groups are perceived as wishy washy"*.
- *"Men's groups are useful in promoting male awareness, but can be seen as sissy"*.
- *"It's unrealistic to expect men to participate in groups with strangers - need to get to know/trust each other through activities in informal settings"*.
- *"A misconception of men's groups by some might be that they represent homosexuals"*.
- *"The term 'men's group' imparts a stigma. Why would a man join one? They're just what women do"*.
- *"Men's groups are needed, but their image is too effeminate"*.
- *"It is probably very important to have more male support workers within men's help groups to help overcome the strong negative stigma"*.
- *"As men do not talk to each other about their true feelings in the same way as women, it is doubtful they would use support groups" ...*

A few respondents were against the concept of men's groups on the basis that they may be *"Trojan Horses for the feminisation/marginalisation of men"* and that their *"group members are personally inadequate"*. Some of these people felt that men should be self-reliant and not seek external remedies or the help of a *"Nanny State which perpetuates passengers for society"*.

4. FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This research project does not provide a fail-safe template for future work with men. However, it was never meant to. From the outset, The Male Link recognised the resource limitations that, ultimately, bounded the scope of topics covered, the number of respondents solicited and the sampling techniques adopted. This study did, though, meet its original aim of providing baseline feedback on local men's views about themselves and the world that they live in. It also highlighted a range of issues which need to be tackled. Subsequently, this is a starting point for further investigation rather than an end product.

Based upon the outcomes of this study, the Research Sub-Group recommends that the following issues should be addressed in the future:

- ❖ **FURTHER RESEARCH ...** Due to limited resources, this project lacked scientific rigour. However, this is still an under-researched area and there is an urgent need for further investigation into men's attitudes and values, as well as mechanisms to engage men in support programmes.
- ❖ **CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES ...** There was consensus that men are often portrayed in a negative light by the media and that males' expectations and opportunities are limited by stereotypes. There is a need for a high profile "Positive Messages For Men" campaign which challenges this negative imagery (and homophobia) and allows men to visualise/ identify with other possibilities for their life. This should help to free men rather than create new 'ideal types' to conform to. It should also present a message that "it's OK to fail".
- ❖ **WORKPLACE ...** Despite indicating that they no longer see "breadwinning" as a primary role for men, many respondents felt that it is very difficult for them to take on roles and tasks traditionally associated with women. One way to overcome this would be to have a proactive recruitment drive to encourage males to enter workplaces which are predominantly populated by females e.g. nursing, primary school teaching, child care etc. This will require a change in the public mind-set which may perceive men as uncaring and/or fears them as potential abusers and rapists.
- ❖ **EQUALITY ...** The need for genuine gender equality was a major issue for many men. There was a strong sense that this should seek to protect the rights of human beings and not focus solely on the rights of women. Many men felt that they had been/were being discriminated against because of their sex. This was seen to be particularly true within family law and employment scenarios. Existing laws and legal procedures need to be systematically screened to ensure that they treat all parties fairly and do not merely reflect a bias towards either sex. Public bodies formulating Equality Schemes should also actively seek to consult with men as a discrete group who have distinct experiences, concerns and needs.
- ❖ **FATHERHOOD ...** Many men recognised the important role that fathers play in the lives of their children. More positive recognition needs to be given to this to counter the image of fathers as disinterested absentees whose only function is to be a "pay packet". Alongside this, structures need to be put in place to allow fathers to play a more active part in the development of their children e.g. access to paid Paternity Leave, a decrease in working hours/increase in hourly rate of pay, support for divorced and separated fathers, systems to ensure fair/meaningful contact between children and their parents after separation, fathers' parenting education groups etc.

