



College of
Policing

Working together
to prevent crime

Honour-based abuse

Summary of practice 2020

November 2020

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Honour-based abuse – summary of call for 2020

Introduction

In 2015, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) undertook an inspection on the themes of honour-based violence (HBV),¹ including forced marriage (FM) and female genital mutilation (FGM).² As a result of that inspection, the College of Policing was given a number of recommendations to assist forces with the development of their approach to these issues. A call for practice around honour-based abuse (HBA) was undertaken and the findings can be found here.

In the past five years, forces have developed their response to HBA. The College sent a request to all forces for current practice around HBA and received responses from 20 forces. The request asked for information under a number of themes, which are covered below.

Risk assessments

Two main risk assessments were mentioned as being in use by the forces that responded. These include the DASH additional HBA section (10 of the 20) and the Karma Nirvana specialist risk assessment (4 of the 20). In general, where HBA is indicated, forces use DASH or another risk assessment first. A specialist officer will then check the DASH assessment and grading and/or will complete the Karma Nirvana risk assessment of HBA.

Other risk assessments mentioned included MeRIT (Merseyside Risk Identification Tool). A number of forces also mentioned other more generic tools, such as RARA (remove, avoid, reduce, accept) and THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation opportunities, vulnerability of the victim and the engagement level required to resolve the issue) that are used to help assess incidents.

¹ From here on, the HBV will be referred to as honour-based abuse (HBA).

² Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. (2015). 'The depths of dishonour: Hidden voices and shameful crimes' [internet]. Available from justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/the-depths-of-dishonour.pdf [Accessed 30 October 2020]

Five forces suggested that where HBA is indicated, the case is always considered high-risk.

A number of forces stress the **one-chance rule** to their officers and staff – they may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim, and thus they may only have one chance to save a life. If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support being offered, that one chance could be lost.

Risk management tactics

All of the responses detailed a wide range of risk management tactics that were used or considered in cases of HBA or FM. These included:

- restricting the incident so only those who need to know do so
- talking to the person on their own, without family present
- not allowing family or community members to mediate
- using independent interpreters who were not family and were not local
- taking copies of passports and other identification documents
- taking photos and biometrics and logging these on the Police National Computer (PNC), requesting the creation of the person at risk with a locate or trace marker
- identifying family trees and checking other family members who may be at risk
- taking the person to a safe location or refuge, if this is considered necessary

For a full list of suggested risk management tactics, see **Public Protection Tactical Menu of Options (PPTMO)**.

Not all of these risk management tactics were mentioned by all forces. Some forces provided comprehensive lists of potential tactics, while others provided less detail.

In general, safeguarding for HBA cases is referred to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). However, in some forces, such as South Wales Police, cases are automatically referred to the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC).

Some of the forces reported that they or their MASH had a specific information-sharing agreement for HBA cases.

Investigation of HBA

The College asked how HBA cases were investigated and what support was provided to frontline officers when they identified that HBA may be involved. The majority of responses that were received mentioned that, following a first responder identifying a case of HBA, someone from a more specialist team or with specialist skills would review the immediate actions and risk assessment. The process varied across forces. In some forces, once a case is determined to involve HBA, it is passed immediately to a specialist unit (often within domestic abuse investigations) for further investigation. Other forces have specialist frontline single points of contact (SPOCs) or HBA champions to support frontline officers. Some of the examples of response are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Examples of investigation process for HBA cases

| Force | How are HBA cases investigated |
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| Cambridgeshire Constabulary | The force operates a network of HBA champions who are embedded with local divisions to assist with advice, support and specialist knowledge to both victims and officers investigating cases of HBA. |
| Durham Constabulary | When a report of any HBA incident is reported, officers are trained to liaise with local safeguarding teams or the on-duty detective sergeant for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). HBA incidents will have a safeguarding referral attached to any crime, which will be reviewed by the MASH. |
| Hampshire Constabulary | There are HBA tactical advisors based in the control room to provide 24-hour cover for tactical advice. The specialist safeguarding team (a team of five officers) also provide tactical advice seven days a week. The tactical advisor in the control room will review the incident prior to deployment where appropriate and provide advice to the attending officer(s). |

