

# WHAT IS 'HONOUR'-BASED ABUSE (HBA)?

'Honour'-based abuse (HBA) is a crime or incident that has or may have been committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of the family and/or community. The term 'honour'-based abuse, encompasses the physical, emotional and practical abuse (e.g. financial) that those at risk endure. 'Honour'-based violence refers to specific acts of violence committed in the name of 'honour', for example when talking about physical attacks or 'honour' killings.

The perpetrator or perpetrators feel that the only way to restore family 'honour' is to harm or kill. It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture or/and family values.

### **Things that can be considered as 'dishonour':**

- Dressing in clothing outside of cultural traditions or individual family cultural/traditional 'dress codes'
- Being LGBTQ+ or questioning your sexuality/gender identity
- Access higher education without the approval of your family
- Choosing an education or a career without high status  
e.g health care assistant, being an artist
- Separate or divorce from partner
- Refuse a marriage
- Interact freely with men when in public or even with the extended family without approval
- Become pregnant outside of marriage
- Marry someone that the family has not chosen
- Marry outside of your religion or caste
- Have sex before marriage
- Go against any other cultural traditions, values that the family or community believe

# FACT SHEET

## Crimes of 'Honour'-Based Abuse

Women and girls are most commonly affected by 'honour'-based abuse. However, it can affect people of any gender. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence.

### Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' can include:

- Domestic abuse - physical and psychological pressure (strict monitoring, humiliation, threats)
- Threats of violence
- Financial and dowry abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Coercive control
- Forced marriage
- Child marriage
- Being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go
- Assault
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Virginity testing and hymenoplasty (surgical reconstruction of the hymen)
- Breast ironing/breast flattening
- Conversion 'therapy' and practices (any form of treatment or psychotherapy which aims to change a person's sexual orientation or to suppress a person's gender identity. These are frequently excused as religious, spiritual or cultural interventions)
- Sex selective abortion
- Marriage by abduction
- Menstruation exclusion

### Key Facts in 'Honour'-Based Abuse (HBA)

- 'Honour'-based abuse is often premeditated and planned by several family members and sometimes extended family and/or the community
- People who commit 'honour'-based abuse believe that their conduct is justified and can receive support from their community
- Women are usually the victims of 'honour'-based abuse. However, men are also targeted if, for example, they are suspected of being LGBTQ+, refusing a marriage or going against their family's cultural values

## Indications of HBA

'Honour'-based abuse is a widespread phenomenon that represents the most serious outcome of a patriarchal, 'honour'-based society in which 'honour' is considered more important than human life.

- Children/young people may truant to avoid family and relatives knowing where they are
- Individuals may be isolated, depressed and there may be concerns about self-harm
- Families may continue to feel 'shame' and the risks may transfer to children or siblings of a person at risk
- Adults may be excessively restricted in their movements, while children and young people may be grounded permanently
- Individuals at risk may be denied access to the internet, phones, friends, passport
- Individuals are always chaperoned by family members

### Responding to 'Honour'-Based Abuse:

Where someone discloses fear or threat of 'honour'-based abuse, professionals in all agencies should:

- Take the disclosure seriously and act on it immediately
- Refer to Adult or Children's Social Care and the Police promptly
- Always follow your organisational policy and other relevant local/national policies and procedures
- Follow the ONE CHANCE RULE at all times. We believe that there might be only once chance to speak to a person at risk or under threat, and, therefore, just one chance to save a life
- Hold an emergency strategy/professional meeting with relevant agencies, (this should be immediately or within no less than 24 hours)

# FACT SHEET

## UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES

- Let the family, community or social network know about the disclosure
- Speak to the person at risk in front of family members or within the family home
- Approach the family or community leaders or attempt mediation
- Use members of the community to interpret
- Accidentally give out information which might jeopardise the person's safety

Caution is required about how information is shared, recorded, and safeguarded within the organisation. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

## We will end 'honour'-based abuse and harmful practices

Helpline: **0800 107 0726**

10am - 4pm, Monday to Friday



To make a professional referral to Savera UK, complete our online form:  
[saverauk.co.uk/get-help/referrals-for-professionals/](https://saverauk.co.uk/get-help/referrals-for-professionals/)

If you are an individual who needs help or advice, complete this form:  
[saverauk.co.uk/savera-uk-individual-referral-form/](https://saverauk.co.uk/savera-uk-individual-referral-form/)

**In an emergency, please call 999.**