

Honour Based Violence

Definition

Honour based violence is 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.

It can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members.

Risks

Cadets may find themselves in an abusive and dangerous situation against their will with no power to seek help. The usual avenues for seeking help - through parents or other family members may be unavailable. Honour based violence manifests itself in a diverse range of ways with children and young people, including [Forced Marriage](#), rape, physical assaults, kidnap, threats of violence (including murder), [Female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#) or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or indeed another family member. Female genital mutilation is an offence contrary to the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, and can result in severe physical and psychological injuries and even death. Although predominantly the victims are women men can be the victim of Honour Based Violence.

In addition to the physical risks, a child may also suffer significant [Emotional](#) harm through the threat of violence or witnessing this directed at a sibling or other family member.

Shame and therefore the risk to a victim may persist long after the incident that brought about dishonour occurred. This means the victim's partner (if new), children, associates or their siblings may be at serious risk of [Significant Harm](#).

Practitioners should be aware that a child could be the victim of violence/abuse in the name of honour for what an outside person may perceive to be a 'minor' issue.

Behaviours that could be seen to transgress concepts of honour include:

- Inappropriate make-up or dress;
- The existence of a boyfriend;
- Rejecting a forced marriage;
- Pregnancy outside of marriage;
- Being a victim of rape;
- Perceptions that the victim is gay/lesbian;
- Inter-faith relationships (or same faith, but different ethnicity);
- Leaving a spouse or seeking divorce;
- Kissing or intimacy in a public place.

Indicators

Leaders may become aware that a child is the victim of an honour based crime through a number of routes such as an assault, truancy, missing from home etc. There are inherent risks to the act of disclosure for the victim and possibly limited opportunities to ask for help for fear that their families will find out.

There may be evidence of [Domestic Abuse](#), self-harming, family disputes, and unreasonable restrictions on the young person such as removal from education or virtual imprisonment within the home.

Cadets may face significant harm if their families realise that they have asked for help. All aspects of their safety need to be carefully assessed at every stage and decisions and actions need to be taken quickly. Initially this needs to address whether it is safe for them to return home following a disclosure.

Some families go to considerable lengths to find their 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, but no mention is made of the reason.

Protection and Action to be Taken

Any suspicion or disclosure of violence or abuse against a cadet in the name of honour should be treated equally seriously as any other suspicion or disclosure or significant harm against that person. If this is suspected or reported then the Force and National Safeguarding Policy and Process should be followed and the incident and concerns reported.

Further Information

[Honour Based Violence](#)- the Governments reply to the Home Office Committee 2007-2008

[Research on Honour based Violence un UK 2018](#)
[CPS Violence against women and girls report 2017- 8](#)