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| Hertfordshire Constabulary | HBA cases must have oversight from a local supervisor at the point of reporting, to review the initial actions in relation to both the criminal investigation and safeguarding. Once crimes are recorded, they are allocated to the specialist Domestic Abuse Unit for onwards investigation and safeguarding. |
| Leicestershire Police | The control room incident system contains a prompt to contact the specialist Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU) when an HBA concern is logged. This team is generally consulted before any attendance (or the team takes over the attendance) and then it takes on the investigation. |
| Merseyside Police | All HBA and FM cases are brought to the attention of the Protecting Vulnerable People Unit (PVPU) and the duty inspector on initial response, to ensure that frontline responders are given appropriate advice from the outset. All investigations are then allocated to detectives in the local PVPU. |
| Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) | Investigations are viewed by the initial investigating officer's (IIO) immediate supervisor, the officer in charge's (OIC) supervisor and a tactical policy advisor (Continuous Policing Improvement Command – CPIC). |
| Norfolk Constabulary | Each investigation will also have a MASH HBA Safeguarding SPOC assigned to them, who will have the specialist knowledge and relevant partner agency contacts. |
| Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) | Duty supervisors take responsibility for managing incidents of HBA, as well as securing evidence and the safety of the victim. The Domestic Abuse and Adult Safeguarding Detective Sergeant will be contacted and decide on what action will be taken. |
| Sussex Police | The force operate a network of HBA champions who are embedded with local divisions to assist with advice, support and |

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| | specialist knowledge to both victims and officers investigating cases of HBA. |
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Some of the responses mentioned specific resources provided for frontline officers.

- West Midlands Police have a very comprehensive aide memoire on FM and HBA.
- West Yorkshire Police have a one-minute guide that is a short briefing on FM and HBA. This includes the legislation, warning signs, key actions and contact numbers.
- North Yorkshire Police provide an information pack with everything that is required for investigations and what should be considered in all investigations. The pack includes an aide memoire, a checklist, an action log, an FM Protection Order application form and guidance documentation.
- Merseyside Police have distributed an aide memoire for all officers, as well as an Investigator's Toolkit. Both documents complement the force HBA and FM policy.

In relation to investigations with an international element, some forces described the support available.

- South Wales Police policies and procedures outline the support that is available 24/7 to officers who may find themselves dealing with cases where there is an international angle. Advice from specialist support teams at the Forced Marriage Unit, National FGM Centre, and Foreign and Commonwealth Office are extremely important, along with oversight from suitably trained officers, supervisors and senior investigating officers (SIOs).
- Leicestershire Police – Liaison is made with the national Forced Marriage Unit or with other partners for overseas work where appropriate, such as the National Crime Agency (NCA) international liaison officer (ILO) network, or Interpol for intelligence requests and sharing.

Education programmes

Many of the responses (six forces) described their force's involvement in Operation Limelight. Operation Limelight is a multi-agency safeguarding operation at the UK border that focuses on harmful practices including FGM and FM. It is a national

operation delivered by police and Border Force. Delivery partners can include local children social care, health and third-sector organisations that specialise in responding to harmful practices. It seeks to raise awareness of harmful practices, identify vulnerability and safeguard those at risk. It also seeks to develop intelligence and identify possible perpetrators.

Other specific education programmes mentioned include the following.

- International Zero Tolerance Day for FGM, on 6 February 2020, saw a community-led event in Southampton for the first time and a second event in Portsmouth in 2020.
- Merseyside Police work with Savera UK to deliver a one-day Harmful Practice Awareness Raising Course to multi-agency groups, usually as part of Local Safeguarding Children Partnership training. The training is open to all agencies, and is attended by various health representatives (GPs, midwives, school nurses, health visitors and mental health workers), teachers, learning mentors, police officers, social workers and others. The training includes cultural context, definitions, legislation, risk identification, safeguarding, joint agency working and signposting.
- A number of forces mention the use of the **spoon in the knickers** initiative. This is a campaign led by Karma Nirvana encouraging those at risk of being taken abroad to place a teaspoon or a safe metal object in their underwear to ensure that metal detectors are activated at airports, providing an opportunity for a potential victim to disclose and seek help.
- West Yorkshire have an FM poster, 'Don't Force Marriage'.

