

# ‘HONOUR’ KILLINGS IN THE UK

By Emily Dyer



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## About the Author

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Emily Dyer is a Research Fellow at The Henry Jackson Society. She specialises in women’s rights, as well as Islamism and terrorism. She authored *Marginalising Egyptian Women*, having spent time in Cairo interviewing leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt’s women’s rights movement. Emily has presented her research on a range of platforms, including the British Parliament, the White House, and the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has written about women’s rights and human rights issues for publications including *Foreign Affairs*, *The Observer*, *The Telegraph*, *The Huffington Post*, *City AM*, *Prospect Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, *World Affairs*, *CTC Sentinel* and *Standpoint* magazine. She has travelled widely in Syria, Egypt, Morocco and Turkey.

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## Executive Summary

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Thousands of people living in the United Kingdom are at risk of losing their lives to an unwritten code of conduct known as 'honour'. Girls across the UK are raised to believe that their purpose in life is to uphold the 'honour' of the family. If they bring dishonour, they will pay the price with their lives. Women have come to the UK in order to escape violent cultural practises abroad - from female genital mutilation to the threat of 'honour' killings - yet have been met with the same brutality and dangers here.

Successful efforts by campaigners to raise awareness of these issues, as well as provide victim support, are not being matched by those whose responsibility it is to protect British citizens: the government. Many victims are still being let down by a government that is failing, not only to deal with crises, but to prevent them from happening in the first place.

### Scale of the Problem

- The exact number of 'honour' killings each year in the UK is unknown. While, in 2003, the police estimated that 12 'honour' killings took place in the UK in 2002, the numbers are likely to be much higher;
- According to our database of killings or attempted killings, 29 cases have been reported in the media to have taken place within the UK in the last five years (11 in 2010, five in 2011, nine in 2013 and four cases in 2014);
- Of all reported cases since 2010, 11 were attempted killings, and 18 were actual killings.

### Nature of the Problem

#### Why do 'Honour' Killings Occur?

- While the reasons can vary broadly, the majority of reported cases since 2010 have occurred due to the victim bringing 'dishonour' to the family as a result of an issue relating to marriage or the victims' choice in partner. An 'honour' killing, therefore, takes place in order to erase the 'dishonour' of the family within the wider community.

#### Who is Involved in 'Honour' Killings?

- The majority of victims of 'honour' killings and Honour Based Violence (HBV) are girls and women. Of all reported UK cases in the past five years, the majority of victims were females. However, men are also victims of 'honour' killings. In the cases of male victims reported in the media over the past five years, the perpetrators usually included the families of a current or ex-partner;
- Young people are those at most risk of HBV. Where the ages of the victims of reported 'honour' killings are known, just less than half were 25 or under - all but three of whom were female. The ages of victims in reported cases ranged from 16 to 56 years old. While the total number of perpetrators of reported 'honour' killings and attempted killings throughout the past five years remains unspecified within open source material, the ages (of those whose age was known) ranged from 17 to 59 years old.

## 'Honour' Killings in the UK

### **Relationships between Victims and Perpetrators**

- The majority of reported killings have been carried out by close family members. In a little over half (15) of all cases of UK 'honour' killings reported in the media over the past five years, the perpetrators were current or former partners and/or that partner's family. In another nine cases, the victims' parents were involved (of which two cases also included the victims' male siblings) in the killing.

### **Roles of Women in 'Honour' Killings**

- While men commit the majority of 'honour' killings, there are cases in which women have played both active and passive roles. While these women share the belief that a woman can bring shame and dishonour, there is also immense pressure put on all family members to guard the 'honour' of the family.

### **Most Common Ethnic Origins of those Involved in 'Honour' Killings**

- HBV and 'honour' killings take place across a range of communities of different ethnic origins. Of the 22 out of 29 reported cases of killings and attempted killings from 2010 where the ethnicity of the victims is known or alleged, 15 were of Pakistani origin, three of Indian, one of Bangladeshi, one of Palestinian/Syrian, one of Kuwaiti and, one of white British. Therefore, most reported UK 'honour' killings and attempted killings have been carried out against people of South Asian origin, the majority of whom have Pakistani ethnic origin.

### **Religion and 'Honour' Killings**

- HBV is not associated with a particular religion or religious practice, and has been recorded across Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. However, in the UK, the communities deemed by women's rights activists to be most at risk are those with links to South Asia, which, according to the 2011 census, overwhelmingly follow Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism. Furthermore, while predominantly considered to be a 'cultural' practise, HBV can be caused by the 'dishonour' of a family brought about by a relationship that transgresses religious boundaries

### **Killings of British Nationals and Residents Abroad**

- Victims are often killed having been taken abroad and to their family's place of origin. Perpetrators appear to do so due to a lower risk of being caught;
- While there are no reliable figures on the total number of female British residents and/or citizens who have been killed abroad in the name of honour, over a third (11 of the 29) of reported cases of killings/attempted killings in the past five years were committed abroad – all of which took place in Pakistan.

### **Risks Posed to Victims Seeking Help**

- Family members often actively attempt to find family members who have run away and/or attempted to seek help for having brought 'dishonour' against their family or community;
- Having run away from home, HBV victims face a risk, not only of being tracked down by their families, but of being returned to them by members of their community and agencies seeking to mediate due to a lack of understanding relating to the risks;

## 'Honour' Killings in the UK

- There is a risk from professionals involved in various lines of victim-support. Some women fleeing HBV or forced marriages have come into contact with professionals such as social workers, police officers, or councillors from the same community who possess similar, if not the same, views to that of the victims' families.

### **Impact of 'Honour' Codes on Victims' Mental Health**

- Victims of forced marriage and HBV suffer both physically and emotionally. In the period leading up to a forced marriage, young women are often withdrawn from school and can be imprisoned in the family home or elsewhere;
- Women and girls can often deeply internalise concepts of 'honour' so that they may feel unable to defy their families' wishes. This isolation from the outside world can be accompanied by physical violence and can lead to mental illness, self-harm, and suicide.

### **Obstacles and Opportunities for Change**

The government recently established a law criminalising forced marriage, setting up inspections by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) into police forces in their handling of cases. Furthermore, the Office for the Children's Commissioner has set up an enquiry into forced marriages and the Forced Marriage Commission, chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss, is currently looking into the scale of the problem and the real barriers and challenges for professionals and victims. Yet, despite recent progress, there has been little sign of the government's long term commitment to much needed multi-agency engagement and victim support.

#### **Roles of Communities**

- Families and members of the community often play an integral role in the perpetuation of HBV and 'honour' killings. This can manifest itself in different ways: disbelief; silence; complicity; and, defending the principle of 'honour';
- Women's groups are taking special precautionary measures due to being targeted by members of the same communities. This can hinder the groups' ability to conduct their activities.

#### **Challenges in Raising Awareness and Identifying Victims**

- *Schools*: there is currently a severe lack of awareness and willingness to cooperate among schools. This prevents teachers from: firstly, being able to help prevent HBV through education; but also to identify and protect victims of HBV. Women's groups have also disappointed by the lack of commitment from the current Education Secretary and the Department for Education on this issue;
- *Police*: police forces are failing to properly identify, record, and report 'honour'-based crimes;
- While women's groups such as IKRWO and Karma Nirvana have a unique level of understanding and knowledge of HBV, their efforts to reach out and engage with schools and police forces have so far largely been ignored or rejected.

#### **Government Funding**

- Women's support groups for victims of forced marriage and HBV currently provide a unique service within the UK. However, they are not receiving adequate financial support from the government.

**Priorities for action should include the following:**

**Raising Awareness**

- It is critical that the government take the lead in helping to raise awareness on a local level with services that have points of contact with victims and/or perpetrators of 'honour'-based violence. This will help to not only to deal with crises, but to prevent others from taking place.

**Support for Women's Groups**

- Women's groups on the ground need long term commitment and engagement from the government and local authorities. In order for these groups to be able to continue providing support for those at risk and cope with the increasing demand, the government must incorporate these groups into its core, long term funding provision.

**Greater Accountability**

- In order to increase government accountability in its dealing with HBV, further assessments should be annually carried out by an independent body regarding its levels of commitment and its findings made public.

While there have been several recent indications that the government is at least recognising the problem of forced marriage HBV in the UK, there has been very little sign of the government's long term commitment to multi-agency engagement that is desperately needed to successfully fight HBV. Until the government provides adequate support for victims of 'honour'-based violence, as well as the groups that protect them, the rights and hopes of millions of girls and women will continue to be denied.

## Introduction

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Thousands of individuals living in the United Kingdom (UK) are at risk of losing their lives to an unwritten code of conduct known as ‘honour’. Girls in many communities in the UK are brought up to believe that their purpose in life is to uphold the ‘honour’ of the family and, if they bring dishonour instead, they will pay the price with their lives. Many women came to the UK in order to escape violent cultural practises abroad, from female genital mutilation to the threat of ‘honour’ killings, yet have been met with the same brutality and dangers here.

Until recent years, ‘honour’-based violence (HBV) was a term that was very rarely used or widely understood by the British public and policy makers. Yet, over the past decade, considerable progress has been made in raising awareness about HBV. Reports of ‘honour’ killing victims now make the headlines on a regular basis. Women’s rights groups have been at the forefront of educating politicians, law enforcers and the general public about the realities of HBV as well as helping to protect victims. Furthermore, thanks to the Karma Nirvana and Cosmopolitan’s ‘Britain’s Lost Women’ campaign, the UK will see the first official day of memory for the victims of HBV, taking place on 14 July 2015.

