

A letter to Humza

Finlay McFarlane is one of the City Centre ward councillors, and his newest constituent is the First Minister, Humza Yousaf, who has just moved into Bute House.

The two politicians are members of the same party, the SNP, but Cllr McFarlane has had very different life experiences to Mr Yousaf, and wanted to make him aware of this and his call to action.

So today Cllr McFarlane along with Sandy Brindley, CEO of Rape Crisis Scotland, Gary Williams CEO of Survivors UK, Ally Fogg, Chair of Men and Boys Coalition, Matthew Withey, Chair of Abused Men in Scotland, Dr Steven Maxwell Researcher in Health Sector Leadership and Tanaka Mhishi, author, campaigner and Associate Fellow at the Sexual Harms and Medical Experiences Project at University of London, have sent an open letter to the First Minister (which you can read in full below).



Cllr Finlay McFarlane City Centre councillor PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr McFarlane has written to Mr Yousaf about sexual violence against males, which he says data proves to be as high as 47% in gay and bisexual men in the UK. But for many male survivors of child sexual abuse it can take decades for them to open up about their experiences and seek help.

Finlay refers to the 2021 SNP manifesto commitment to establish a national strategy on ending intimate and sexual violence against men and boys”, and urges the First Minister to work to establish the strategy now.

He himself is a survivor of sexual abuse when he was 18. He became determined to change things after being turned away from advisory services as they did not at that time cater for men and boys. He ended up telling his story to BBC Scotland and has received national awards for his work in this area.

Cllr McFarlane said: “Currently in the UK male survivors of intimate or sexual crimes are catered for by Violence Against

Women and Girls strategies. I, and others from across the sector think this is wrong (for reasons outlined in the letter) and began to campaign for the government to establish a parallel strategy, to return VAWG strategies to their intended purpose and emulate the success of VAWG with a gendered response tailored, and understanding of, the needs of male survivors of rape, sexual assault, domestic abuse, so-called honour based violence.

“I am looking forward to working with the new First Minister to deliver this strategy that will make a huge difference for male survivors in Scotland.

“The Scottish Government has previously taken huge strides to protecting and improving outcomes for survivors. A gendered approach for men and boys, to compliment violence against women and girls’ strategies will ensure that every survivor will truly be “Equally Safe” and supported when they come forward.”



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