

Recommendations to the UK government National Summit on Men and Boys from the Roundtable on policy responses to preventing online misogyny and promoting men's mental health, held on 25 February 2026 in the UK parliament

32 experts met together on 25 February 2026 to discuss policy solutions to online misogyny and men's mental health and to make recommendations to the government to inform the forthcoming National Summit on Men and Boys. The participants represented a range of sectors, including MPs, government officials, men and boys' issues, women's rights, violence against women and girls (VAWG), mental health, online safety, sports, children's rights, academia, education, trade unions, thinktanks, policy forums and donors. This event was co-convened by the [Misogyny Policy Project](#), [Male Allies UK](#), [Fabian Women](#), Jess Asato MP and Alistair Strathern MP. The following 10 recommendations for the National Summit reflect the key collective themes across opening speakers, group work and plenary discussions during this roundtable. Please note these are not in order of priority.

Summary of ten key recommendations for UK National Summit on Men and Boys:

1. The Summit should adopt a positive, aspirational framing, which acknowledges men's own needs and challenges	6. The Summit should take a public health framework approach, including preventing male mental ill-health and strengthening fatherhood and male caregiving
2. The Summit should focus on connection, belonging and relationships, not shame	7. The Summit should focus on outreach and engagement, not just policy change
3. The Summit should position men's issues and VAWG as sharing common root causes, strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and expand partnerships	8. The Summit should include boys and young people directly
4. The Summit should focus on scaling proven solutions and strengthening the evidence, not simply restating problems	9. The Summit should be explicitly intersectional
5. The Summit should strengthen regulation for online harms while also recognising the value of online spaces	10. The Summit should produce a practical action plan and metrics for success

1. The Summit should adopt a positive, aspirational framing and narrative, which acknowledges men's own needs and challenges

Summit recommendation

Frame the Summit around healthy masculinities, belonging, relationships, friendship, care, responsibility, contribution and respect, rather than crisis, blame or deficit. The focus should be on how to make a positive contribution to the challenges of the normalisation of online misogyny and men's deteriorating mental health. Existing policies should highlight how they respond to men's and women's specific needs (not be gender-neutral). All policy should support a positive vision for being a man and masculinities in the UK today.

Roundtable participants noted that the Summit should:

- Avoid framing boys and men as a problem to be fixed or masculinities as toxic.
- Acknowledge that men and boys are struggling.
- Focus on strengths, positive and secure identities, as well as accountability.
- Highlight how this agenda, and gender equality, benefits everyone.
- Highlight what is already going well, positive trends and celebrate boyhood.

Examples of specific contributions on this topic included:

- Calling men in rather than calling them out.



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- Boys and young men do want to talk. It's all about how you frame the work.
- We've created a culture when boys expect to hate conversations about masculinity.
- Recognition that most boys are not creating and sharing harmful content.
- Policy is often gender-neutral, when it needs to show the specific benefits that it brings to men and women alike.
- Addressing men's needs can help to address the exclusion felt from mainstream political processes and address extremism.

2. The Summit should focus on connection, belonging and relationships, not shame

Summit recommendation

Make connection, belonging, friendships and social cohesion a central organising principle of the Summit, valuing relational outcomes in policy and measurement.

Roundtable participants frequently identified:

- Loneliness.
- Social isolation and connection.
- Lack of belonging.
- Weak relationships.

as key drivers of both:

- Poor outcomes for men and boys.
- Susceptibility to misogynistic content and related harms.

Friendship was noted as a core policy and cultural theme, given the protective factors of friendships and the benefits of male friendships and friendships between sexes/genders.

Recommendations included:

- Prioritising social connection.
- Community-building.
- Positive peer groups.
- Mentoring and fatherhood.
- Friendship-building.
- Cross-sex and gender connections.

3. The Summit should position men's issues and violence against women and girls as sharing common root causes, strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration to bridge these issues, and expand partnerships

Summit recommendation

Position the Summit as improving outcomes for men and boys while also contributing to safety, equality and wellbeing for women and girls, including preventing VAWG. Support cross-sectoral collaboration between different actors in this space, and consult and engage with the VAWG sector. Broaden the coalition and organisations supporting men and boys' issues, expanding the permission space for this issue.

These areas were among the strongest themes repeated by participants. Roundtable participants made points noting that:

- These issues are connected.
- Gender norms shape outcomes for everyone.
- Organisations working with men and VAWG organisations need to work together.
- There cannot be a culture of silence around VAWG, sexism and misogyny.
- The Summit should support cross-sectoral collaboration, which brings significant benefits and supports space for alternative perspectives and co-created solutions.
- The Summit should grow the coalition supporting men and boys' issues, further expanding the permission space, including engagement with the corporate sector.

Several participants specifically welcomed the fact that the roundtable and new Cross-Sector Task Force on Online Misogyny and Men's Mental Health brought these issues together rather than separating them.



4. The Summit should focus on scaling proven solutions and strengthening the evidence base, not simply restating or diagnosing problems

Summit recommendation

Prioritise conversations on 'what works and how we scale it' rather than further diagnoses of the problems. Commit to supporting:

- Scaling up what works.
- Testing interventions.
- Operational research and evaluation funding.
- Clearer outcomes frameworks.

Several roundtable participants noted that we already know a lot about the problems:

- We continue to fund a focus on the problem, when we already know what this is.
- Organisations are already delivering interventions.
- There are already some resources and tools available.
- There are already evidence-based programmes (though not yet enough).