Yet, successful efforts to fill these gaps of knowledge and understanding as well as victim support are not being matched by those whose responsibility it is to protect British citizens, many of whom are still being let down by a government that is failing, not only to deal with crises, but to prevent them from happening in the first place.

*‘Honour’ Killings in the UK* uses first-hand interviews and original data analysis to address why ‘honour’ killings remain a widespread problem in this country. Having documented all UK ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings<sup>1</sup> that have taken place in the last five years to have been reported by the media, this report helps give a clearer picture of the nature and scale of the problem that plagues Britain today as well as what can be done to tackle the phenomenon.

The first section of the report focuses on various aspects of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings, such as the ethnic origin of the victims and perpetrators, the most common causes of such offences, the role of women in ‘honour’ killings, and the patterns behind ‘honour’ killings of UK citizens and/or residents abroad – drawing on relevant case studies of ‘honour’ killings throughout.

The second section of the report looks at the government’s progress to date in tackling HBV, as well as the main problem areas behind the perpetuation of ‘honour’ killings in the UK – Education, Funding and Police. As well as exploring the existing barriers to change, this report provides recommendations on what the government can do to help prevent further abuses from occurring.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘attempted killing’ is used in this report to describe an act of violence where the perpetrator’s apparent intent was to cause death rather than injury. For example, if the victim received threats to their life prior to the attack, it could be included as an attempted killing.

# 1. Background

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## 1.1 What is ‘Honour’-Based Violence?

‘Honour’ is often regarded as central to the social standing and position of families within certain communities. The concept is largely believed to be embodied by the young women and “is based on absolutely every move that [the woman] makes or every word that she says”.<sup>2</sup> The family ‘honour’ is therefore vested in her behaviour, appearance, and sexuality, and is “there to be guarded by men”.<sup>3</sup>

Women are taught from birth to follow a set of rules, or ‘honour’ codes, in order to avoid bringing ‘dishonour’ to the family. While these codes can vary from family to family, they are always based upon the regulation of the woman’s independence and freedom of movement, i.e. whether she is allowed to leave the family home and if so, who with and what time.<sup>4</sup> According to campaigner Jasvinder Sanghera, “a woman has to be controlled; she has to be sexually submissive, until it’s time for her to be married”.<sup>5</sup>

Adherence to these ‘honour’-codes is often guarded and enforced through ‘honour’-based violence (HBV), ranging from emotional and psychological abuse such as threats and intimidation, to sexual and physical abuse including rape,<sup>6</sup> violence and, in some cases, murder.<sup>7</sup> Forced marriage<sup>8</sup> and female genital mutilation (FGM),<sup>9</sup> often closely associated practices, are both honour-based forms of abuse.<sup>10 11</sup>

Breaking the rules is seen as destroying the reputation of the family<sup>12</sup> and is deserving of punishment at the discretion of male relatives.<sup>13</sup> The British Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) defines HBV as:

[...] a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Raheel Raza, president, *Muslims Facing Tomorrow*, May 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Dr. Qanta Ahmed, physician and author, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, founder, *AHA Foundation*, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> ‘“Honour” Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation: Guidance’, Hampshire, IOW, Southampton and Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Boards, April 2013.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> There is a clear distinction between forced marriages and arranged marriages. According to the UK government’s Forced Marriage Unit, guidance for MPs and Constituency Offices, “In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the intended spouses. In forced marriages, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure”, Forced Marriage Case Handling Guide for MPs and Constituency Offices, Home Office; Foreign & Commonwealth Office, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/35550/fmu-guide-mps.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/35550/fmu-guide-mps.pdf). Last visited: 13 December 2014.

<sup>9</sup> According to the World Health Organisation’s basic definition of female genital mutilation (FGM), it “comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”. See: ‘Female genital mutilation; Fact sheet No. 241’, updated February 2014, World Health Organisation, available at: [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/). Last visited: 14 August 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Chesler, P., ‘Are honour killings simply domestic violence?’, *The Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2009, pp. 61-69, available at: [www.meforum.org/2067/are-honor-killings-simply-domestic-violence](http://www.meforum.org/2067/are-honor-killings-simply-domestic-violence). Last visited: 21 July 2014.

<sup>11</sup> ‘“Honour” Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation: Guidance’, Hampshire, IOW, Southampton and Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Boards, April 2013.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Culture of discrimination: a fact sheet on honour killings’, *Amnesty International*, 2012, available at: [www.amnestyusa.org/sites/.../honor\\_killings\\_fact\\_sheet\\_final\\_2012.doc](http://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/.../honor_killings_fact_sheet_final_2012.doc). Last visited: 19 July 2014.

<sup>13</sup> ‘The Honour Killings Debate in Canada’, *Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership*, 27 August 2010, available at: [www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/files/pdf/HonourKillingsPaper\\_rw\\_20100827\\_web.pdf](http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/files/pdf/HonourKillingsPaper_rw_20100827_web.pdf). Last visited: 19 July 2014.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Honour based violence; Point 6; Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage’, The Crown Prosecution Service, available at: [www.cps.gov.uk/legal/h\\_to\\_k/honour\\_based\\_violence\\_and\\_forced\\_marriage/#a04](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/h_to_k/honour_based_violence_and_forced_marriage/#a04). Last visited: 30 June 2014.

HBV cuts across many cultures and communities, including: South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South and Eastern European.<sup>15</sup> In 2000, the United Nations Population Fund estimated that around 5,000 women die in ‘honour’ killings every year worldwide, the vast majority in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh.<sup>16</sup> According to human rights activist Raheel Raza:

‘Honour’, as I see it, being played out in these countries, comes from this tribal concept; the honour of a family, the honour of a tribe, the honour of a village is all vested in everything that the woman does. How she speaks, what she wears, who she speaks to, and that entire responsibility is placed on her. Anyone can decide that she is dishonouring the family or the tribe.<sup>17</sup>

While HBV is largely perpetrated by male members of a family against young women for failing to conform to their rules and regulations, men can also be victims of HBV (see: ‘2.2.2.1 Gender’, page 16). Moreover, many women have played both passive and active roles in the perpetuation of HBV.<sup>18</sup> However, given that a family’s ‘honour’ is centred on the behaviour of the woman, the majority of victims of HBV are also women. According to Chief Crown Prosecutor Nazir Afzal:

At the moment, in so many communities, in so many families, [honour] is merely used to suppress women, to oppress women. So, if they misbehave in some way, or make their own choice, they have dishonoured the family. If men do the same, well it’s men [...], they do what they want. Regrettably too often it’s used to control women.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.2 *‘Honour’-Based Violence and ‘Domestic’ Violence*

There are major differences between ‘honour’ and ‘domestic’ violence. For example, ‘honour’ killings are more likely to be premeditated than killings as a result of domestic violence, which are more likely to be unexpected and spontaneous.<sup>20</sup> The majority of UK ‘honour’ killings are planned in advance by one or more members of the victims’ family. Another difference is considered to be that apparent regret is shown by the perpetrator of domestic violence more often than that of HBV.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, despite differences, criminal cases involving HBV or domestic violence typically involve the same criminal offences, such as rape or murder, rather than a specific crime of ‘HBV’ or ‘domestic violence’. However, these crimes are treated as domestic violence or HBV depending on: the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator in the former; and, the motivation in the latter. For example, a husband charged with murder carried out to restore his honour will be prosecuted as a murderer but the crime will be flagged under HBV. Domestic violence is prosecuted in the same way, but refers to violence against a family member or intimate partner, rather than to restore honour.<sup>22</sup> HBV, however, need not be carried out against a family member or intimate partner – rather it could be a community

<sup>15</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*, p. 4 & 5.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Chapter 3: Ending Violence against Women and Girls’, United Nations Population Fund, 2000, available at: [www.unfpa.org/swp/2000/english/ch03.html](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2000/english/ch03.html). Last visited: 15 July 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Raheel Raza, president, *Muslims Facing Tomorrow*, May 2014.

<sup>18</sup> See: ‘2.2.4 Roles of Women in Honour Killings’, page 17.

<sup>19</sup> ‘UK arranged marriages: Kidnapping, rape and murder in the name of family honour’, *ABC News*, 12 November 2013, available at: [www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-12/foreign-correspondent-honour-killings/5082946](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-12/foreign-correspondent-honour-killings/5082946). Last visited: 21 July 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Chesler, P., ‘Are honor killings simply domestic violence?’, *The Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2009, pp. 61-69.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> ‘Violence against Women and Girls Crime Report 2012-2013’, Crown Prosecution Service, July 2013, available at: [www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps\\_vawg\\_report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_vawg_report_2013.pdf). Last visited: 1 September 2014.

leader, for example, taking it upon him/herself to restore honour to his/her community by murdering a woman accused of bringing shame (see: ‘2.2.8 Risks Posed to Victims Seeking Help’, page 24).

### 1.3 ‘Honour’ Killings

The most extreme end of the spectrum of HBV is where community interests and values are imposed on an individual at the expense of many of their human rights under the Human Rights Act, including the right to life.<sup>23</sup> ‘Honour’ killings often take place when an individual’s perceived failings become known to the wider community and, according to a 2010 study, the main factor which drives families to act is the fear that the individual is, will or has damaged their standing in the community by breaking established ‘honour’ codes.<sup>24</sup> An ‘honour’ killing therefore takes place in order to completely absolve the family’s ‘dishonour’ within the wider community.