- ❖ **HEALTH ...** There was a strong feeling that men should look after their health and personal well-being more. Yet, this is another area where stated preference does not, necessarily, equate to action. Men's health should become a priority area of intervention. However, creative and innovative pilot projects must be undertaken to help determine appropriate means to engage men. This might involve Saturday/evening clinics at GP's Surgeries, mobile health check units at workplaces, specific "Well Man" clinics, community-based men's health days, creative alternatives to going to the pub etc. Within this strategy, support for men's mental health is crucial.
- ❖ **SELF-EXPRESSION ...** Contrary to the public stereotype, respondents indicated that males do see the value of expressing their feelings and want/need support. However, this motivation rarely seems to translate from aspiration into practical action. Pilot projects need to be established to see how this could be addressed.
- ❖ **SUPPORT ...** Although there was a strong feeling that support services are geared towards women, many men felt that they, too, need support. They viewed other men/fathers, men's groups and the churches as some potential allies. This gives a mandate for further development in these fora. However, to date, most men's support is offered by the voluntary and community sector and very few specific services for men are organised by the statutory sector. This may be because men often present themselves as being in control/do not ask for help, or because support providers have not recognised the need, or because men are seen as a low priority in terms of resource allocation. Either way, a crisis is imminent and there is an urgent need for action in this area. As a starting point, support could usefully be offered to fathers, victims of violence (both inside and outside the home), men who have recently had a trauma in their life (e.g. bereavement, illness, loss of job, relationship break-down etc.), gay/bisexual men and disabled men.
- ❖ **COMMUNITY ...** There was overwhelming support for the idea that men should be involved in improving their local community yet, in practice, males may be conspicuously absent from such activity. Trial projects should look at how the skills and expertise of men can be better utilised in community development initiatives, and how this largely untapped resource can be accessed.
- ❖ **NETWORKS AND BEST PRACTICE ...** Men's work/issues is in its infancy in the north of Ireland. As such, it is fragile and on a steep learning curve. However, this is not the case in all parts of the world. The enthusiasm currently around needs to be nurtured and sustained. This might be achieved by encouraging networking between interested people, sharing experience and resources, and by collecting best practice from both national and international sources.
- ❖ **RESOURCES ...** At present, there are few resources invested in men's work/issues - despite the emerging awareness of the need for action. This situation should be addressed as a matter of urgency. There is enthusiasm to promote change, but little means to initiate it. When seeking financial support to undertake this research project it became clear that although many potential funders will underwrite "Gender Equality" or "Gender Issues" programmes, they see these terms as being synonymous with women's work and issues. However, there is a danger that the need for resources to develop men's work will compete with the demands of women for resources to establish/maintain/expand their area of concern. This will, inevitably, lead to mistrust and competition between these interests and must be avoided. Meaningful, long-term work can only be achieved through cooperation and complementary development between men and women. Consequently, the development of one group cannot be at the expense of the other.

APPENDIX 1: ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you very much for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. It will probably only take you about fifteen to twenty minutes to fill it in, but your answers will help us for a long time in the future! Before you begin to look at the questions, please take a few moments to read the following information as it will help you to understand why we are doing this survey and what we would like you to do ...

What Is The Male Link?

The Male Link is a voluntary network of individuals and groups throughout the northern counties. Members share a common belief that it is important to increase awareness of the issues facing all local men and seek to encourage practical projects to meet these needs.

Why Do An Attitudes Survey?

Although males make up almost half of our population, very little is actually known about their attitudes and opinions. At best, we make assumptions about their thoughts and, at worst, we rely on stereotypes that are passed from one generation to the next. Today, there are many new projects being developed for local males of all ages. Yet until we get some idea of how males feel about a range of issues, these programmes will be "working in the dark". This questionnaire hopes to give us some basic feedback about the attitudes and values of males who live in our community.

Who Will Be Taking Part In This Survey?

The Male Link are asking all the groups and individuals that they have contact with to complete a questionnaire and/or pass them out to others. This will include people from all backgrounds and interest groups in the north of Ireland e.g. young/old, town/country, gay/straight, working/unemployed, disabled/able-bodied etc. However, only males aged 15 years and over are being asked to participate. We hope to gather the responses of at least 500 people. This survey will, therefore, be one of the biggest ever pieces of research on local men.

Is This Like A Test?

This survey is not like a test. There are no right or wrong answers - you will only be asked to give your opinions about a range of subjects. You don't have to be really smart to take part, because this is about your views not your knowledge.

What Are The Questions About?

There are two main parts to this questionnaire:

- 1) The next page asks you to give a "Personal Profile" of yourself. This will help us to ensure that we have managed to get responses from a good cross-section of males. If we can't do this, the survey will be biased.
- 2) Pages 3 and 4 are the main part of the questionnaire. We have given a list of forty statements and you are asked to state how you feel about these. To do this there is a scale of options ranging from "Strongly Agree" (1) to "Strongly Disagree" (5). You circle whichever number represents your views. At the very end of this paper there is also an "Open Question" where you can write a couple of lines about issues which you feel are important.

Almost all the questions only ask you to tick a box or circle a number. Please try to answer all the questions and give your first thoughts on each statement. Don't spend a lot of time weighing-up your answers. There aren't any hidden catches.

Will Anyone Know Who I Am?

