



Honour Based Violence

So-called 'Honour Based Violence' may be carried out in any culture or community where there are strong perceptions of 'honour' and 'shame'. Threats and violence are used to control the behaviour of an individual, and may be used to bring about or maintain control within a [forced marriage](#).

In cases of honour based violence, there can be one or multiple perpetrators. It is not unusual for younger relatives to be selected to undertake the abuse as a way to protect senior members of the family. Contract killers and bounty hunters may even be employed.

The level of risk is further escalated by the collusion by extended family and community members, who may participate in harassment, threats and intimidation to maintain control over the individual outside the home. Relatives and third parties can themselves be coerced to support, incite or assist the abuse. This vastly increases the risk and scope of the abuse and control over the victims.

Honour infringements which have led to honour based violence can include:

- Choosing one's own partner and physical contact such as kissing in a public place
- Pregnancy outside of marriage
- Interfaith relationships, seeking divorce
- Wearing clothes which are considered immodest including wearing make-up
- Individuals who identify as LGBT may be placed under pressure to reject their sexuality/identity. The pressure to "conform" may also extend to individuals who are suspected as identifying as LGBT.

Honour based violence can escalate swiftly. Support and interventions are available via police and local domestic abuse support services where community languages can be accessed for victims whose first language is not English. Call 999

if someone is at immediate risk and seek support from your domestic abuse helpline.

Responding safely

It is crucial for agencies to listen to the victim or potential victim's concerns - remember that they may not be able to articulate why they believe they are at risk or provide tangible evidence of the risks.

- **Do not** approach the victim's family or community leaders - this could heighten the risk to the victim.
- **Do not** attempt any form of mediation or reconciliation with the family and/ or community members.
- **Do not** make assumptions or judgements based on perceptions of cultural difference.