

'Honour-Based' Violence (HBV)

What is 'Honour-Based' Violence?

'Honour-Based' Violence (HBV) is a crime or incident committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community.

There is not one specific crime; HBV generally occurs in domestic settings and can involve a range of offending behaviours which are used against individuals, families, or other social groups, to control and protect perceived cultural or religious beliefs and honour.

HBV may include: murder; fear of, or actual, forced marriage; controlling sexual activity; domestic abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional); child abuse; rape; kidnapping; false imprisonment; assault; harassment; forced abortion. This list is not exhaustive.

Such crimes cut across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups, and communities. They transcend national and international boundaries; they are violations of human rights and there is no 'honour' in the commission of them.

HBV may occur when the perpetrator(s) perceive that a person (or persons) have shamed the family / community by breaking an honour code. The violence can include planning, premeditation, and family/community conspiracy. Often the belief is that victim(s) 'deserve' the punishment.

Who is involved?

Notions of honour framed within culture and religion are used for justification of primarily (but not always) male violence against women and children.

Justifications given for HBV may include: unapproved make-up or dress; having an unapproved girlfriend or boyfriend; intimacy in a public place; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; being a victim of rape; inter-faith relationships; same-sex relationships; leaving a spouse or seeking divorce.

HBV involving children means that they are at significant risk of actual physical harm, neglect, and emotional harm through the threat, or witnessing, of violence. Families may feel shame long after the incident that brought about 'dishonour' occurred, therefore the risk of serious harm to a child can persist.

What does the law say about this?

'Honour-based' violence is a crime or incident which has, or may have, been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. **There is no specific offence of 'honour-based' crime.**

The police will record and investigate all instances of 'honour-based' violence, even in cases where there is only a small amount of information, or when a victim has not reported it themselves. They do this so they can provide protection which may prevent further abuse or violence, or in some cases forced marriage.

What should practitioners do? Awareness, disclosure and response.

Practitioners should make themselves aware of potential signs of 'honour-based' violence. Children may:

- go missing (from home and school) in an attempt to keep themselves safe
- self-harm, appear depressed, angry and/or desperate
- be restricted in their movements and overly supervised
- not have access to the internet, mobile phones, and their passport or family members
- be forced to marry, or forced to live elsewhere

If a child tells a practitioner about 'honour-based' violence in respect of themselves or another family member, the practitioner should:

- See the child alone in a safe and private place to obtain their wishes, views, and feelings, and explain confidentiality fully, including the need to share
- Record carefully; caution is required about how information is recorded and shielded within the organisation to ensure the child's safety
- NOT make contact with the family or community leaders, and should not under any circumstances tell the family or their social network about what the child has said, attempt mediation, or use members of the community to interpret on behalf of the child.

If a child tells a practitioner about 'honour-based' violence, a referral must be made to the Children's Services Duty and Advice Team, who in partnership with the Police may undertake a Section 47 Enquiry (safeguarding).

Practitioners should also be aware that children who are at risk of serious harm through child sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, 'honour-based' violence, and female genital mutilation are often 'hidden' and may be also missing from education, and/or care or home.

Key contacts

You can call Cleveland Police on 101. In an emergency always call 999.

You can also contact the Halo Project, a specialist service for victims of 'honour-based' violence and forced marriage, by calling 01642 683045 or visiting [their website](#).

The Children's Services Duty and Advice Team can be contacted on 01642 726004 (or 0870 240 2994 for out of hours).