



Honour-based abuse is NOT determined by age, class, gender, sexuality or religion.

Pan Bedfordshire One minute guide Honour Based Abuse

What is Honour Based Abuse?

The CPS, ACPO and support groups common definition of Honour based Abuse/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 not one specific crime HBA 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 / religious beliefs and honour.

Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based violence however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include threats of violence, sexual or psychological abuse, being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go, 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 and 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.

HBA may occur when the perpetrator(s) perceive that a person (or persons) has shamed the family / community by breaking an honour code. The violence can include planning, premeditation and family /community conspiracy; often the belief held is that the victim(s) is 'deserving' of the punishment.

Who is involved?

Notions of honour framed within culture and religion are used for justification of primarily (but not always) male abuse against women and children. Justifications given for HBA may include: unapproved make-up or dress; having an unapproved girlfriend /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; and / or leaving a spouse or seeking divorce. HBA involving children/young people means that they are at significant risk of actual physical harm, neglect and emotional harm through the threat of, or witnessing violence. Families may feel shame long after the incident that brought about 'dishonour' occurred; therefore the risk of serious harm to a child/young person can persist.

What does the law say about this?

There is no specific offence of "honour based crime", it is an umbrella term to encompass various offences covered by existing legislation. The Home Office definition of domestic abuse (2021), which HBA is related to, now applies to young people aged 16 years and over. Offences of HBA are prosecuted under the specific offence committed e.g. common assault, grievous bodily harm, harassment, kidnap, rape and murder. Examples that might trigger HBA include someone becoming involved with a

boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion, wearing clothes or taking part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture, or seeking a divorce.

What should practitioners do?

Make themselves aware of potential signs of HBA. These include:

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

If a child/young person tells a practitioner about HBA in respect of themselves or another family member, **the practitioner should:**

See the child/young person 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/young person's safety; and the practitioner should **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/young person has said, attempt mediation or use members of the community to interpret on behalf of the child/young person.

If a child/young person tells a practitioner about HBA a referral **must** be made to their local Children's Services.

Practitioners should also be aware that children/young people who are at risk of serious harm through child sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, HBA and FGM are often 'hidden' and may be also missing from education, and/or care or home.

What possible offences are being committed?

HBA is a serious offence which can involve some of the crimes already mentioned along with:

- Cruelty to persons under 16 (including neglect and abandonment) - Failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil - Theft (e.g. passport), Forced repatriation - Abduction of an unmarried girl under the age of 16 from parent or guardian - Aiding and abetting a criminal offence

Key contacts and more information

Concerned for a child/young person make a referral to your local Children's Services;

[Bedford Borough](#) – 01234 718700

[Central Bedfordshire](#) – 0300 300 8585

[Luton](#) - 01582 537653

Out of office hours Emergency Duty Team - 0300 300 8123
[Luton All Women's Centre \(LAWC\)](#) supports women and girls living in Luton and Bedfordshire and offering a wide-range of advisory, information, practical and holistic support services in respect of issues such as harmful practices, domestic abuse/violence and sexual exploitation.

[Karma Nirvana](#) supports victims/survivors of honour-based abuse, raises public awareness and provides education through accredited training, seminars, conferences and workshops. It runs the National Honour Network Helpline which provides confidential listening support, options and guidance to all victims, survivors of honour based abuse and professionals. Helpline: 0800 5999247

[Crown Prosecution Service webpage](#) on Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage

[Pan Bedfordshire Inter-agency Child Protection procedures So called 'Honour' Based Abuse](#)