Training

The responses from forces detail a range of specific training directed at different roles within the force, including the following.

- All forces that responded reported that the College HBA and FM training is now embedded within their initial recruit training. The majority also mentioned that it is part of trainee investigator and detective training (for example, Hertfordshire Constabulary – see Table 2 below).

- Many forces mention specific awareness training for call handlers and other public-facing roles (for example, Cambridgeshire Constabulary – see Table 2 below).
- Some forces have provided all staff with vulnerability training, which incorporates training on HBA and FM (for example, Merseyside Police – see Table 2 below).
- Some forces have specific SPOCs or champions who received more in depth training (for example, Sussex Police – see Table 2 below).
- Many forces mention additional training or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that is provided for specialist investigators, such as those in public protection units (for example, South Wales Police – see Table 2 below).

In general, the training for new recruits and trainee investigators, and the awareness training for public-facing roles, is provided by force trainers or SPOCs. The more specialist training is often provided by outside organisations and charities, such as the National FGM Centre and Karma Nirvana. The specialist training often incorporates inputs from survivors. In some cases, it is undertaken jointly with local partners.

Table 2 – examples of training provided

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| Cambridgeshire Constabulary | <p>The local SPOC for harmful practices currently delivers training to all staff within the Demand Hub, including the control room and information management unit. Harmful practice training is also delivered to all new starting officers. Plans are in place to roll this training out to all frontline officers, but this has been delayed due to the ongoing pandemic.</p> <p>The training covers what to look for in these types of incidents, how to assess risk, the consequences of particular actions and how to manage the part of the investigation that a staff role handles. The training also covers the theory behind these practices and the practicalities of dealing with it.</p> |
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| Hertfordshire Constabulary | <p>HBA training is provided to all officers during their initial training and again for those on the trainee investigators process. Separately, there is awareness training for call handlers and across many public-facing roles within the organisation, such as PCSOs. As such, the majority of organisation will have received a basic level of training.</p> <p>The training examines risk assessment through the use of DASH and subsequently establishing a risk management plan. There is often a survivor who provides a valuable input to this session.</p> |
| Merseyside Police | <p>Call handlers and despatchers receive a half-day Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) training.</p> <p>All officers and staff from all departments, including response, contact centre and investigations, receive a mandatory PVP two-day course that covers all vulnerability and includes HBA case study. The training is delivered by force trainers, with 731 officers and staff trained in 2019.</p> |
| South Wales Police | <p>Specialist officers in Public Protection Units (PPUs) across the force receive one-day specialist training provided by the National FGM Centre and attend a three-day course provided by the Karma Nirvana charity, which includes inputs from survivors.</p> |
| Sussex Police | <p>The force operate a network of Harmful Practices Champions, who are embedded with local divisions to assist with advice, support and specialist knowledge to both victims and officers investigating cases of HBA. There will be 20 new Harmful Practices Champions recruited and trained in January 2021, with Karma Nirvana attending to deliver a three-day course to include risk assessment for HBA and FM investigations. The National Centre for FGM will then deliver</p> |

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| | <p>a one-day course to include FGM, breast flattening, child abuse linked to faith and religion, and associated risk assessment.</p> <p>The objectives of the HBA and FM input are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ understand the triggers and motivators of HBA▪ discuss offence types that are linked to HBA▪ outline the legislation on FM▪ define key words used in an investigation▪ demonstrate the impact of HBA and FM▪ understand a trauma-led investigation▪ define the law relating to FM▪ understand forced marriage protection orders▪ comprehend what support services are available▪ discuss the benefits of multi-agency working▪ demonstrate comprehension about the complex nature of HBA▪ analyse and develop an investigative strategy for HBA and FM |
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Other available resources

- The College has developed vulnerability training, using victims' videoed testimony as case studies. These include HBA options.
- HBA forms an integral part of the new recruits' curriculum. The Public Protection Learning Programme includes HBA and is available for forces to upskill existing officers and staff.

About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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