## 2. Findings

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### 2.1 *Scale of the Problem*

The exact number of ‘honour’ killings each year in the UK is unknown. While, in 2003, the police estimated that 12 ‘honour’ killings took place in the UK in 2002,<sup>25</sup> the numbers per year are likely to be much higher.<sup>26</sup> According to our database<sup>27</sup> of killings or attempted killings,<sup>28</sup> 29 cases<sup>29</sup> have been reported in the media to have taken place within the UK in the last five years (11 in 2010, five in 2011, nine in 2013 and four cases<sup>30</sup> in 2014. There were no cases reported in open-source material of killings or attempted killings in 2012).<sup>31</sup> Of all reported cases since 2010, 11 were attempted killings, and 18 were actual killings.<sup>32</sup>

The past five years have seen the release of more concrete information regarding various aspects of HBV and forced marriage, due to the concerted efforts by several UK-based charities.<sup>33</sup> In 2010, the UK police reported a minimum of 2,800 cases of HBV, including: abduction, mutilation, acid attacks,

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<sup>23</sup> ‘The Human Rights Act’, *Liberty 80*, available at: [www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act). Last visited: 22 December 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community: Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Kurd who slit daughter’s throat in “honour killing” is jailed for life’, *The Guardian*, 30 September 2003, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/sep/30/religion.world](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/sep/30/religion.world). Last visited: 27 July 2014.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and “Honour”-Based Violence’, Home Affairs Select Committee, House of Commons, Sixth Report of Session 2007-08, available at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/263/263i.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/263/263i.pdf). Last visited: 8 January 2015.

<sup>27</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database documents all cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the mainstream media to have taken place between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014. Research into the attacks was carried out through in depth searches using the search tool, *Lexis Nexis*. Criteria for inclusion is based on the definitions of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings, outlined in Footnote 1 and the ‘Background’ section.

<sup>28</sup> In the cases of attempted killings, the victims’ survival was extremely unlikely, i.e. victims who survived gun shots but remained paralysed; or, those who were kidnapped by individuals who had previously threatened to kill the victim an intention to murder, but who were rescued or managed to escape at the last minute.

<sup>29</sup> The small number of cases indicates the need for caution in interpreting this data.

<sup>30</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>31</sup> However, the high profile court trial of Shafiea Ahmed’s parents for her murder in 2003 took place in 2012.

<sup>32</sup> While there were 29 reported victims of killings/attempted killings since the beginning of 2010, the total number of perpetrators (due to some cases such as Shafiq Ahmed, whereby the total number of perpetrators has yet to be confirmed) of reported ‘honour’ killings or attempted killings remains unspecified. However, the minimum number of reported perpetrators is 29.

<sup>33</sup> There are three main charities challenging and raising awareness of ‘honour’-based violence (HBV), particularly in South East Asian communities: the Iranian Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation (IKWRO) and Karma Nirvana and Southall Black Sisters. These groups offer counselling services and advice to victims whose situations are often misunderstood by the police. All three organisations aim to increase awareness about HBV through holding seminars and conferences, as well as providing training to other organisations in how to deal with victims or potential victims, which promotes the multi-agency approach to tackling the problem.

beatings, and murder.<sup>34</sup> This marked a 47% increase in comparable reported cases between 2009 and 2010.<sup>35</sup>

It is currently unclear as to whether or not the rate of HBV is decreasing or increasing, due to a current lack of reporting (see: '3.2.2 Challenges in Raising Awareness and Identifying Victims', page 31). Karma Nirvana, a UK charity that supports victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour-based abuse, has a helpline that currently receives over 850 calls per month, the majority of which are from victims themselves. The number of calls received by the helpline increased between 2010 and 2013 by 47%.<sup>36</sup> While this is seen as a sign of success - in that an increasing number of people are able to access support by calling the helpline - centre staff believe it represents just the tip of the iceberg due to the fact that HBV is still a vastly underreported problem.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2 Nature of the Problem

### 2.2.1 Why do 'Honour' Killings Occur?

The majority of reported cases since the beginning of 2010 have occurred due to the victim bringing 'dishonour' to the family as a result of an issue relating to marriage or the victims' choice in partner.<sup>38</sup> The most common issues were: concern over a re-marriage, whereby the ex-partner was unhappy with the new marriage having taken place; the belief that the victim was cheating on her husband; the victim leaving the man she was engaged to be married to; the victims' families being unhappy with their female relatives' choice of spouse; and, the victim's desire or efforts to study and become more independent, rather than get married in accordance with the family's wishes. Furthermore, two parents were killed as a result of refusing to marry off their daughters to the perpetrator's nephews.<sup>39</sup>

In 2010, Naila Afsar was kidnapped and drugged after she refused to marry what her family considered to be the 'right' man (See: 'Case Study: Naila Afsar', page 18).<sup>40</sup> Kalsoom Bibi was said by her father Mohammed Riaz Inayat to have brought "dishonour on the family" due to her wanting to go to Dubai to marry for love instead of staying at home in Birmingham for an arranged marriage. As a result, her father attempted to kill her, her mother, her two sisters and a family friend by setting their house in Birmingham on fire while they were all inside.<sup>41</sup> Her mother (Inayat's wife) died and the other women were injured. Another woman - Farkhanda Younis - was killed by her husband. The court heard that Ms Younis was "flirtatious and attractive", had "many boyfriends" and lived "an entirely Westernised

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<sup>34</sup> IKWRO's findings were based on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests sent to all police forces across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Of all 52 FOI requests made, 39 forces responded with 2,823 cases in total, while 13 did not respond to the requests. See: 'Nearly 3000 cases of 'honour' violence every year in the UK', *IKWRO*, 3 December 2011, available at: [www.ikwro.org.uk/2011/12/nearly-3000-cases-of-honour-violence-every-year-in-the-uk/](http://www.ikwro.org.uk/2011/12/nearly-3000-cases-of-honour-violence-every-year-in-the-uk/). Last visited: 12 July 2014.

<sup>35</sup> 12 of the forces that responded provided comparable data for 2009 and 2010, the rest only provided for 2010. See: "'Honour' attack numbers revealed by UK police forces', *BBC News*, 3 December 2011, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16014368](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16014368). Last visited: 12 July 2014.

<sup>36</sup> 'Summary stats: 2008-2014' (available upon request), *Karma Nirvana*.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Unless stated otherwise (if the couple is married), 'partner' refers to "a person with whom one shares an intimate relationship; one member a couple". See: 'Partner', *Merriam-Webster*, available at: [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/partner](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/partner). Last visited: 2 September 2014.

<sup>39</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of 'honour' killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>40</sup> 'Muslim grandmother who kidnapped and drugged her own daughter because she wouldn't marry the "right" man is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 27 July 2012, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2179946/Muslim-grandmother-kidnapped-drugged-daughter-wouldnt-marry-right-man-jailed.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2179946/Muslim-grandmother-kidnapped-drugged-daughter-wouldnt-marry-right-man-jailed.html). Last visited: 7 July 2014.

<sup>41</sup> 'Father who started fire in attempt to stop daughter "dishonouring family" by marrying for love is found guilty of murdering wife and three other daughters', *Daily Mail*, 30 October 2013, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2480364/Father-guilty-murdering-wife-setting-house-fire.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2480364/Father-guilty-murdering-wife-setting-house-fire.html). Last visited: 7 July 2014.

lifestyle”, to the anger of her husband, whom the prosecution described as “possessive [and] controlling”.<sup>42</sup>

*CASE STUDY: Rania Alayed*

**In June 2013, Rania Alayed was murdered by her husband in a pre-planned attack<sup>43</sup> for bringing ‘dishonour’ to his family.**

In 2005, Palestinian citizens<sup>44</sup> Rania Alayed and her husband (whom she married when she was 16 years old), Ahmed al-Khatib, moved to the UK from Syria.<sup>145</sup>

Throughout her marriage, Alayed suffered domestic abuse by her husband. Al-Khatib is reported to have beaten her when he did not like the food she had prepared for him. He also reportedly raped and throttled her.<sup>46</sup>

As a result of the abuse, Rania “sought help from the Citizens Advice Bureau, the police, and eventually a solicitor” as well as her family.<sup>47</sup> She told one friend of her fear that her husband would kill her, and he was once reportedly seen by a friend to be “angry like a monster shouting [that] he would kill her”.<sup>48</sup>

Rania began to detach herself from the marriage, gaining greater independence by attending college and making male and female friends outside of her family circle.<sup>49</sup>

In 2013 Rania filed for divorce, rented another property and reportedly started a relationship with a married man whom she had met on the internet. Her behaviour is said to have intensely angered her husband’s family.<sup>50</sup>

Al-Khatib then lured his wife to his brother’s house by asking her to drop off their three children so they could spend the weekend with their father.<sup>51</sup> Almost an hour after arriving at

