



Honour Based Violence

What does the term 'Honour Based Violence' mean?

'Honour Based Violence' (HBV) is the term used to refer to a range of violent practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to sustain or promote perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour (*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People, March 2016*).

Such violence may occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative or another has shamed, or may shame, the family and/or community by breaking their 'honour code'.

Who does HBV affect?

Children, young people and adults can be victims of HBV. The majority are women and girls. However, HBV can also affect men and boys.

Common triggers for HBV :

- showing expressions of autonomy
- inappropriate make-up or dress
- having a relationship outside of the approved group
- refusing an arranged marriage
- loss of virginity
- pregnancy
- kissing, intimacy or smoking in a public place

HBV includes:

- physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional abuse
- threats of violence
- forced marriage
- abduction
- restrictions of liberty
- confinement
- murder

Sometimes just a perception or rumour about one or more of the above triggers is enough to result in an abusive act, including murder. Staff and volunteers should never underestimate the risks involved.



Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor (*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People, March 2016*).

It is different from an arranged marriage where both parties choose whether or not they want to marry the person suggested to them by their families. In a forced marriage there is no freedom of choice.

Forced marriage is often motivated by a desire to maintain family honour, to maintain and strengthen family and community links, or for immigration and citizenship purposes. The force can be emotional and/or physical.

Parents who force their children to marry often do not see anything wrong with their actions. Many children live their entire childhoods with the expectation that they will marry someone their parents select and may not be aware that they have a fundamental human right to choose their own spouse.

Who does forced marriage affect?

The issue of forced marriage primarily affects girls and young women. However, there are male victims too. The most prevalent ages are between 15 and 24 but can be as young as 10 and some come forward years after being forced into marriage

The victim may be taken abroad and then forced to marry, or brought to the UK as a result of forced marriage to someone living in the UK.

The majority of cases in the UK involve South Asian families, but also families from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

Forced marriage involving anyone under 18 is child abuse. It cannot be justified on religious or cultural beliefs and is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. Under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007, a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) offers protection to a victim from being forced into marriage.



Indicators of HBV, including risk of forced marriage:

- Change in demeanour or behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or depressed
- Self-harm and/or eating disorder
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Fearful of being seen talking to the leader by their relatives
- Running away from home
- Controlling behaviour by their family, including unreasonable restrictions
- Family maintaining surveillance over the young person at all times (particularly through brothers and cousins)
- Siblings having had early marriages or dropped out of school at a young age.

Organisations working with children and young people should:

- Educate children and young people about HBV, including forced marriage. Organisations can use age appropriate training resources for this e.g. information leaflets or video clips.
- Have clear reporting procedures within their safeguarding children and young people policy.
- In relation to HBV, take action commensurate with the perceived level of risk. Any immediate risk should be reported to the PSNI. If the risk is not perceived to be immediate, the information must be passed to the local HSCT.
- Report immediately to the PSNI any knowledge/suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child/young person.

Useful websites and resources:

- *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI*
www.health-ni.gov.uk
- www.safeguardingni.org
- www.karmanirvana.org.uk/
- www.hbv-awareness.com/
- www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- Forced Marriage Unit www.facebook.com/forcedmarriage
- *The Right to Choose: Statutory guidance for dealing with Forced Marriage*
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/70194/forced_marriage-right-to-choose.pdf