You will not be asked for your name, so you will remain anonymous. The code at the top of this page refers to the person who distributed this questionnaire for The Male Link not the person who completed it.

Any Other Questions?

If there's anything else you would like to know please contact:

- Colin Fowler (The Men's Project) - Belfast 310891
- Nuala Brady (Young Men and Positive Mental Health Project) - Ballybofey, Co. Donegal 32335
- Shirley Ewart (Research Student, Magee College) - Derry/Londonderry 375439

Personal Profile/Information

Only tick one box for each question - give the answer which best describes you

LOCATION:

a) Which county do you live in at the moment?

Antrim	
Armagh	
Cavan	
Derry / Londonderry	
Donegal	
Down	
Fermanagh	
Leitrim	
Louth	
Meath	
Monaghan	
Sligo	
Tyrone	
Other (please specify)	

b) Do you live in ...

A City	
A Town	
A Village	
The Countryside	

AGE:

Which age group do you belong to?

15 - 18 years	
19 - 29 years	
30 - 39 years	
40 - 49 years	
50 - 59 years	
60 - 69 years	
70 - 79 years	
Over 80 years old	

IDENTITY:

Do you see yourself as being ...

Straight / Heterosexual	
Gay / Homosexual	
Bisexual	

RELATIONSHIPS:

Are you currently ...

Single	
In a relationship / married	
Separated / divorced	
Widowed	

CHILDREN:

How many children/stepchildren do you have?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE:

Do you ...

Live alone	
Live with parents	
Live with partner	
Live with partner and children	
Live with children	
Share accommodation with others	
Other (please specify)	

EMPLOYMENT STATUS:

Are you currently ...

Employed / Self-Employed	
Unemployed	
Student	
Retired	
On a Training Course	
A full-time carer (e.g. looking after children or relatives etc.)	
Out of work long-term on health grounds	
Other (please specify)	

PERCEIVED BACKGROUND:

Would you see yourself as belonging to ...

The Roman Catholic community	
The Protestant community	
Another Religious community (please specify)	
No religious community	
I do not wish to answer this question	

COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE:

Did you complete this questionnaire ...

On your own	
With the help of someone else	

Statements

Below is a list of forty statements. Some of these you might agree with and others you might even find offensive. These statements are designed to provoke a response. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the survey organisers. We would like you to tell us what your attitude is to each statement by **circling one of the numbers** from 1 - 5 ...

- 1** = you **Strongly Agree** with the statement
2 = you **Agree** with the statement, but not very strongly
3 = you are **Undecided** and can't make up your mind
4 = you **Disagree** with the statement, but not very strongly
5 = you **Strongly Disagree** with the statement

... As we said on the first page, please try to answer all the questions and give your first thoughts on each statement. Don't spend a lot of time weighing-up your answers. There aren't any hidden catches. We just want to hear your opinions.

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
1. Real men don't cry	1	2	3	4	5
2. Men can care for children equally as well as women	1	2	3	4	5
3. The media portray men in a negative way	1	2	3	4	5
4. Men and women should always be treated equally	1	2	3	4	5
5. The man should be the chief breadwinner in a household	1	2	3	4	5
6. Hard men are given a lot of respect in our community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Religion can be a source of comfort and support for men	1	2	3	4	5
8. Male friends should feel free to show physical affection to each other	1	2	3	4	5
9. You should only go to the doctor when there is something seriously wrong	1	2	3	4	5
10. Going to the pub is a good way to relax	1	2	3	4	5
11. After separation/divorce, children should stay with their mother	1	2	3	4	5
12. It's good to show your sensitive side	1	2	3	4	5
13. Women don't understand men	1	2	3	4	5
14. Work experience is more important than education when getting a job	1	2	3	4	5
15. It's good to talk to other men about personal problems	1	2	3	4	5
16. Men can be discriminated against because they are men	1	2	3	4	5
17. Support services are geared towards women	1	2	3	4	5
18. Men's lives would be better if they looked after themselves more	1	2	3	4	5
19. Talking about your feelings is OK	1	2	3	4	5
20. Being gay or bisexual is as natural as being straight	1	2	3	4	5
21. Football is a man's sport	1	2	3	4	5
22. It's more acceptable for a man to sleep around than a woman	1	2	3	4	5
23. Sometimes suicide is the only escape from life's problems	1	2	3	4	5
24. It's useful for fathers to talk to other fathers	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. It's harder to be seen as a "real man" if you are disabled | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Men should be involved in improving their local community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Men need less emotional support than women | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Men use their power to threaten each other | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. There's a lot of pressure on men to behave in a certain way | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. It's better to be on your own than in a relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Straight, gay and bisexual men should all be treated equally | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Sometimes you don't do things in case you fail | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Family law upholds the rights of women more than men | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. Nursing is a good career for a man | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Some men are abused by their partners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. A man gets stick if he doesn't drink alcohol in the pub | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. "Men's Groups" are only for weak and sappy men | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. It's more difficult for men to take on traditional female roles than vice-versa | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Men's health is not taken seriously by the Health Services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Men shouldn't ask for help even if they've got a problem | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

