

Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

Includes Female Genital Mutilation (**FGM**) Forced Marriage (**FM**) and Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief (**CALFAB**).

Everyday, people in the UK are in danger of Honour Based Abuse if there is a belief they have dishonoured their family and/or community members.

What is HBA?

An incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse committed to protect or perceived defence the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or communities code of behaviour.'

Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims of so called 'honour based abuse', which is used to assert male power in order to control a female's behaviour and sexuality.

Contents

What is HBA?
Our Responsibility
[Victims and concepts of honour](#)
[Forced Marriage](#)
[FGM](#)
[Child Abuse linked to Faith](#)
[Contacts and support agencies](#)



Our Responsibility

As local service providers - whether that's in health, care, education, or public services - we get the chance to speak to the victim or potential victim, and to save a life from abuse. Remain **Open-minded** – HBA cuts across all Cultures, Nationalities, Faith Groups and Communities where a space or area is shared, and usually heavily male dominated.

Independent Interpreter

If you are asked to provide an Interpreter you **must** use an independent Interpreter, never a chaperone, family or community member.

Remember! *When requesting an interpreter, ask for the service to be sourced outside of the victim's area. This will reduce any concern over possible connection with the victim's community or family. Interpreters should speak directly to the victim, and not via a 3rd party, and consider the sex of the Interpreter (since this can increase risk in some cultures).*

Safeguarding

Be professionally curious, aware of the [One Chance Rule](#) and safeguarding obligations when dealing with honour abuse, forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

Personal Data - Data Protection Act 2018 – GDPR:

[Disclosures in the public interest are justified where:](#)

- this may assist in the prevention, detection and prosecution of a serious crime
- failure to disclose would put the patient or someone else at serious risk.

HBA Statistics (England & Wales) - year ending Mar 2024

Total cases of HBA recorded = 2,755

FGM = 111 Forced Marriage = 201 Other Tagged Offences = 2,443

- 11% were for assault without injury; 20% for controlling and coercive behaviour, and a further 14% for assault with injury.
- Over half (**54% - 60** offences) of the FGM offences were reported to the police under the mandatory reporting duty for FGM

Potential Victims:

- Male or female (women predominantly but not exclusively)
- The male sexual partner of a woman who is perceived as having brought dishonour to the family/community
- A person perceived to have conspired or assisted such a relationship

Barriers of Reporting

- Loyalties to abusers
- Culture and religion
- Victims with insecure immigration status
- Difficulties speaking or reading English
- Victims underestimating danger from their families and/or communities
- Previous poor or unsafe service or reduced access to services

Consequences

- Physical violence, rape
- Emotional, psychological, financial, coercion and controlling behaviours
- Mutilation
- Abduction, false imprisonment
- Withdrawal from education
- Forced into marriage
- Death (extreme cases)

Concept of Honour:

- Extremely important to the communities
- Fundamental abuse of Human Rights
- Collection of practices used to control behaviour
- Protecting perceived culture and religious beliefs

Concept of Dishonour:

- Compromises a family's and/or communities' honour
- Brings shame leading to consequences
- Consequences occur when perpetrators perceive a relative has shamed the family/ community

Motivators:

- Controlling – unwanted behaviour, sexuality
- Peer group or family pressure
- Land, property and wealth remains within the family
- Protecting perceived cultural & religious ideals (often misguided)
- Preventing relationships outside the ethnic cultural, religion or caste group

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is when a person does not consent and faces physical pressure to marry (for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. made to feel like bringing shame on family).

Victims can be both female and male.

Professionals must consider added vulnerabilities in cases of people with conditions that might impair their capacity (e.g. dementia, brain injury, mental health, learning disabilities).