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<sup>42</sup> “‘I will kill you’: What jealous husband said just weeks before he stabbed his Westernised Muslim wife 19 times in neck after finding out about affair, court hears”, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2573944/Westernised-wife-stabbed-death-Muslim-husband-birthday-sex-man-attack.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2573944/Westernised-wife-stabbed-death-Muslim-husband-birthday-sex-man-attack.html). Last visited: 7 July 2014.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Husband jailed for life over Rania Alayed murder’, *The Guardian*, 4 June 2014, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jun/04/husband-jailed-life-rania-alayed-murder](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jun/04/husband-jailed-life-rania-alayed-murder). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>44</sup> ‘American woman and partner attending family wedding in Pakistan murdered in suspected honour killing’, *Daily Mail*, 25 November 2011, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2065622/Saif-Rehman-Uzma-Naurin-murdered-suspected-honour-killing-Pakistan.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2065622/Saif-Rehman-Uzma-Naurin-murdered-suspected-honour-killing-Pakistan.html). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Rania Alayed: Mum was warned she would be killed by violent husband years before her death’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 June 2014, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/rania-alayed-honour-killing-mum-7192395](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/rania-alayed-honour-killing-mum-7192395). Last visited: 18 July 2014.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> ‘Jealous husband jailed for life over ‘honour killing’ of Manchester mum Rania Alayed’, *Mancunian Matters*, 4 June 2014, available at: [www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/content/040669249-jealous-husband-jailed-life-over-honour-killing-manchester-mum-rania-alayed](http://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/content/040669249-jealous-husband-jailed-life-over-honour-killing-manchester-mum-rania-alayed). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Rania Alayed case: jealous husband jailed for 20 years for honour killing of his wife’, *The Independent*, 4 June 2014, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/jealous-husband-jailed-for-20-years-for-honour-killing-of-his-wife-9487901.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/jealous-husband-jailed-for-20-years-for-honour-killing-of-his-wife-9487901.html). Last visited: 23 July 2014. See also: ‘Husband who fled Middle East for Britain “murdered his wife and buried her body by a lay-by after she left him and became Westernised”’, *Daily Mail*, 1 May 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2617040/Husband-fled-Middle-East-Britain-murdered-wife-buried-body-lay-left-Westernised.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2617040/Husband-fled-Middle-East-Britain-murdered-wife-buried-body-lay-left-Westernised.html). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Husband who lured his “Westernised” wife to her death in “honour killing” then dressed up in her clothes to convince family and friends she was still alive is jailed’, *Daily Mail*, 5 June 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2648651/Husband-lured-wife-death-dressed-clothes-convince-family-friends-alive-jailed.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2648651/Husband-lured-wife-death-dressed-clothes-convince-family-friends-alive-jailed.html). Last visited: 17 July 2014.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Husband accused of murdering his wife claims he killed her when she appeared “as an evil apparition”’, *The Mirror*, 1 May 2014, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raniaalayed-murder-trial-husband-accused-3483847](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raniaalayed-murder-trial-husband-accused-3483847). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

## 'Honour' Killings in the UK

the address, his brother left with the children.<sup>52</sup> Shortly afterwards, Ahmed left the house wearing his wife's clothing, and carrying her dead body in a suitcase.<sup>53</sup>

Al-Khatib had beaten Rania Alayed to death in an attack described by Detective Chief Inspector Phil Reade of the Greater Manchester Police Major Incident Team as a "pre-planned honour killing".<sup>54</sup> Al-Khatib was convicted in June 2014, receiving a life sentence.<sup>55</sup> His brothers received three and four years imprisonment.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.2.2. Who is Involved in 'Honour' Killings?

#### 2.2.2.1 Gender

The majority of victims of 'honour' killings and HBV are girls and women.<sup>57</sup> Of all reported UK cases in the past five years, the majority of victims were females (22 females/7 males).<sup>58</sup> However, men are also victims of 'honour' killings in the UK. In the cases of male victims reported in the media over the past five years, the perpetrators usually included the families of a current or ex-partner. For example, one man was killed alongside his wife and daughter by his ex-wife's family. Another male victim was the partner of a British Pakistani woman, both of whom were attacked by the woman's ex-husband in March 2011. While both survived, the man is now paralysed. In another case, in August 2010, a man and his wife were shot because they refused to marry their daughters to the perpetrator's nephews.<sup>59</sup>

'Honour' killings against men also took place prior to 2010. In 2004, 19 year old Arash Gorbani was stabbed to death by the father and teenage brothers of his girlfriend, Manna Begum. During the trial, the court heard that this murder took place due to the "shame and dishonour" brought on the family as a result of the relationship.<sup>60</sup>

While men have committed the majority of reported 'honour' killings in the UK, there are cases in which women have played both active and passive roles in killings and attempted killings in the name of the family 'honour' (see: '2.2.4 Roles of Women in 'Honour' Killings', page 17).

#### 2.2.2.2 Age

Children and young people are the age group at most risk of HBV. Of the 25 cases where the ages of the victims of reported 'honour' killings/attempted killings are known, just less than half (13) were 25

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<sup>52</sup> 'Husband accused of murdering his wife claims he killed her when she appeared "as an evil apparition"', *The Mirror*, 1 May 2014, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raniaalayed-murder-trial-husband-accused-3483847](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raniaalayed-murder-trial-husband-accused-3483847). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>53</sup> 'Violent husband killed "westernised" wife and hid her body before pretending she was still alive, court hears', *Manchester Evening News*, 30 April 2014, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/violent-husband-killed-westernised-wife-7056325](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/violent-husband-killed-westernised-wife-7056325). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>54</sup> 'Husband jailed for life over Rania Alayed murder', *The Guardian*, 4 June 2014.

<sup>55</sup> 'Rania Alayed: Husband jailed for life after being found guilty of murder', *Manchester Evening News*, 4 June 2014, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/rania-alayed-husband-ahmed-al-khatib-7202175](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/rania-alayed-husband-ahmed-al-khatib-7202175). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>56</sup> 'Husband who lured his "Westernised" wife to her death in "honour killing" then dressed up in her clothes to convince family and friends she was still alive is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 5 June 2014.

<sup>57</sup> The law in the UK does not give a clear cut specific age at which a girl becomes a woman, rather, specific age limits vary between different relevant laws and government guidance. This is in contrast to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as anyone under the age of 18, which the UK ratified in 1991. Within this report, therefore, any female under the age of 18 are referred to as a 'girl' and those aged 18 or over are referred to as a 'woman'. See: 'Legal definition of a child: NSPCC factsheet', *NSPCC*, July 2013, available at: [www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/definition\\_of\\_a\\_child\\_wda59396.html#law](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/definition_of_a_child_wda59396.html#law). Last visited: 31 August 2014. See also: 'Convention on the Rights of the Child', United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, available at: [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx). Last visited: 31 August 2014.

<sup>58</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of 'honour' killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> 'Family guilty of "honour killing"', *BBC News*, 4 November 2005, available at: [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/oxfordshire/4407728.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/oxfordshire/4407728.stm). Last visited: 7 January 2015.

years old or younger – all but three of whom were female. The ages of victims in reported cases ranged from 16 to 56 years old.<sup>61</sup>

This finding is reflected in broader statistical data. In 2013, UK charity Karma Nirvana’s helpline for victims of forced marriage and HBV received 351 cases from victims aged 17 and under and 764 calls from victims aged between 18 and 24 – out of a total of 6,519 calls received that year.<sup>62</sup>

While the total number of perpetrators of reported ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings throughout the past five years remains unspecified within open source material, the ages (of those whose age was known) ranged from 17 to 59 years old. The results of a 2012 survey ordered by BBC Panorama showed that, among 16 to 24 year olds specifically, the percentage of those who agree that families should live according to the concept of honour was higher than other age groups, at 73%.<sup>63</sup>

### 2.2.3 Relationships between Victims and Perpetrators

The majority of reported killings have been carried out by close family members. In a little over half (15) of all cases of UK ‘honour’ killings reported in the media over the past five years, the perpetrators were current or former partners and/or that partner’s family.<sup>64</sup> In another nine cases, the victims’ parents were involved (of which two cases also included the victims’ male siblings) in the killing. In another two cases, siblings were involved in the killing without the parents. In another case, the victim (a taxi driver named Shafiq Ahmed) reportedly did not recognise his killers before they shot him over a feud involving his wife.<sup>65</sup> In the past five years there has been one reported case in which the perpetrator was a friend of the victim’s family.

This finding reflects a broader pattern in all HBV cases, whereby the perpetrators are almost always family members of the victim and, in the case of male victims, the family of their spouse.

### 2.2.4 Roles of Women in ‘Honour’ Killings

While men commit the majority of ‘honour’ killings, there are cases in which women have played both active and passive roles in killings and attempted killings in the name of the family ‘honour’. While this is the result of women sharing the belief that a woman can bring shame and dishonour upon the family,<sup>66</sup> there is also immense pressure put on all family members to guard the ‘honour’ of the family.

Therefore, women living within the ‘honour’ system can be made to feel as if they have no choice but to participate in violence and murder due to the threat to their own life if they do not. In some cases, for those women who go against this expectation and attempt to defend their daughters, “the threat over her life is enforced”, meaning that “those who are helping [their daughters] are at risk”.<sup>67</sup>

In the past five years, there has been one reported case whereby a female relative is known to have been actively involved in an attempted ‘honour’ killing (see: ‘Case Study: Naila Afzar’, page 18):

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<sup>61</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Honour Network Statistics – 2013’ (available upon request), *Karma Nirvana*, 2013.

<sup>63</sup> ‘13-34 Year Old Asians Poll’, *ComRes*, 13-27 February 2012, available at: [www.comres.co.uk/polls/BBC\\_Blakeway\\_Honour\\_Crime\\_Feb12.pdf](http://www.comres.co.uk/polls/BBC_Blakeway_Honour_Crime_Feb12.pdf). Last visited: 15 July 2014.