Roundtable participants noted that we know much less about, among other areas:

- What interventions work in which contexts and for different groups.
- Which online harms affect which populations and at what age.
- What prevention approaches work, including to prevent early harmful behaviours.
- How pornography affects behaviour.

The UK government has already developed a range of policies and strategies linked to this area, including the men's health strategy, VAWG strategy and national youth strategy.

The Summit should therefore focus on:

- Funding and scaling existing successful initiatives and supporting new models.
- Supporting implementation, particularly linked to its existing strategies and plans.
- How this broader agenda aligns with the existing national policies and strategies.
- Better evaluation and operational research.
- Clear outcome measures/metrics.

5. The Summit should strengthen regulation for online harms while also recognising the value of online spaces

Summit recommendation

Commit to stronger platform regulation to address online harms and prevent the problems at source. At the same time, the Summit should not frame the internet solely as a problem, and instead look at how we create healthier online ecosystems.

Several participants noted that:

- The real-world offline and online harms for both girls and boys and the links between online and offline ecosystems.
- Concerns around recommender systems, amplification mechanisms, generative AI systems, apps and chatbots, and their potential to amplify online and offline harms.
- Current regulation, such as the Online Safety Act, doesn't go far enough.
- Many young people find genuine community and connection online.
- Online ecosystems can be healthy and supportive and bring benefits.

Recommendations included:

- Enacting stronger tech and platform regulation.
- Move from 'safety by design' to 'safety, care and connection' by design.
- Investing in healthier digital spaces and positive online communities.
- Supporting existing moderators who foster healthy online cultures.
- Encouraging pro-social online and offline communities.

6. The Summit should take a public health framework approach, including preventing male mental ill-health and strengthening fatherhood and male caregiving

Summit recommendation

Adopt a public health lens, for both online and offline environments, focused on:

- Prevention and early intervention.
- Safe spaces and peer-led models.
- Gender-responsive health systems.
- Connection and belonging.
- Gender norms, gender equality and healthy expressions of masculinities.

Include discussions at the Summit on, among others:

- Preventing mental ill-health through community approaches supported by offline and online mental health services.
- Supporting fatherhood and male caregiving and improving paternity leave.

Roundtable participants supporting this position noted that a public health framework helps:

- Focus on prevention and upstream factors.
- Focus on a gender-responsive health system, including addressing men's ill-health.
- Allows both legal accountability while also addressing the root causes.
- Depoliticise issues and reduce culture-war framing.

Multiple roundtable contributors highlighted:

- Male-friendly prevention and mental health services are key.
- That loving father-child relationships is a strong protective factor for boys against later intimate-partner violence. The UK also has the worst paternity leave in Europe currently, which should be addressed.

7. The Summit should focus on outreach and engagement, not just policy change

Summit recommendation

The Summit should include:

- A public engagement or outreach strategy.
- Communications strategy.
- Engaging trusted messengers and cultural figures in the Summit and its follow-up.

Not just policy recommendations.

Roundtable participants noted that while policy and regulation matters, public engagement is often where real culture change happens. One participant compared this to smoking, where regulation, culture change and education worked together.

There was concern that:

- A Summit that only produces policy recommendations will miss an opportunity.
- Government should invest in public engagement alongside policy reform.
- Government messaging often doesn't reach the intended audiences.
- The Summit becomes just a one-off discussion and then the government moves on.

Recommendations included:

- Developing an outreach plan alongside the Summit.
- Articulate in society the positive elements of being a man throughout their lives.
- Holding public conversations and events to reach mainstream audiences.
- Feed into what communities are already doing.
- Disseminating the learning from the Summit to schools and other institutions.
- Involving the following to translate ideas into public culture:
 - Artists and Arts organisations.
 - Storytellers.
 - Creatives.

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- Influencers and content creators.
- Sports figures (such as footballers).
- Coaches.
- Community leaders.
- Trade unions

8. The Summit should include boys and young people directly

Summit recommendation

Include:

- Co-designed approach with boys and young people.
- Youth delegates.
- Youth-led sessions.

Recommendations included:

- Young people should not just be consulted but be part of co-creation.
- Young people should be present at the Summit and have their voices heard.

One participant specifically referenced cyber-allies work noting that young people want to be part of the solution.

9. The Summit should be explicitly intersectional

Summit recommendation

Recognise that different groups of men and boys, as well as women and girls, face different challenges and require different solutions.

Roundtable participants warned against treating men and boys as one homogeneous group. Intersectional factors mentioned included:

- Class.
- Race.
- Disability.
- Faith.
- Sexuality.
- Neurodiversity.
- Geography.
- Age

10. The Summit should produce a practical action plan and metrics for success

Summit recommendation

The Summit should conclude with:

- Clear priorities.
- Named responsibilities – who does what, and with what resources.
- Implementation commitments.
- Accountability mechanisms and targets.

Roundtable recommendations included:

- Clear action plan and strategy from the Summit.
- Clear responsibilities – what does government do, what does civil society do, what should families do, etc. This will support joint ownership.
- Clear implementation pathways.
- Clear resourcing.
- Clear outcomes – what are the changes we want and how can we measure them.

For further information please contact:

Dr Tim Shand, Director, Misogyny Policy Project and Chair, Cross-Sector Task Force on Online Misogyny and Men's Mental Health

tim@shandclarke.com; 07906731783

