

# Honour Based Violence

**Background:** Honour based violence (HBV) is a type of abuse that is carried out in communities that have strong perceptions of 'honour' and 'shame'. Individuals may be seen to bring shame onto the family if they behave, or it is rumoured that they have behaved, in a way which the family or community disapproves of. This may include having a 'non-arranged' relationship, having a relationship with someone of a different faith, refusing an arranged marriage, leaving a marriage, being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender or dressing inappropriately. Acting on this in a violent manner is honour based violence. HBV is a cultural, not religious, practice that involves South Asian, Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, Africa, Romany and Traveller communities, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European communities.

**Why It Matters:** Home Office figures suggest there are on average 12 honour killings in the UK each year, not counting individuals who are taken abroad and not seen again. There are differences in the dynamics of HBV and domestic abuse in that the breach of the family's so called 'honour' code may be very slight but punishment can be severe, long lasting and involve multiple perpetrators - you may find a whole community informing and punishing and not necessarily exclusively family. HBV often begins early in the family home leading to deeply embedded coercive control, built on expectations about behaviour that are made clear at a young age.

**Consider:** Are you aware of any families from communities which may be affected by HBV? Are you clear about what to do, especially in the light of the 'one chance rule'? Do you know the signs and indicators? More information is available at:

- [www.researchinpractice.org.uk/media/2345/rip\\_front\\_line\\_briefing\\_forced\\_marriage\\_web\\_aug19-1.pdf](http://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/media/2345/rip_front_line_briefing_forced_marriage_web_aug19-1.pdf)
- [Spotlight on HBV and forced marriage-web.pdf](http://Spotlight%20on%20HBV%20and%20forced%20marriage-web.pdf) ([safelives.org.uk](http://safelives.org.uk))
- [www.haloproject.org.uk](http://www.haloproject.org.uk)

**What To Do:** Act with extreme caution and seek specialist advice and guidance. Never turn a person away – you may have only one chance to speak to a potential victim and only one chance to save a life. Listen carefully & believe the victim – do not judge them. See the victim away from any chaperones. Do not involve or speak to the family or community members. Be professionally curious. Always ask the victim what actions may be considered by their family as bringing shame or dishonour and the consequences. Consider additional complexities and adversities such as immigration status, pregnancy, language, disabilities, mental capacity and sexuality.



**Information:** Honour based violence can take many forms: domestic abuse, sexual harassment, assault, rape, psychological abuse, child abuse, kidnapping, false imprisonment, FGM, threats to kill, forced marriage, coercive & controlling behaviours, stalking, house arrest, servitude, isolation from family and community, denial of further education or employment, excessive restrictions on freedom and social activities, abandonment or sending someone back to their own country of origin, dowry abuse, forced suicide and murder.

**Indicators:** Anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, fear, low self-esteem, self-harm, decline in academic performance, unreasonable parenting restrictions, not allowed to express sexuality, not allowed to have male friends /boyfriends, fear of family rejection, having to dress modestly, leading a secret life outside the family (eg wearing make-up outside of home & removing it before returning), accompanied to/from school, living under the threat of forced marriage, not allowed to go into town alone, limited or no independence, no one they can trust or turn to due to fear of reports back to family, fears for siblings if they report.

Girls and women are most at risk and are particularly vulnerable following a refusal or breakdown of an arranged or forced marriage, termination of an unwanted pregnancy or defying parents. LGBTQ+ and disabled people are amongst the most vulnerable. It can also affect boys and men. Those who enforce honour systems are often members of the immediate and extended family and include men and women. Studies have found that mothers play a significant role in perpetrating honour based violence against their daughters (Aplin 2017).