A person commits an offence under the law of England and Wales if he or she:

- Uses violence, threats or any other form of coercion for the purpose of causing another person to enter into a marriage, and believes, or ought reasonably to believe, that the conduct may cause the other person to enter into the marriage without free and full consent.
- The law in England and Wales (not yet Scotland) changed in 2023 – **children under 18** cannot marry and it is an offence for a person to cause a child under 18 to enter into a marriage. Children under 18 are automatically deemed to lack capacity to consent to marriage; there is no requirement to show any duress, pressure or coercion.
- Practices any form of deception with the intention of causing another person to leave the United Kingdom and intends the other person to be subjected to conduct outside the United Kingdom if the victim were in England or Wales.

Individuals have the right to choose whom they marry, when they marry, or if they marry at all.

Forced Marriage Unit (FMU):

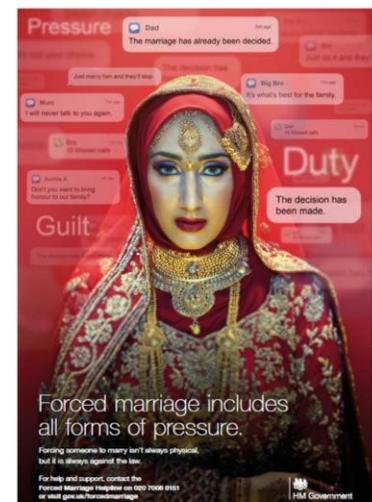
FMU work with embassy staff to rescue victims held captive, raped, forced into a marriage or into having an abortion.

UK FMU assists actual and potential victims of forced marriage, as well as professionals working in the social, educational and health sectors.

FMU has handled cases relating to countries across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

For more information and contact details, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

If you are concerned about an individual, contact 999 in the first instance

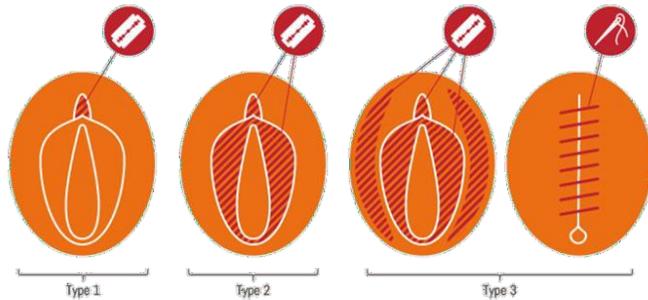


What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

The World Health Organisation describes it as:

"procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons"

There are four types of FGM



Type 1: Clitoridectomy: Partial or total removal of the clitoris.

Type 2: Excision: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora.

Type 3: Infibulation: Narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal.

Type 4: All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g., pricking, piercing, incising, scraping, stretching and cauterising the genital area.

Impact on Health

FGM causes severe pain, difficulty in passing urine/urine infections, HIV, infertility and damage to organs, genital tissue swelling, death, difficult labour, impaired wound healing, excessive bleeding: (haemorrhage), shock caused by infection, pain, psychological consequences (PTSD).

As a professional, you may be asked:

- For a translator/interpreter, if they need one – remember, you **must use an independent Interpreter**; never a chaperone, family or community member.
- Questions about their body
- About any pains or discomfort that could be the result of FGM
- Any symptoms they should look out for
- How does FGM affect their sexual health
- About different treatment options available to them and any potential side effects
- If they can I talk to someone about FGM
- How can they make sex less painful

Duty to Notify

- **ALL** regulated professionals **MUST** report known cases of FGM
- Personal duty – cannot be transferred to anyone else
- Applies to under 18's only
- Applies in cases of "known" FGM (disclosed by victim or visually confirmed)
- Duty applies to all regulated professions: clinicians, social workers and teachers
- Failure to comply with the duty will be dealt with via existing disciplinary measures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

Sadia Hussein – FGM Survivor

Hussein's horrendous labour was a direct result of the female genital mutilation (FGM) she suffered at the age of 10. Like so many women, her trauma did not end there. It returned, years later, when she got married, and underwent further cutting to prepare her body for sex. And it was there once again, in labour, when she feared she would lose both her baby's life and her own.