<sup>64</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Family horror as taxi driver shot dead in honour killing’, *Derby Telegraph*, 13 May 2011, available at: [www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/Family-horror-taxi-driver-shot-dead-honour-killing/story-11602897-detail/story.html](http://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/Family-horror-taxi-driver-shot-dead-honour-killing/story-11602897-detail/story.html). Last visited: 15 August 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

*CASE STUDY: Naila Afzar*

**In January 2010, Naila Afzar was drugged and kidnapped by her mother, brother, and brother-in-law as a result of her refusal to enter into an arranged marriage.**

Naila Afzar ended her relationship with her cousin whom her family had arranged for her to marry. As a result of being put “under a lot of pressure”<sup>68</sup> by her family, she fled to Newcastle in 2009. Whilst there she married a man named Afsar Saddiq.<sup>69</sup> She then attempted to salvage a relationship with her family. However, they began pressuring her to restart her previous relationship with her cousin and divorce her new husband.<sup>70</sup>

On 17 January 2010, Naila's 34 year old brother, Shamrez Khan, their 59 year old mother, Shamim Akhtar, and brother-in-law, Zahid Mahmud, travelled to Newcastle where she was living and broke into her flat.<sup>71</sup> They then threatened Naila and her husband, before taking her to her sister and her brother-in-law's house. They attempted to change Naila's mind, with her mother reportedly saying at one point saying that her daughter was “worse than a prostitute, you should be killed”.<sup>72</sup>

Two days later, Naila's family made her a drink containing lorazepam,<sup>73</sup> which can be used as a “date rape drug”,<sup>74</sup> before forcing her into a car in an attempt to return her to Bradford. However, when Naila did not return home for three days, her husband alerted the police.<sup>75</sup> Officers found her alive in a car in Rossendale, Lancashire.<sup>76</sup>

The perpetrators, Naila's brother-in-law, mother, and brother, were convicted on 27 July 2012 of drugging with intent to commit an indictable offence, kidnapping, and false imprisonment.<sup>77</sup> They were sentenced to three, four, and five years respectively.<sup>78</sup> The case is an example not only of the involvement of female relatives in 'honour' killings, but of how 'honour' codes can transcend generations within the family and extended family.<sup>79</sup>

Naila Afzar is not the only instance of women in the UK being an active participant in the killing of female relatives in order to restore family 'honour'. In 1998, 27 year old Surjit Athwal was killed after her mother-in-law, Bachan Athwal, urged relatives to murder her, due to her discovery that Surjit was having an affair and was planning to divorce her husband (Athwal's son). She lured Surjit to India,

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<sup>68</sup> 'Asian bride "drugged and held prisoner by her family after breaking off arranged marriage and secretly marrying another man"', *Daily Mail*, 1 November 2011, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2056069/Asian-bride-Naila-Afsar-held-prisoner-family-secret-marriage.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2056069/Asian-bride-Naila-Afsar-held-prisoner-family-secret-marriage.html). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> 'Family jailed in forced marriage row kidnap of Bradford woman', *BBC News*, 27 July 2012, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-19019538](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-19019538). Last visited: 7 July 2014.

<sup>71</sup> 'Family "drugged bride" after she broke off engagement', *The Telegraph*, 2 November 2011, available at:

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/8862250/Family-drugged-bride-after-she-broke-off-engagement.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/8862250/Family-drugged-bride-after-she-broke-off-engagement.html). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>72</sup> 'Family jailed in forced marriage row kidnap of Bradford woman', *BBC News*, 27 July 2012.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> 'Lorazepam Abuse and Drug Interactions', Lorazepam Abuse Help, [www.lorazepamabusehelp.com/lorazepam-abuse-and-drug-interactions](http://www.lorazepamabusehelp.com/lorazepam-abuse-and-drug-interactions). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>75</sup> "'Honour kidnappers" jailed for total of twelve years', *ITV*, 27 July 2012, available at: [www.itv.com/news/granada/story/2012-07-27/honour-kidnap-sentencing/](http://www.itv.com/news/granada/story/2012-07-27/honour-kidnap-sentencing/). Last visited: 20 July 2014.

<sup>76</sup> 'Family jailed in forced marriage row kidnap of Bradford woman', *BBC News*, 27 July 2012.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> "'Honour kidnappers" jailed for total of twelve years', *ITV*, 27 July 2012.

<sup>79</sup> 'Family jailed in forced marriage row kidnap of Bradford woman', *BBC News*, 27 July 2012.

telling her they were going to attend a ‘family wedding’, where she was then killed. Her mother-in-law was convicted and given a life sentence in July 2007.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, the mother of Rukhsana Naz, a pregnant 19 year old teenager living in Derby, played an integral role in her murder in 1999. Her mother did not believe that Rukhsana’s unborn baby was her husband’s. She offered Rukhsana an ultimatum: to either have an abortion or be killed by the family.<sup>81</sup> According to the prominent women’s campaigner, Jasvinder Sanghera, on the day the ultimatum was made, Rukhsana’s mother:

[...] sat on her legs while her brother strangled her to death [at the instruction of his mother],<sup>82</sup> and the youngest brother was made to watch because he was told it was his duty to uphold the honour of the future generations. Now, this mother was sentenced, she got a life sentence. And I was in the prison, because I give talks in prisons, and I was at the prison where she’s serving her sentence [...], 13 years down the line, and this mother says she’s not coming to hear me speak. She said to a prison officer to give me the message, “because I am in here in the name of my *izzat*<sup>83</sup> honour and in the name of Allah”.<sup>84</sup>

Rukhsana’s mother is said to “[have] no regret over what she has done”, despite the fact that she is still serving her time in prison.<sup>85</sup> Director of the Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation (IKWRO) Diana Nammi reports that this lack of remorse among female family members is not uncommon. For example, when she mentioned an ‘honour’ killing case during a public training session several years ago, a woman in the audience stood up and said “she deserved to be killed, or otherwise she would [have been] a bad example for her daughters”.<sup>86</sup>

#### *CASE STUDY: Shafilea Ahmed*

**In 2003, 17 year old Shafilea Ahmed was murdered by her parents in their home because they believed she had brought shame upon their family.**

Shafilea Ahmed’s parents - Iftikhar and Farzana Ahmed - objected to their daughter wearing western clothes, socialising with white girls, and having any contact with boys. According to Shafilea’s sister, in the years leading up to her murder, they began attempting to force their daughter to conform to their cultural values through bullying and intimidation.<sup>87</sup> In February 2003, Shafilea ran away, before being recaptured and forced into a vehicle. A week later she was drugged and taken to Pakistan to meet her prospective husband.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community: Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*, p. 45.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>83</sup> According to a study on the impact of *izzat* and shame on mental health, “in cultures derived from Pakistan and the Indian sub-continent, the term used to depict family honour is *izzat*. *Izzat* is related to reflected shame but has no single meaning”. See: Gilbert, P., Gilbert, J. & Sanghera, J., (June 2004). ‘A focus group exploration of the impact of *izzat*, shame, subordination and entrapment on mental health and service use in South Asian women living in Derby’, *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 109-130, available at: [www.karmanirvana.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Focus-groups-and-izzat.pdf](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Focus-groups-and-izzat.pdf). Last visited: 28 July 2014.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> ‘Shafilea Ahmed case: “Sister saw parents commit murder”’, *BBC News*, 21 May 2012, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-18144095](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-18144095). Last visited: 1 January 2015.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Shafilea Ahmed’s tragic history of violence’, *The Guardian*, 3 August 2012, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/aug/03/shafilea-ahmed-history-of-violence](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/aug/03/shafilea-ahmed-history-of-violence). Last visited: 19 August 2014.

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During her time in Pakistan, Shafilea attempted suicide by drinking bleach due to her refusal to go through with the marriage.<sup>89</sup> Her parents had expected her to marry a partner of their choice and to avoid contact with men outside of the family. However, Shafilea wanted “a more westernized [sic.] lifestyle, to wear fashionable clothes and become a lawyer”.<sup>90</sup>

On 11 September 2003, following an argument with her mother, Shafilea was murdered by her parents in front of her four siblings. According to the siblings' testimony, their mother issued the kill command, saying “Just finish it here” in Urdu, as the murder began. Iftikhar and Farzana Ahmed then forced a plastic bag into their daughter's mouth, put their hands over it and blocked her airways in order to suffocate her, while her father held her down.<sup>91</sup>

Having suffocated their daughter to death, they then disposed of her body.<sup>92</sup> Shafilea's sister Alesha said that she saw their father punch Shafilea's dead body in the chest, her mother prepare binbags, rolls of tape and sheets in the kitchen and her father carry a large package, which she assumed was the body. Upon the placement of a listening device in the Ahmed household by the police following Shafilea's disappearance, Farzana Ahmed was repeatedly heard telling her other children to keep quiet about the murder and Shafilea's whereabouts.<sup>93</sup>

Six months after the murder, in February 2004, her body was found on a riverbank in Cumbria. After being found guilty of murdering their daughter, Shafilea's parents were sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 25 years.<sup>94</sup>

The judge stated that one of the aggravating factors in the sentence was the fact that Shafilea's parents specifically acted “as a team” and that they both actively endeavoured to conceal their crime, including forcing their other children to give false accounts of the events.<sup>95</sup> As well as being an active participant in the murder of their daughter, Farzana Ahmed, according to her daughter Alesha, carried out the majority of the physical abuse against Shafilea because she was at home more often than her husband.<sup>96</sup>

In other cases, women have played a more passive role in 'honour'-based crimes, such as the Banaz Mahmood's mother, who refused to cooperate with the police following the murder of her daughter in 2006.<sup>97</sup>

### 2.2.5 Most Common Ethnic Origins of those Involved in 'Honour' Killings

HBV and 'honour' killings take place across a range of communities of different ethnic origins. Of the 22 out of 29 reported cases of killings and attempted killings from 2010 where the ethnicity of the victims is known or alleged, 15 were of Pakistani origin, three of Indian, one of Bangladeshi, one of

<sup>89</sup> 'Shafilea Ahmed's tragic history of violence', *The Guardian*, 3 August 2012.