OTHER COMMENTS

This questionnaire does not cover everything to do with men. Subsequently, there may be other comments or suggestions that you would like to make about men's work/issues. If you would like to add anything further (for example, your opinion of "Men's Groups"; support available to men; hopes for men in the future etc.) please use the box below. However, only use this space if there is something you really want to say. Please don't feel obliged to fill the box for the sake of it!

Thank You Very Much For Taking The Time To Help Us!

APPENDIX 2: FREQUENCY TABLES

A. Personal Profile/Information

Which county do you live in at the moment?

	Number	%
Antrim	145	23
Down	110	18
Armagh	106	17
Derry / L'Derry	90	14
Donegal	59	9
Leitrim	35	6
Fermanagh	24	4
Sligo	20	3
Tyrone	17	3
Dublin	6	<1
Meath	3	<1
Tipperary	3	<1
Cavan	2	<1
Carlow	2	<1
Louth	1	<1
Clare	1	<1
Cork	1	<1
Kildare	1	<1
Kilkenny	1	<1
Waterford	1	<1
n	628	

Do you live in ...?

	Number	%
A city	204	34
A town	226	38
A village	67	11
The countryside	104	17
n	601	

Age group

	Number	%
15 - 18 years	52	9
19 - 29 years	165	27
30 - 39 years	140	23
40 - 49 years	160	26
50 - 59 years	79	13
60 - 69 years	11	2
70 - 79 years	6	1
n	613	

Identity

	Number	%
Straight / Heterosexual	576	94
Gay / Homosexual	25	4
Bisexual	10	2
n	611	

Relationships

	Number	%
Single	210	34
In a relationship / married	361	59
Separated / divorced	38	6
Widowed	4	<1
n	613	

Number of children

	Number	%
0	238	48
1	54	11
2	85	17
3	58	12
4	33	7
5	9	2
6 or more	22	4
n	499	

Note: It could be assumed that many of the 133 people who did not answer this question had no children

Household structure

	Number	%
Live alone	100	16
Live with parents	139	23
Live with partner	90	15
Live with partner and children	203	33
Live with children	9	2
Share accommodation with others	63	10
Other	4	<1
n	608	

Employment status

	Number	%
Employed / self employed	423	69
Unemployed	63	10
Student	52	9
Retired	18	3
On a training course	20	3
A full-time carer (e.g. looking after children or relatives etc.)	2	<1
Out of work long-term on health grounds	33	5
Other	1	<1
n	612	

Perceived background

	Number	%
Roman Catholic community	295	48
The Protestant community	197	32
Another religious community	10	2
No religious community	94	15
I do not wish to answer this question	16	3
n	612	

Completing the questionnaire

	Number	%
On your own	603	98
With the help of someone else	10	2
n	613	

Note: Figures do not always add up to 100 due to rounding

B. Attitudes to Statements

Statement	%					n
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Q1 Real men don't cry	6	6	9	29	50	629
Q2 Men can care for children equally as well as women	44	27	14	11	5	631
Q3 The media portray men in a negative way	18	22	35	18	7	624
Q4 Men and women should always be treated equally	68	14	7	6	6	628
Q5 The man should be the chief breadwinner in a household	8	10	16	25	41	628
Q6 Hard men are given a lot of respect in our community	15	25	13	21	26	626
Q7 Religion can be a source of comfort and support for men	22	28	29	11	11	630
Q8 Male friends should feel free to show physical affection to each other	20	29	20	15	17	626
Q9 You should only go to the doctor when there is something seriously wrong	14	17	9	28	32	630
Q10 Going to the pub is a good way to relax	28	32	17	13	10	631
Q11 After separation/divorce, children should stay with their mother	8	8	33	23	29	630
Q12 It's good to show your sensitive side	39	38	15	5	4	629
Q13 Women don't understand men	18	24	27	20	11	624
Q14 Work experience is more important than education when getting a job	16	20	26	24	14	629
Q15 It's good to talk to other men about personal problems	27	38	23	8	5	629
Q16 Men can be discriminated against because they are men	29	32	21	11	7	629
Q17 Support services are geared towards women	30	36	19	10	6	631
Q18 Men's lives would be better if they looked after themselves more	33	40	14	7	6	630
Q19 Talking about your feelings is OK	50	36	8	4	3	630
Q20 Being gay or bisexual is as natural as being straight	19	19	18	18	26	629
Q21 Football is a man's sport	17	17	18	26	22	628

