

FACTSHEET: Honour-based Abuse

Honour based violence, where it affects children and young people, is a child protection issue. It is an abuse of human rights. Children and young people who suffer Honour Based Violence are at risk of Significant Harm through physical, sexual, psychological, emotional harm and neglect. In some cases they are also at risk of being killed.

Definitions

Honour based abuse is:

“an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/ or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community’s code of behaviour.” CPS

The challenges for services include developing responses that keep people safe and hold perpetrators to account without stereotyping, stigmatising or making assumptions about any given individual or community.

Women and girls are predominantly the targets but not exclusively.

Initial Child Protection Conference

- Protecting family ‘honour’
- To control un-wanted behaviour and sexuality (including perceived promiscuity or being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans gender)
- As a response to family, community or peer group pressure
- Strengthening family links
- Protecting perceived cultural and/or religious ideals
- Retaining wealth, property or land within the family
- Preventing unsuitable relationships
- Assisting claims for residence and citizenship in the UK
- Perceived immoral behaviour e.g. make-up or dress; use of mobile phone; inter faith relationships.

Recognising Risks

- Children may truant to avoid family and relatives knowing where they are
- Children may be isolated, depressed and there may be concerns about self-harming behaviour
- Families may continue to feel ‘shame’ and the risks may transfer to children or siblings
- Children may be excessively restricted in their movements; grounded permanently
- Denial of access to internet, phones, friends, passport
- Children may be stopped from seeing their mother.

Responding to & referring concerns

Where a child or young person discloses fear of honour based violence professionals in all agencies should:

- Take the disclosure seriously and act on it
- Refer to the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub & the Police promptly

Under no circumstances:

- Let the family or social network know about it
- Speak to the child in front of family members
- Approach the family or community leaders or attempt mediation
- Use members of the community to interpret
- Accidentally give out information which might jeopardise the child or young person’s safety.
- Caution is required about how information is recorded and shielded within the organisation.

A **Strategy Discussion** meeting must be arranged within two working days. The meeting should be a multi-agency meeting and a legal advisor should be invited. Any investigation will be in accordance with the Section 47 Joint Investigation Team Protocol.

For further details see **chapter 3.7.4** in Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership Procedures.