<sup>90</sup> Taylor, S., 'The Madness of Honor Killing', *Psychology Today: Health, Help, Happiness & Find a Therapist*, 25 May 2012, available at: [www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201205/the-madness-honor-killing](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201205/the-madness-honor-killing). Last visited: 19 July 2014.

<sup>91</sup> 'Shafilea Ahmed's parents jailed for her murder', *The Guardian*, 3 August 2012, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/aug/03/shafilea-ahmed-parents-guilty-murder](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/aug/03/shafilea-ahmed-parents-guilty-murder). Last visited: 31 December 2014.

<sup>92</sup> 'Shafilea Ahmed's Parents Found Guilty of Her Murder', *Channel 4 News*, 3 August 2012.

<sup>93</sup> 'Shafilea Ahmed case: "Sister saw parents commit murder"', *BBC News*, 21 May 2012

<sup>94</sup> 'Shafilea Ahmed's parents jailed for her murder', *The Guardian*, 3 August 2012.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> 'Mother suspected in UK 'honor murder' implicates husband in teen's killing', *CNN*, 10 July 2012, available at: [edition.cnn.com/2012/07/10/world/europe/uk-shafilea-honor-murder/](http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/10/world/europe/uk-shafilea-honor-murder/). Last visited: 1 January 2015.

<sup>97</sup> Weathers, H., "'Honour killing' sister breaks her silence", *Daily Mail*, 17 June 2007, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-462342/Honour-killing-sister-breaks-silence.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-462342/Honour-killing-sister-breaks-silence.html). Last visited: 5 April 2014.

Palestinian/Syrian, one of Kuwaiti and, one of white British.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, most reported UK ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings have been carried out against people of South Asian origin, the majority of whom have Pakistani ethnic origin.<sup>99</sup>

This finding is largely reflected in the 6,519 calls received in 2013 by the charity Karma Nirvana’s helpline for victims of forced marriage and HBV. Where the caller’s ethnicities were known, the group received the following: British Pakistani (821 calls) and Pakistani (509 calls), followed by British Indian (462 calls), and Indian (216 calls). These were then followed by British Bangladeshis (210 calls), Arabic (67 calls), and White British (41 calls).<sup>100</sup>

The three cities in the UK with the highest number of residents with Pakistani origin – London, Bradford and Birmingham<sup>101</sup> – also ranked as three of the UK cities with the highest number of ‘honour’ killings or attempted killings to have been reported in the media in the past five years. More specifically, Birmingham had the highest number, with five reported cases, while London had three, and Bradford had two.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, the CPS report for 2012/2013 states that areas prosecuting the greatest number of forced marriage and HBV prosecutions were London, the North West, and the West Midlands.<sup>103</sup> This breakdown is also largely reflected in the most common locations of individuals who called Karma Nirvana’s helpline for victims of HBV and forced marriage: London, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent, Leeds, and Manchester.<sup>104</sup>

It was previously assumed that HBV was an imported phenomenon which would die out with first generation immigrants. However, HBV is also being carried out by second and third-generation immigrants born and brought up in the UK.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, women’s refuge workers have reported that, in their experiences, ideas of ‘honour’ are becoming increasingly entrenched.<sup>106</sup> In fact, the results of a 2012 survey ordered by BBC Panorama showed that 69% of British Asians agree that families should live according to the concept of honour. Among 16 to 24 year olds specifically, the percentage was higher, at 73%.<sup>107</sup>

### 2.2.6 Religion and ‘Honour’ Killings

HBV is not associated with a particular religion or religious practice, and has been recorded across Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.<sup>108</sup> However, in the UK, the communities deemed by women’s rights activists to be most at risk are those with links to South Asia, which, according to the 2011 census, overwhelmingly follow Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>98</sup> Laura Wilson who, in October 2010, was the first and only reported case of a white ‘honour’ killing in the UK. See: The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>99</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Honour Network Statistics – 2013’ (available upon request), *Karma Nirvana*, 2013.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Britain’s Pakistani community’, *The Telegraph*, 28 November 2008, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3533486/Britains-Pakistani-community.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3533486/Britains-Pakistani-community.html). Last visited at: 7 July 2014.

<sup>102</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Violence against Women and Girls Crime Report 2012-2013’, Crown Prosecution Service, July 2013.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Honour Network Statistics – 2013’ (available upon request), *Karma Nirvana*, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> According to previous studies, many ‘honour’ killings are carried out by first-generation immigrants to the UK, yet “an increasing number also involve people born and raised in Britain”. See: Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*, p. 4 & 5.

<sup>106</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*.

<sup>107</sup> ‘13-34 Year Old Asians Poll’, *ComRes*, 13-27 February 2012.

<sup>108</sup> ‘Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and “Honour”-Based Violence’, Home Affairs Select Committee, House of Commons, Sixth Report of Session 2007-08, available at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/263/263i.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/263/263i.pdf). Last visited: 8 January 2015.

<sup>109</sup> Of the 2,984,670 individuals who self-identified as Asian or British Asian from India, Bangladesh or Pakistan in the 2011 census, 55% also identified as Muslim; 21% as Hindu and 11% as Sikh. ‘DC2201EW - Ethnic Group by Religion’, nomis official labour market statistics, Census 2011, available at: [http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/DC2201EW/view/2092957703?rows=c\\_ethpuk11&cols=c\\_relpuk1](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/DC2201EW/view/2092957703?rows=c_ethpuk11&cols=c_relpuk1). Last visited: 8 January 2015.

while predominantly considered to be a ‘cultural’ practise, HBV can be caused by the ‘dishonour’ of a family brought about by a relationship that transgresses religious boundaries, such as the attempted killing of Afshan Azad:

*CASE STUDY: Afshan Azad*

**In May 2010, Afshan Azad from Manchester was the victim of what the judge called a “prolonged and nasty attack”<sup>110</sup> by her older brother, Ashraf, after he discovered that she was in a relationship with a non-Muslim man.**

In their family home, 28 year old Ashraf Azad overheard his younger sister Afshan, 22, talking on her mobile phone in her bedroom to whom he suspected was her Hindu boyfriend. He threatened her, saying, “watch what I will do” and, as she ended the call he attempted to hide the mobile phone and its SIM card before grabbing her by her hair, throwing her across the room, and punching her head and back.<sup>111</sup>

Ashraf reportedly told his father to “sort your daughter out” and called her a “slag”, before pushing her head-first onto her father's bed, where she claimed to have heard the words “just kill her”. Her brother then attempted to strangle her.<sup>112</sup>

Afshan’s mother and Ashraf’s wife then entered the bedroom and she was told that she would have to be sent to Bangladesh to get married. According to the prosecutor, “[Afshan’s] mother called her a prostitute and asked why she was obsessed with sex.”<sup>113</sup>

Ashraf then ran downstairs, and Afshan told the court she heard knives rattling in a drawer.<sup>114</sup> Afshan went back to bed but fled the family home through her bedroom window the following morning bruised and swollen from the attack.<sup>115</sup> She then made a statement to police. According to the prosecutor, Afshan fled her home following the attack due to a “genuine fear for her life”<sup>116</sup> as “she was told that she had to marry a Muslim or die”.<sup>117</sup>

The family was described as “devout Muslims” in the court hearing,<sup>118</sup> who would not accept Afshan’s relationship due to the couple’s different religious backgrounds.<sup>119</sup> Her father was accused of making threats to kill her, although this charge was later dropped. Her brother received a six-month prison sentence.<sup>120</sup> Afshan had previously pleaded with the judge to give Ashraf a lenient sentence, writing that she had forgiven her brother and that she didn’t want him

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<sup>110</sup> ‘Harry Potter actress asked judge not to jail brother who beat her and said “Marry a Muslim or die”’, *Daily Mail*, 22 January 2011, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1349326/Harry-Potter-actress-Ashraf-Azad-asked-judge-jail-brother-beat-her.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1349326/Harry-Potter-actress-Ashraf-Azad-asked-judge-jail-brother-beat-her.html). Last visited: 15 July 2014.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> ‘Harry Potter actress asked judge not to jail brother who beat her and said “Marry a Muslim or die”’, *Daily Mail*, 22 January 2011.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Harry Potter star Afshan Azad’s brother jailed over three-hour “honour” attack’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 January 2011, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/harry-potter-star-afshan-azads-852273](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/harry-potter-star-afshan-azads-852273). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>115</sup> ‘Harry Potter actress asked judge not to jail brother who beat her and said “Marry a Muslim or die”’, *Daily Mail*, 22 January 2011.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Harry Potter star Afshan Azad’s brother jailed over three-hour “honour” attack’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 January 2011.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> ‘Harry Potter actress asked judge not to jail brother who beat her and said “Marry a Muslim or die”’, *Daily Mail*, 22 January 2011.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Harry Potter actress’s brother jailed for attacking her’, *BBC News*, 21 January 2011, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-12248091](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-12248091). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