Q22	It's more acceptable for a man to sleep around than a woman	15	20	15	16	34	629
Q23	Sometimes suicide is the only escape from life's problems	8	9	9	15	59	630
Q24	It's useful for fathers to talk to other fathers	44	34	13	5	3	631
Q25	It's harder to be seen as a "real man" if you are disabled	22	26	17	15	20	628
Q26	Men should be involved in improving their local community	54	33	9	2	2	628
Q27	Men need less emotional support than women	8	13	14	29	36	627
Q28	Men use their power to threaten each other	32	41	14	9	3	624
Q29	There's a lot of pressure on men to behave in a certain way	33	40	16	7	4	626
Q30	It's better to be on your own than in a relationship	6	4	22	28	40	627
Q31	Straight, gay and bisexual men should all be treated equally	46	21	15	6	12	626
Q32	Sometimes you don't do things in case you fail	24	40	14	11	11	625
Q33	Family law upholds the rights of women more than men	30	28	28	10	4	626
Q34	Nursing is a good career for a man	27	38	23	7	5	626
Q35	Some men are abused by their partners	35	42	17	4	2	626
Q36	A man gets stick if he doesn't drink alcohol in the pub	15	28	18	23	16	626
Q37	"Men's Groups" are only for weak and sappy men	8	7	16	27	43	625
Q38	It's more difficult for men to take on traditional female roles than vice-versa	20	33	23	14	11	627
Q39	Men's health is not taken seriously by the Health Services	13	23	24	24	16	627
Q40	Men shouldn't ask for help even if they've got a problem	7	3	5	18	68	627

Note: Figures do not always add up to 100 due to rounding

APPENDIX 3: RESPONSES TO OPEN QUESTION

In total, 139 respondents offered some additional information in the "Open Question" section. However, this sometimes merely congratulated The Male Link on conducting this research rather than commenting on the current situation for men or offering any ideas about the development of men's work. The contributions which did offer some personal experience/feelings/suggestions are presented below in the order in which they were inputted:

- The support available for men needs to be promoted more and made public. The more we see and hear about these issues the easier it will be to talk about them. We become accustomed to the society we live in. Our beliefs/attitudes are influenced by this sexist/racist society.
- As a young man, I feel society needs to address men's issues - men in marriage, as a father figure, in the workplace ... When the general public are mature enough to know the answers the human balance can be restored.
- I feel that there is a need for more active male support groups.
- Leadership among key/visible/media men would help many others to break the mould.
- A lot of Irish rural males are what their mother made them - mother stayed at home and did all the cooking and cleaning. Current males are being taught differently.
- Why is it that Leaving Certs etc. appear more important to authorities than experience?
- The questions show prejudice and are loaded. Men's group members are personally inadequate and does it do their members any good to join them?
- Some of the above statements might demand different answers in different contexts.
- Men and women should be treated as equally as possible. Only biological/physical differences should have an effect on how a man/woman is treated.
- There should be more emphasis on mood altering drug abuse in men's groups.
- I learn to be closer to myself when I engage in a respectful way with other men. I reduce my alienation brought on through competition. I risk my vulnerability and challenge my myths about being a man.
- It's unrealistic to expect men to participate in groups with strangers – they need to get to know/trust each other through activities in informal settings. Men are slow to trust. They are taught from an early age what not to be. Feminine things are labelled as such.
- There are beginnings of shifts in the way men live their lives. I work as part of the health service and there are healthy changes afoot - the way the service is interacting with men and the way "men's issues" are being dealt with.
- Many real issues are of importance to men and women. Single sex approaches work in some but not all cases and should be applied only where they are most likely to be effective. There is a role for both men's and women's groups, but they should coordinate and cooperate where appropriate.
- Men do not go for regular cancer tests like women. There are many men under stress at work and home with very little help/guidance. Most magazines relate to women's issues not men's. Stress and suicide should be talked about openly to men and male teenagers.
- There is a risk that positive discrimination in favour of women (e.g. to redress imbalance in employment) will lead to negative discrimination against men - particularly against those without the skills to represent themselves adequately.
- Support groups e.g. bereavement counselling post-miscarriage are very much geared towards the woman - to the detriment of the male partner. Society, as a whole, is being shaped more along feminine lines - often to the benefit of society but undermining any sense that the male tradition is important too.
- There should be more support for men who have children or relations with disabilities as often they are not given support or help.

