



**First Minister's National Advisory
Council on Women and Girls**

Website Summary
September 2018 Spotlight: Masculinity

**MAKE YOUR
VOICE HEARD**

**#GENERATION
EQUAL**



YOU SAID – WE LISTENED

In September 2018 we invited public feedback on the Spotlight topic of gender and masculinity in Scotland.

A full report has been given to the NACWG, and a summary version is shared below.

Please note: these reports summarise the responses received to this open call for submissions. They do not represent the views of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (we are seeking feedback to gain more insight) nor do they represent a majority view or the view of the Scottish population. They represent the views of those organisations or individuals who have chosen, proactively, to respond.

Who did we hear from?

We had a great response and heard from both individuals and 'Wee Circle' discussions.

We heard from both men and women, and the age of respondents ranged from 16 to over 65.

WE ASKED THREE QUESTIONS:

- Q1** IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU THINK GENDER STEREOTYPES HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON MEN AND BOYS IN SCOTLAND?
- Q2** WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO REDUCE THE NEGATIVE EFFECT GENDER STEREOTYPES HAVE ON MEN AND BOYS IN SCOTLAND?
- Q3** WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD NACWG RECOMMEND TO REDUCE THE NEGATIVE EFFECT GENDER STEREOTYPES HAVE ON MEN AND BOYS?



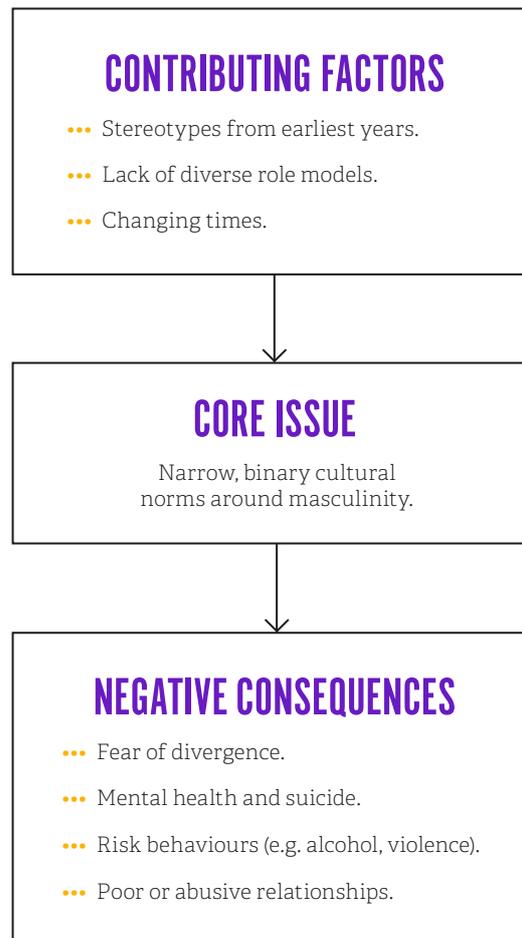
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WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Feedback received showed a belief among respondents that society has a narrow view of masculinity. Feedback suggested that this narrow view is fed by cultural norms that have an impact on boys and girls from a young age, and is perpetuated by other factors such as a lack of diverse role models.

People said that society's narrow idea of masculinity may give rise to various issues and problems that effect boys and girls, men and women. These are summarised below, as well as respondents' suggested action for change.





MAIN ISSUES



1.

FEAR OF DIVERGENCE

Feedback suggested that men and boys are often scared, consciously or not, of straying from the narrow norm of masculinity for fear that they will be mocked, bullied or ostracised. Feedback suggested that this fear can lead to negative behaviours, for example alcoholism. Respondents believed that the fear may even affect parents and carers, whereby they prioritise conforming to the stereotype to reduce the risk of bullying.



2. REPRESSED EMOTIONS, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE

Feedback suggested that a prominent consequence of stereotypes is a male tendency to repress emotions, because of a perception that being emotional is more generally regarded as a female trait. Respondents were keen to convey that emotions are a part of human nature, and men and boys should not feel unable to show their emotions. Feedback also showed a widely held belief among the respondents that repression of emotions could be a cause of male mental health issues and suicide.



3. RISK BEHAVIOURS

Several respondents noted that male gender stereotypes can limit the behaviour and activities of men and boys, for example that they must like cars and playing sports. Feedback suggested that this may also lead to men adopting negative behaviours because it is perceived to be “normal to do” for boys and men, such as drinking and inappropriate behaviour towards women. It was noted by several respondents that when men suppress their emotions, an alternative outlet for them can become violence and violence against women.



4.

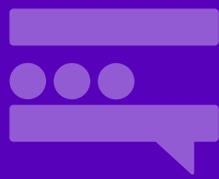
POOR OR ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Feedback highlighted that men may experience poor family and personal relationships as a consequence of stereotypes. Respondents highlighted that some men lose out on meaningful relationships as a father or a child, because being male is not associated with being caring or affectionate. Feedback suggested that male stereotypes are also linked to negative attitudes and behaviours around relationships, sex and consent. Some respondents expressed a view that schools must improve their teaching on concepts of consent.



5. RESTRICTED CHOICES AND LIFE POTENTIAL

Feedback suggested that male gender stereotypes can lead to boys underperforming at school and as they grow older, can prevent men achieving their full life potential or choosing particular career paths. The feedback showed a feeling among respondents that career choices are frequently affected by stereotypes, and many agreed that the general public would benefit from more men working in roles that are traditionally associated with women, and vice versa.



THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their feedback – it is valuable.

We'd love as many people as possible to share their ideas on our next Spotlight topic. We have a new one every month.