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to be locked up.<sup>121</sup> The court also heard that Afshan did not support the prosecution despite giving police an initial statement at the start of their investigation.<sup>122</sup>

### 2.2.7 *Killings of British Nationals and Residents Abroad*

Victims are often killed having been taken abroad from the UK, in many cases to their family’s place of origin. Perpetrators appear to do so due to a lower risk of being caught.<sup>123</sup>

While there are no reliable figures on the total number of female British residents and/or citizens who have been killed abroad in the name of honour,<sup>124</sup> over a third (11 of the 29) of killings/attempted killings reported in the media in the past five years were committed abroad. All took place in Pakistan: nine in the Punjab province (five in the city of Gujurat, two in Lahore, and two in other small cities); and, two in the Nowshera district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. Victims who were killed abroad were usually visiting family, attending a wedding or on holiday in Pakistan. Overall, there is an almost even split between reported cases of male and female victims among those killed abroad.<sup>125</sup> Six of the victims killed abroad were female, while five were male. All of the perpetrators were male. Nine of the cases have been reportedly due to concern ex-partners or family relatives unhappy with the victims’ choice in partner.<sup>126</sup>

All but one of the cases abroad were shootings. In the remaining case, in August 2013 a 31 year old woman, Saira Rani, was tortured and killed by her husband, Rashid Ashraf. Both had previously taken British nationality upon moving to the UK from Pakistan. Ashraf attempted to cover the murder up in a staged car crash. However, while preparing Saira’s body for the funeral, her relatives found marks and signs of violence and their suspicions led them to report it to the police. Following the police investigation, Ashraf admitted at a police station that he was responsible.<sup>127</sup>

All the victims were reported to have had Pakistani origin. Only one woman was an American citizen, Uzma Naurin (see: ‘Case Study: Uzma Naurin’, page 24), who had moved to the UK from New York. She was of Pakistani origin (her parents moved to the US from Pakistan; however, it is unclear whether she was born in the US). The remaining victims were either newly emigrated Pakistanis to the UK who retained their Pakistani nationality, or who had emigrated a long time ago and had obtained UK citizenship.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, according to the open-source material available, none of the victims of UK ‘honour’ killings in the past five years were born in the UK.

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<sup>121</sup> ‘Harry Potter actress asked judge not to jail brother who beat her and said “Marry a Muslim or die”’, *Daily Mail*, 22 January 2011.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> There have been no reports of perpetrators who, having committed an ‘honour’ killing or attempted killing of a British citizen or UK resident abroad in the past five years, being given prison sentences. It is unclear whether this means that they were not prosecuted or convicted, or simply that the trial, conviction and sentencing went unreported. See: The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014. Amnesty International has previously raised concerns that, in Pakistan, HBV, forced marriages, and ‘honour’ killings, are being committed with impunity as police are reluctant to record and investigate complaints. See: ‘Document - Pakistan: Honour Killings of Women and Girls’, Amnesty International, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA33/018/1999/en/952457dd-e0f1-11dd-be39-2d4003bc4450/asa330181999en.html>. Last visited: 8 January 2015.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>125</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> ‘British man arrested on suspicion of murdering wife in Pakistan’, *The Telegraph*, 9 September 2013, available at:

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/10296311/British-man-arrested-on-suspicion-of-murdering-wife-in-Pakistan.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/10296311/British-man-arrested-on-suspicion-of-murdering-wife-in-Pakistan.html). Last visited: 15 July 2014.

<sup>128</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of ‘honour’ killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

*CASE STUDY: Uzma Naurin*

**In late-2011, American citizen Uzma Naurin and her husband were murdered in Gujrat, Pakistan.**

Uzma Naurin, aged 30, and her husband Saif Rehman, a 31 year old Glasgow-based businessman, married in Manchester. While Rehman's relatives were said to be happy with the marriage, it caused upset among some of his bride's relatives.<sup>129</sup> However, another larger ceremony involving both sides of the family took place in Glasgow, in June,<sup>130</sup> when it appeared that the differences between the families might have been resolved.

In late 2011, the couple travelled to Pakistan for the wedding of Rehman's brother.<sup>131</sup> Whilst driving through the Punjabi city of Gujrat on 1 November their car was ambushed,<sup>132</sup> Rehman was shot dead and Naurin was taken away and later murdered.<sup>133</sup> Her body was thrown in nearby bushes.<sup>134</sup> The couple had been accompanied by a driver, Rehman's sister, and her two year old daughter, but the other passengers were unharmed.<sup>135</sup>

Her father, a taxi driver in New York, was the primary suspect due to a number of combined factors: he had relatives in Gujrat; the driver of the car the victims were attacked in is said to have been employed by his Pakistani relatives;<sup>136</sup> and that he was thought to be disappointed with his daughter's choice to marry outside of the family and not adhere to arranged marriage traditions.<sup>137</sup>

Among all reported cases of UK 'honour' killings and attempted killings abroad in the past five years, there are no clear patterns to the age of the victims or the perpetrators. For example, while four victims were in their 30s, others were as young as 18 years and as old as 50 years.<sup>138</sup>

### *2.2.8 Risks Posed to Victims Seeking Help*

Family members often actively attempt to find and/or family members who have run away or attempted to seek help for having brought 'dishonour' against their family or community. Women's group Karma Nirvana note calls to its helpline from families of girls who have run away, who call the helpline hoping to find information about where they are and bring them home.<sup>139</sup>

In 2010, 20 year old 'Aneeta', for example, told her story of being psychologically abused and chased by her family in Stonham for refusing to go into employment and instead aspiring to go to university and complete her education. She escaped through the help of her school counsellors and teachers and, with assistance from the police, was taken into refuge care. Her family, including relatives from India,

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<sup>129</sup> 'American woman and partner attending family wedding in Pakistan murdered in suspected honour killing', *Daily Mail*, 25 November 2011.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> 'Couple shot in "honour killing" while in Pakistan for wedding', *Daily Mirror*, 24 November 2011, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/couple-shot-in-honour-killing-while-in-pakistan-278958](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/couple-shot-in-honour-killing-while-in-pakistan-278958). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>132</sup> 'American woman and partner attending family wedding in Pakistan murdered in suspected honour killing', *Daily Mail*, 25 November 2011.

<sup>133</sup> 'Couple shot in "honour killing" while in Pakistan for wedding', *Daily Mirror*, 24 November 2011.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> 'American woman and partner attending family wedding in Pakistan murdered in suspected honour killing', *Daily Mail*, 25 November 2011.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> 'Pakistan police search for relatives of honour killing couple', *The Telegraph*, 24 November 2011, available at:

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/8913013/Pakistan-police-search-for-relatives-of-honour-killing-couple.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/8913013/Pakistan-police-search-for-relatives-of-honour-killing-couple.html). Last visited: 15 July 2014.

<sup>138</sup> The Henry Jackson Society database of reported cases of 'honour' killings and attempted killings in the UK between 31 December 2009 and 31 December 2014.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014.

managed to track her phone down and were calling her on a daily basis urging her to return home. In 2010 she was still living in a women’s refuge but reported being terrified that, if they found her, she would be killed.<sup>140</sup>

Having run away from home, HBV victims face a risk, not only of being tracked down by their families, but of being returned to their families by members of their community and agencies who seek to mediate due to a lack of understanding relating to the risks.<sup>141</sup> Women’s groups have pointed to particular problems with local taxi firms. According to Sanghera:

We have a [national] problem with taxi drivers [in that] we just can’t trust them. This can be a matter of life and death for these girls. If they get in the wrong taxi, they might just take them straight back home; straight back to the place that they’ve just escaped from.<sup>142</sup>

There is also currently a risk from professionals involved in various lines of victim-support due to reports that some women fleeing HBV or forced marriages have come into contact with professionals such as social workers, police officers, or councillors, from the same community who have shown to possess similar, if not the same, views to that of the victims’ families.<sup>143</sup> For example, reports how victims have told her staff at Karma Nirvana that professionals of Asian origin have encouraged them to return home and “work it out with their families. We have victims that say they’ve had an Asian officer talk them into going home”. In another incident, a social worker reportedly wrote “you have no shame” in a comment underneath an online blog post of a forced marriage survivor.<sup>144</sup> A police officer has also been reported to have expressed similar views in a public forum (see: ‘3.2.1.1 Online, Verbal and Written Abuse and Disturbance’, page 29).

Returning victims home not only puts their lives at serious risk, but indicates the level at which ‘honour’ is still protected and therefore perpetuated by members of the community. Moreover, the fact that members of the police force have been known to work on the side of the perpetrators rather than the victim threatens victims’ ability to seek help, remove themselves from a potentially dangerous situation, and bring their attackers to justice. Furthermore, according to Sanghera, “[some] victims have a fear that the worker may have a loyalty to these communities’ views”. This damage to the level of trust that victims, potential victims and survivors have in the accountability of services designed to protect them from harm could prevent others from coming forward and seeking help in the future.