- If a man hits a woman it's assault. If a woman hits a man it's funny . This is the common view of violence in a relationship. Cases are biased in favour of females as they are seen as the "weaker sex". Yet males can be physically and mentally battered by their partner too.
- I think men are superior to women in some ways and women are superior in others. So at the end of the day they're equal.
- "Men's groups" do exist, but they're often dressed in different ways e.g. rugby/soccer clubs and teams; Masons; Orange/Hibernian Orders etc. These reflect a need for men to bond.
- Men in the workplace feel wary about their actions around female staff as this is often mistakenly labelled as harassment. Harassment laws are so vague and one-sided that once harassment is 'called' it is difficult to prove otherwise.
- Some statements seem to invite stereotypical responses, tending to suggest a prescribed response.
- Both men and women can get support for group sporting activities.
- Men's Groups play an essential role in the community. They bring men's issues to the forefront and bring equality to society and to the matrimonial law framework.
- It's probably very important to have more male support workers within men's help groups to help overcome the strong negative stigma.
- I feel that men do not realise how important it is being a father to their children.
- Life is a lot harder for men than it is for women.
- I would like to see more men in work and people not giving the job to the person because it's a nice looking woman. When it comes to being homeless women will be helped more, as it is okay for men as they are tough. That is the abuse of most government departments.
- Men's groups are good because men can share in confidence and release anger and resentment which otherwise wouldn't be dealt with which can create havoc later.
- Men are more likely to bully and intimidate other men in work after they have dominated/bullied/ harassed women. Women are more likely to bully other women before turning to men.
- Some of the above answers reflect my views on the way things are and not necessarily the way I think they should be. Hard men shouldn't be given a lot of respect in the community. Sadly, they are.
- The changing expectations of the role of 'father' is difficult to adjust to - work at home, work at work - no rest!
- Hard men are feared in their communities.
- A misconception of 'men's groups' by some might be that they represent homosexuals.
- Doctors don't have hours on the weekend, so if we want to see one, we need to take time off work and we lose money. I think that this may keep many people from going to the doctor.
- Men can always look secure on the outside, but inside the hurt is always the same as a woman's. I am especially worried about my current relationship breaking up. It's not just women that worry about those things.
- This survey contained lots of 'it depends' type of statements.
- If there are lots of men's groups out there, they are either not making young men aware of them or the information is not accessible enough.
- Men's groups are important as men need to realise the importance of talking about various issues. Men can be encouraged to 'shut up and get on with it' and not deal with any problems. This needs to be addressed for men to develop a sense of well being.
- It is very stupid separating men from women because they are equal.
- The power of religion/church life, particularly for Catholics, has not been good for men to explore issues around sexual health and other issues.
- Men in work situations have no confidential service to discuss problems. This should be addressed.
- I strongly support men's groups.