Sadia Hussein.
Photograph: Peter Caton/ The Guardian

Now Hussein's campaign to end mutilation has led to a staggering change in attitudes. To read Sadia's full story, please click [here](#)

News source: The Guardian Online

Risk Factors

- Older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
- Child is born to a woman who has undergone FGM
- Belief FGM is integral to cultural/ religious identity
- Female talks about a 'special procedure to 'become a woman'
- Female talks about a long holiday to country where the practice is prevalent
- Parent or family member expresses concern relating to FGM
- Family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other)
- Sections are missing from a girl's Red book (PCHR)

Why is FGM Practiced?

Below are some of the reasons that those who believe in FGM give for the practice. **FGM is a crime no matter what reason is used to justify its practice.**

- Preserves a girl's virginity/ chastity
- A rite of passage - viewed as being desirable
- Belief that it makes sexual relations safer/more pleasurable for men
- Upholds family honour
- Is seen to cleanse and purify a girl
- Fulfils a religious requirement believed to exist
- Social acceptance, especially for marriage
- Gives the family a sense of belonging to the community
- Preserves a custom/tradition
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth safer for the infant
- Is seen to rid the family of bad luck or evil spirits
- Believed to reduce a woman's libido, preventing extramarital affairs

Other names for FGM

Circumcision, Cut, Pharaonic, Infibulation (Type 3), Sunna Type 1, 2 and 4.

Sunna means "path or way" in Arabic and refers to the tradition of Muhammad, although none of the procedures are required within Islam.

The term infibulation derives from fibula, Latin for clasp. The surgical infibulation of women came to be known as pharaonic circumcision in Sudan and as Sudanese circumcision in Egypt. In Somalia, it is known simply as qodob ("to sew up").



Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFAB)

Abuse linked to faith or belief is where concerns for a child's welfare have been identified, and could be caused by, a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual or satanic abuse features; or when practices linked to faith or belief are harmful to a child.

Some Examples of Potential Victims

- Learning difficulties
- Behavioural concerns
- Disability
- Beautiful
- Gifted and talented
- Child accused of being possessed and causing the death
- Lefthanded

Types of Belief Abuse:

- Beating, burning, cutting/ stabbing
- Semi-strangulation
- Deprived of sleep
- Starvation
- Made to sleep in the bath or forced to have cold baths
- Isolation, being tied or locked up
- Being held under water
- Having chilli pepper, salt or ginger applied to eyes or genitals
- Sexual exploitation and abuse

UK Cases: <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/>

This type of abuse is under-reported

Any abuse that takes place against those who are branded (or labelled) either as a witch or as having been possessed by an evil spirit is unacceptable.

Significant harm (including murder) can occur because of concerted efforts to 'excise' or 'deliver' evil from a child (or vulnerable adult).

Contacts and Support Agencies

- NIDAS - Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service for those assessed to be at high or medium risk of harm
- Freedom – 24/7 Helpline 0845 607 0133
- National FGM Centre
- Karma Nirvana Honour Network Helpline – 0800 5999 247
- IKROW – Iranian & Kurdish Women
- Forced Marriage Unit
- Southall Black Sisters
- Women's Aid
- NSPCC Asian Helplines available in Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu
- Health, Research & Development (FORWARD)
- The African Well Women's Clinic (AWWC)
- <https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

GUIDANCE

HM Government Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage - Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage Published March 22

HM Government - Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation
Published July 20

[Back to the beginning of the document.](#)

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)



- Police
- Children Services
- Child Abuse Investigation Team/Units
- Public Protection Units
- Social Services/Housing/Health
- Specialists support services
- FCO Forced Marriage Unit
- CPS
- MARACS/MAPPA
- If someone is in immediate danger call 999. If you are concerned about a vulnerable adult, call 0344 800 8020. If you are concerned about a child call 0344 800 8020
- MASH HBA Team can be contacted here – MashHBA@norfolk.police.uk