



Safeguarding Children from Honour-Based Violence

Honour based violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Honour-based violence takes many different forms and, while it is mostly females who experience it, for instance by being abused, disowned, or possibly being forced into having an abortion, boys and men can be victims too. For young victims, it is a form of child abuse. Examples of honour-based violence include:

- physical abuse (kicking and beating)
- psychological pressure (strict monitoring, humiliation, threats, harassment)
- domestic and/or sexual violence including rape of themselves or other family members
- forced marriage
- forced abortion
- kidnap and/or abandonment (leaving someone in their country of origin or sending them back)
- forced suicide
- honour killing (murder)
- female genital mutilation (see separate policy)

It can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with a degree of approval and/or collusion from other family and/or community members. Women, men and younger members of the family can all be involved in the abuse.

A study in April 2019 by Dr Becki Kaur of the University of Manchester entitled Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage highlighted the following statistics. There are/were:

- 12 'honour killings' in Britain each year
- 5,105 cases of HBV (including forced marriage and FGM) recorded by Police forces in 2016
- 2,600 cases of HBV (including forced marriage and FGM) recorded by 41 out of 43 police forces between March 2014 and January 2015
- 200 HBV related offences referred by police to the CPS in 2016/17

Risks

Young victims may find themselves in abusive and dangerous situations against their will with no power to seek help due to the involvement of family members and the community. Behaviour that could lead to honour-based violence responses include:

- Wearing what is considered to be inappropriate make-up or clothing
- The existence of a boyfriend or relationship which is perceived to be unacceptable e.g., a gay/lesbian relationship
- Rejecting a forced marriage
- Pregnancy outside of marriage

- Being a victim of rape
- Inter-faith relationships (e.g., same faith, but different ethnicity)
- Leaving or attempting to leave a spouse or seek a divorce
- Kissing or showing intimacy in a public place
- The use of alcohol and drugs

Indicators

It is likely that an awareness that someone has been the victim of an honour based crime will only come to light after an assault of some kind has taken or if a child is reported missing. There are inherent risks to the act of disclosure for the victim, with the added pressure of fear of criminalising their parents' behavior. Young people may face significant harm if their families and/or communities realise they have asked for help. They are also likely to have a fear of retribution from their family or community of being forced into engagement and/or marriage. Unreasonable restrictions on the young person, such as removal from education or virtual imprisonment, may occur.

Some families go to considerable lengths to find children who run away, and young people who leave home are at risk of significant harm if they are returned to their family. They may be reported as missing by their families with no mention made as to the reason. It is important that underlying reasons for a child or young person going missing are fully explored.

Protection and Action to be taken

It takes a lot of courage for a child or young person to disclose that they are afraid that they will be, or have been, subjected to HBV. It is essential, therefore, that Foster Carers and workers take such matters seriously and that agencies work together to act in a manner that will not further jeopardise the child or young person's safety.

Where a child or young person discloses fear of HBV in respect of them or a family member, Foster Carers should:

- Take the disclosure seriously. Any suspicion or disclosure of violence or abuse against a child in the name of honour should be treated as seriously as any other suspicion or disclosure of significant harm against a child.
- Explain to the child or young person the limits of confidentiality, what information may have to be shared, with whom and for what purpose.
- Make a clear recording of all the information that is disclosed.
- Contact your Placement Manager and the Child's Social Worker **immediately**, following Safeguarding procedures.
- Do not approach the family or community leaders or share any information with them.

In cases of violence in the name of honour and of forced marriage, it will be essential for the multi-agency team to consider other siblings in the family that may be experiencing, or at risk of, the same abuse. Any information of this nature which is given to you by the young person should be clearly recorded in detail, and information shared immediately, as per AFA's Safeguarding Policy.

Issues

Addressing the needs of the individual is key, as HBV victims will require a tailored response dependent on a number of factors, including language and cultural barriers, how long they have been in the country, their social and family networks and their economic circumstances. A Foster Carer will need to work alongside other professionals to ensure that the child is safe, while supporting his or her emotional needs. Any relevant cultural and religious needs will also need to be respected and supported in an appropriate way.

The 'One Chance Rule'

All practitioners working with victims of HBV need to be aware of the 'one chance' rule. That is, they may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim, and therefore only one chance to save a life. This means that all practitioners working within statutory agencies need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they come across these cases. If the victim is not heard and supported, that one chance might be wasted.

For further information and relevant online training go to:

Halo Project: <https://www.haloproject.org.uk/> Call: 01642 683 045

Karmina Nirvana: <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/> UK Helpline: 0800 5999 247
Monday to Friday, 9-5

True Honour: <https://www.truehonour.org.uk/> Telephone: 07480 621711 or email
contact@truehonour.org.uk

Refuge: <https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/honour-based-violence/> Freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline **0808 2000 247**

Connected Policies or Guidance

Name of Policy / Guidance	Relevant for
Record Keeping and Confidentiality Policy	All staff and Foster Carers
Safeguarding Policy	All staff and Foster Carers
Children Missing from Care	Foster Carers, Placement Managers
Foster Carer's Handbook	Foster Carers, Placement Managers
Staff Handbook	All staff
Safeguarding Children from Trafficking	Foster Carers, Placement Managers
Safeguarding Children from FGM	Foster Carers, Placement Managers

January 2021