- If a man was abused sexually as a boy, does he live in fear that he may go on to abuse any of his children?
- The survey by nature is generalised. A lot depends on the person and how the questions are framed and the mood at the time of filling in the questions.
- There are plenty of Well Women's Clinics. What about a Well Man's Clinic?
- Disabled men are seen as being less than other men and come out bottom of the pile.
- These questions are very dependent on the group of males you spend time with.
- Being male, and not having any particular career plans, has left me feeling helpless, especially regarding savings, pension plans, etc. I think it is assumed that once someone has been ushered through school that afterwards they suddenly become driven.
- Men should have more support in marriage break-ups. They are not always at fault, but in most cases come out worse and lose homes and children. It seems that the law takes the side of women. Social services are biased when dealing with marriage problems.
- To clarify my position on gay men - in some cases the condition is a regrettable reality in the genes and these persons should be treated with respect.
- Hopefully one day all men will show tolerance and understanding instead of discrimination and aggression as a means to solve a problem. Perhaps if people had a personal code of ethics rather than following religious 'leaders.'
- Nursing could be a good career for a man if the female ethos was challenged. The female ethos, from personal experience, has deeply permeated ante-natal classes. Men should be included in a more supportive way.
- In my last job I was in confrontation with a female, single, feminist colleague and treated unfairly. Management didn't see my side. She was treated differently as she was female. I was portrayed as a trouble-maker and treated accordingly. Soon afterwards I was made redundant.
- All gays and bisexuals should be killed. There are enough females on this island to go around. Why spread disease and infection when it's children that suffer?
- Concerned about alcohol abuse, drug abuse, respect for persons and property and men being lazy.
- Important to be part of the community. All people should be self-reliant and keep a sensible life balance. "Nanny state" perpetuates passengers for society. Help in some circumstances. Should encourage family unit values. Many men need education on life issues.
- The ideal support is within yourself. Conditioning/socialisation of men emphasises external remedies. Focus is on social roles, physical action, success, job/income satisfaction. Know thyself. Gender is a construction. Men and women have much in common as humans.
- Everybody, male or female, needs support at some time - should it be a group or a single person e.g. doctor, counsellor, friend or family member - even if they don't realise that they are getting it.
- Men do not know there is so much help out there available to them unless they have a drink or drug problem. They keep it in to themselves. If it was better known it would help. Sometimes it's hard to be a woman. Sometimes it's harder to be a man.
- Men should help themselves more but this is made difficult by the media. There isn't enough support for men in the community. As they do not talk to each other about their true feelings in the same way as women, it is doubtful they would use support groups.
- Very seldom has the law had compassion towards men and almost 90% of women get away with anything with a drop of crocodile tears.
- In question 23 you talk of suicide being the only escape. What about alcohol?
- Men's groups - I have never heard of any. Where are they? What are they?
- I am fully supportive of men's groups and see them as an alternative to going to pubs or becoming a "couch potato".
- Macho men need support and should be encouraged to participate in men's groups.

- Men need support.
- In spite of "social laws" hormones are real. Males and females are interdependent. These groups should not be compartmentalised, but respected. Positive discrimination denies others their rights.
- 90% of men do not "grow up".
- Men's groups are a useful forum to share and listen to the views of others. In the future I would like to see men not seen as the bane of all problems - social, family, cultural and family break-up.
- If a male knows where to look, there is support. I hope that men and women will look at each other with respect in the future.
- Men's groups are slightly "cheesey" but do help some people.
- There is a need for men to have more self-expression and an ability to combine their "old male role" with modern virtues. Men should be able to use support services if they need to, but there is a stigma attached to this by society.
- I hope men will get equality in the future.
- I feel that there is not enough male support groups and those that do exist need financial backing and empowerment. Men need help with emotional, drug, family, mental health, suicide and family law problems. Men should have more family law rights.
- Men should be more like women when dealing with difficult issues such as family, work and health.
- Men need to find inner peace and happiness.
- There is not enough support available to men and, if there is, it should be better advertised. There should be easier access to information on men's groups.
- Asking for help can be frightening as well as humiliating. It takes a brave person to admit that something is wrong and an even braver one to change things. We should be less ready to ridicule and more willing to support those men who want fuller lives.
- There should be less emphasis on either sex and more on "people".
- People value men's wallets more than the man. Men need more breaks in their working life. Men feel safer being part of a group.
- My desire is that men's groups (for mental health and other disabilities) can share friendship and fellowship with men who are not considered disabled.
- Men have put their lives on the line to construct a civilised society. Now it is time for women to stop demanding and help to share this wealth with our fellow human beings and other creatures in the world.
- The attitudes of men are constantly changing for the better: they are wheeling prams, taking children for a walk or to/from school. This would have happened very little in the past. I feel that men have come a long way, but have a long way to go.
- What is an unreal man?
- I think it's important that more men's groups are set up, but it will take a lot longer for the men to support or use them.
- The term 'men's group' imparts a stigma. Why would a man join one? They're just what women do. The more common the groups become, the more normal it will become. If a man has an arena to express his trepidations the better he will be.
- Despite campaigning for equality, I feel many women who are involved in "women's groups" resent "men's groups" of any description.
- I believe in equal rights, but it must be stated that equal rights must take into account the individual person's sex, physical strength and ability. Tokenism is fraud and counter-productive.
- Men's Group's are useful, although I have never seen any advertised. Not enough support available and more should be done about this, especially in the general medical area. I hope men in general will receive a greater level of support.

