

2-minute briefing

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage

Capacity to consent to marriage

The provision of consent is essential within all marriages – only the spouses themselves will know if their consent is provided freely. If a person does not consent or lacks capacity to consent to a marriage, that marriage must be viewed as a forced marriage whatever the reason for the marriage taking place. Capacity to consent can be assessed and tested but is time and decision specific

Motives prompting forced marriage Perpetrators who force their children or other family members into marriage often justify their behaviour as protecting their children, building stronger families and preserving 'so-called' cultural or religious beliefs.

When challenged on this practice, they often do not see anything wrong in this approach. The act of forcing another person into marriage cannot be justified on religious grounds; every major faith condemns it and crucially, freely given consent is a prerequisite of all religions.

Often perpetrators are convinced that they are upholding the cultural traditions of their home country, when in fact these practices and values may have in fact changed.

There are also others who are placed under significant pressure from their extended family to ensure their children or other family members are married. In some instances, an agreement may have even been made about marriage when a child is in its infancy.

There is currently no statutory definition of HBA.

HBA is defined as 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 practice. (College of Police APP, 2017).

HBA is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families and/or communities to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative or community member has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code or code of behaviour. An honour code can define a family's mindset, way of life or lifestyle.

Indicators:

- Absence and persistent absence
- Fear about forthcoming school holidays
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality
- Poor exam results
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- Prevented from going on to further or higher education

Responding to an incident

- Take the child seriously
- The pressures on the child to keep silent are enormous. Be patient, supportive and caring, plus stay calm.
- Inform the DSL immediately via the normal reporting and recording procedures
- Record verbatim what has been reported to you by the child

Further information

[Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage Policy and Procedure \(northlincscmars.co.uk\)](http://northlincscmars.co.uk)

[The Blue Door](#)

[Home office Forced marriage website](#)

[WTG 2018](#)

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