- Men's groups are useful in promoting male awareness, but can be seen as sissy. Not enough support available and more information about this required. Services for men include the doctor, Samaritans and counselling. I hope men will become more aware and use services provided.
- Men's Groups are a good idea.
- Men's groups are an opportunity for like-minded men to discuss issues in a safe environment. Disabled men need more support with regard to relationships and other issues. I hope men will be more broadminded in future and that the survey results will help this.
- Men's groups are useful as a means of outside help for men with problems. Unmarried men need more advice about their paternity rights (e.g. Family Planning Association). I hope men show more social responsibility and self-awareness.
- I think men's groups are as valuable as women's groups depending on what issues they raise and the clientele they address. The social services are still very geared towards women - but that is probably due to the very patriarchal organisation of society.
- There should be a need for men's groups, rather than just setting them up for the sake of it. There needs to be support for men's health - both physical and mental.
- I hope in the future there will be equal treatment with women and with each other.
- A problem with support services for men is flexibility. I wish the legal profession would recognise men as human beings with rights and feelings, and would give them their human rights.
- Men's groups are positive and there should be the same provisions made for the problems of males as those of females. I hope men will become better able to deal with domestic and social problems and will be supported by the community in which they live.
- There is a disparity between maternity and paternity leave. I would hope there is an increase in the minimum wage, paternity leave and a reduction in the number of working hours. I also would like to see the needs of single male parents acknowledged.
- Men's groups are needed but their image is too effeminate.
- I hope that more men's groups are formed and that men become more vocal on the issues that affect them most. I also hope that all men are treated equally. Currently there is not enough information available to men on their entitlements and support groups.
- Men's groups are useful to men living in the locality. I wish men who are living alone would receive more information on their benefits and entitlements and that men should be treated equally in domestic problems.
- Men's groups are useful as a means of support and political lobbying. I think that male attitudes will have to change before men's groups become more effective. I hope that society becomes more fair, and that community groups become more male-friendly.
- Men's groups are very good. Would like to see drop-in centres and more men's organisations.
- Men's groups are potentially a very useful facility for men. Hope men will be more secure and open in future.
- Not enough Men's groups. Like to see more local centres for men.
- Essential part of modern life especially in local communities where little to do; provide outlet for personal/family problems. Want more local and community-based men's groups. Hope for equal terms with women who get more support services.
- Need more men's groups, particularly promoting healthy life. Use leisure activities to improve general fitness/health. Need support services aimed at men. Men should take more interest in health, working together/sharing problems.
- Men's groups are useful forums. Can become vehicles for other agendas. Want domiciliary support/day care aimed at fathers. All services open to men and women. Hope men begin to tackle the emotional/psychological/political issues which led to emasculation.

- Forget “Iron John”, but genuine support is good. Want groups which support men, but challenge traditional male behaviour. Don't know of support services other than social services. Hope men recognise futility of patriarchy. Nice someone is doing something.
- Men's groups not productive unless targeting specific issues. Men's groups perceived as ‘wishy washy’. Want establishment of cohesive network of young men's groups focusing on key issues i.e. drugs, paramilitarism.
- Men's groups are useful. Not enough support available to men.
- Need more support geared specifically at men. Home based. Don't know support services available to men.
- Hope that men move away from all that macho, violent shite.
- Men's groups can be helpful. Want support on sex, cancer, depression, child care. Hope men become equal to women.
- Men's groups are Trojan Horses for feminisation/marginalisation of men. Need support for men in broken relationships, particularly around access to children. Not allow demonisation by misanthropic feminists. Gain emotional freedom and not apologise for being male.
- Don't know what men's groups are.
- The only support groups that I know of are for men with problems. I hope that men can be more open to others and themselves so that the idea of the male ego can be quashed. It's drummed into boys that it's sissy to talk about their feelings.
- I would like to see more groups for emotional support and more understanding that men have feelings too that they bottle-up. Men and women's problems should be tackled equally.
- Men's groups should be available on prescription! Support should be designed by men for men and backed by the government. At the moment you need to have a problem to get support. Men's issues are not taken seriously at any level.
- I don't know of any men's groups - except The Male Link, which I saw on the front of this questionnaire. I feel strongly about Paternity Leave which isn't long enough.
- I think men's groups are a good idea. It is important for men to get a chance to express themselves and talk openly to each other. My student liaison officer is excellent and helps to promote issues like these.
- Men's groups are needed - but some get carried away with unimportant things. I hope that men will do more for themselves in the future.
- Men's groups can be very affirming and a good laugh.
- I am not aware of any men's groups.