### *2.2.9 Impact of ‘Honour’ Codes on Victims’ Mental Health*

Victims of forced marriage and HBV suffer both physically and emotionally. In the period leading up to a forced marriage, young women are often withdrawn from school<sup>145</sup> and can be imprisoned in the family home or elsewhere.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, women and girls can often deeply internalise concepts of

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<sup>140</sup> ‘Women who escape forced marriages’, *The Telegraph*, 8 August 2010.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, January 2015.

<sup>142</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, January 2015.

<sup>145</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Honour based violence; Point 6; Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage’, The Crown Prosecution Service.

'honour' so that they may feel unable to defy their families' wishes.<sup>147</sup> This isolation from the outside world can be accompanied by physical violence and can lead to mental illness, self-harm, and suicide.

According to women's rights campaigner Diana Nammi, those who are closest to the victim "become her first enemy",<sup>148</sup> yet are more likely to know their victims' movements, activities, and physical appearance. This makes it far easier for girls to get caught acting in a way their family deems dishonourable and/or if they attempt to run away from home. The result of this is that victims live in constant fear and "will always have to look over their shoulder".<sup>149</sup>

Victims of HBV and forced marriage – as with other forms of violence and abuse – often suffer anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems that can lead to schizophrenia, self-harm, and suicide.<sup>150</sup> According to women's rights activist and licensed clinical therapist Zainab Khan, self-injurious behaviours are often due to the fact that the victim has high amounts of self-doubt; internal anger; and, a view that they are not good enough.<sup>151</sup>

Jasvinder Sanghera, now the founder and CEO of Karma Nirvana, was raised in a family that adhered to an 'honour' system. Her sister Robina, was forced to marry and, in her second marriage, committed suicide as a result of being victim of a forced marriage. Sanghera explains:

My parents were Sikh, so my family's religion is Sikhism. I am one of seven sisters and the majority of us were born here in Britain, and I watched the majority of my sisters being taken out of British schools when they were only 15 years old to marry men they had only met in photographs. They would have long absences which were never questioned and they would return back to the UK as somebody's wife. My sister Robina was telling me how unhappy she was in her marriage and I said "come to me" and she said "I can't because I have to think about honour". She didn't want to dishonour the family by leaving her husband and divorcing him. My sister, in the end, took her own life, Robina did, she set herself alight and she died. It's more 'honourable' to do that than to 'dishonour' your family by leaving your husband.<sup>152</sup>

Even with murders that they say are clear-cut, they don't have to do that, you see, so that's an issue. We also have an issue around suicide as well. Lots of South Asian women have a higher suicide rate, 2-3 times higher than the national average, and we are looking at the links between suicide and murder. We know [some are] being driven to commit suicide, therefore can we hold people to account for that? But also are these suicides are not suicides but actually murders? That's a different question.<sup>153</sup>

In 2003, 17 year old Shafilea Ahmed attempted suicide before being murdered by her parents due to her refusal to go through with a forced marriage (see: 'Case Study: Shafilea Ahmed', page 19).

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<sup>147</sup> 'Honour based violence; Point 6; Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage', The Crown Prosecution Service.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Douki, S., Zineb, B., Nacef, F. & Halbreich, U., (September 2007), 'Women's mental health in the Muslim world: Cultural, religious, and social issues', *Journal of Affective Disorders*, Vol. 102, No. 1, pp. 177-189, available at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17291594#](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17291594#). Last visited: 28 July 2014.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Zainab Khan, women's rights activist and licensed clinical therapist, May 2014.

<sup>152</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, in 'Honor Diaries', 2013.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, September 2014.

Research dating to 2000 showed that Asian women, who hold the most common ethnicity among victims of HBV,<sup>154</sup> are twice as likely to commit suicide as the rest of the population.<sup>155</sup> A 2004 study found that the rate of attempted suicides among Asian women aged 16 to 19 years is 17 times higher than that of Asian men.<sup>156</sup> Rates among young South Asian women, especially the 15 to 19 year old group, are particularly high compared to national results for whites and all other minority groups.<sup>157</sup> There are no recent statistics on the rates of suicide and self-harm among South Asian women in the UK.

There are also questions relating to forced suicides within families committing HBV. In Turkey, there have been record high numbers of recorded 'honour'-related suicides since 2005. It has been suggested<sup>158</sup> that this was due to that fact that, in the same year, Turkey introduced reforms to its penal code, including mandatory life sentences for perpetrators of 'honour' killings. While, previously, perpetrators of 'honour' killings could get away with lower sentences by claiming provocation, it is possible that they began resorting to forced suicides instead.<sup>159</sup> While there is no data to prove that the same is happening in the UK, women's activists have expressed their concerns that it is a strong possibility.<sup>160</sup>

Currently, many victims do not have coping outlets, creating a heightened sense of depression and loss of hope - the very first indicators that a person is suicidal.<sup>161</sup> Among other services, victims require long term support in order to help them deal with their feelings of intense isolation.<sup>162</sup>

### 3. Obstacles and Opportunities for Change

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There have been several recent indications that the government recognises the problem of HBV in the UK, particularly in its work relating to challenging forced marriage.

#### 3.1 *Progress to Date: Forced Marriage and 'Honour'-Based Violence*

Forced marriage is, according to experts, always preceded by HBV: "you never have a forced marriage without honour-based violence, ever. And I say that with conviction".<sup>163</sup> The government has recently emerged as a key player in establishing a law criminalising forced marriage, setting up inspections by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) into police forces in their handling of cases. Furthermore, the Office for the Children's Commissioner has set up an enquiry to forced marriages and young people, and the Forced Marriage Commission, chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss, is currently looking into the scale of the problem and the real barriers and challenges for professionals and victims.

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<sup>154</sup> See: 'Most Common Ethnic Origins of those Involved in 'Honour' Killings and HBV', page 20.

<sup>155</sup> 'Asian women in suicide risk', *BBC News*, 12 October 2000, available at: [www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/967153.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/967153.stm). Last visited: 25 June 2014.

<sup>156</sup> Bhugra, D., 'Culture and self-harm: attempted suicide in South Asians in South London', *Psychology Press*, 2004, available at: [www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/culture-and-self-harm-attempted-suicide-in-south-asians-in-london/r/a11G00000017xOYIAY](http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/culture-and-self-harm-attempted-suicide-in-south-asians-in-london/r/a11G00000017xOYIAY). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>157</sup> Raleigh, S., 'Suicide patterns and trends in people of Indian sub-continent and Caribbean origin in England and Wales', *Ethnicity and Health*, 1996, 1; pp. 55-64.

<sup>158</sup> "'Honor Killings' Have Morphed Into 'Honor Suicides' in Turkey", *The Huffington Post*, 17 April 2009, (updated: 25 May 2011), available at: [www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/27/honor-killings-have-morph\\_n\\_179928.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/27/honor-killings-have-morph_n_179928.html). Last visited: 15 July 2014.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, September 2014.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Zainab Khan, women's rights activists and licensed clinical therapist, May 2014.

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, September 2014.

Forced marriage was made a criminal offence in the UK on 16 June 2014, and is now punishable by up to seven years in prison.<sup>164</sup> The new legislation is hoped to reduce the overall number of forced marriages in the UK but also to have a reverse effect on the number of ‘honour’-based attacks in cases where a girl who refuses to enter a forced union faces punishment as a result. Thousands of potential victims are to be protected, according to ministers and charities, with recent evidence showing over 1,300 documented cases of forced marriages in 2013 alone.<sup>165</sup>

Experts believe that the new law will help strengthen the implementation of statutory guidance regarding forced marriage issued by the government. According to Mak Chishty from the Association of Chief Police Officers,

[The new law] is a very important step because for the first time it gives us a definition of what forced marriage is and gives us the ability to take people to court and get a criminal conviction and that is a very powerful message to deter people in the future.<sup>166</sup>

Yet, concerns remain as to what the new law will mean in terms of a support package for victims. There are also concerns that the new law could lead to “a narrower understanding of the problem” within the Crown Prosecution Service and that the focus on achieving successful prosecutions will undermine efforts to implement the law, support victims, and raise awareness about the issue.<sup>167 168</sup> In July 2014 at the *Girl Summit* in London,<sup>169</sup> Sanghera asked Prime Minister David Cameron about the government’s statutory guidance regarding forced marriage and how he intends to ensure its implementation. However, there has been little evidence that the government has given any thought to monitoring the law’s implementation.<sup>170</sup>

Activists claim that, if the forced marriage multi-agency guidance were to be implemented successfully, “overnight we would create greater accountability and awareness”.<sup>171</sup> While the law criminalising forced marriage is a step in the right direction, there remains much to do in the form of implementation and support for victims.

### 3.2 *The Perpetuation of ‘Honour’-Based Violence and ‘Honour’ Killings*

Despite recent progress, there has been very little sign of the government’s long term commitment to multi-agency engagement and victim support that is desperately needed in order to successfully fight the perpetuation of HBV.

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<sup>164</sup> ‘Forced marriage law sends “powerful message”’, *BBC News*, 16 June 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27830815](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27830815). Last visited: 22 August 2014.

<sup>165</sup> May, T., ‘Theresa May: How this Government plans to end heartbreaking forced marriage and FGM in the UK’, *The Telegraph*, 21 May 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10979899/Forced-marriage-and-FGM-in-the-UK-Theresa-Mays-blueprint-for-ending-heartbreaking-crimes.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10979899/Forced-marriage-and-FGM-in-the-UK-Theresa-Mays-blueprint-for-ending-heartbreaking-crimes.html). Last visited: 18 July 2014.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Forced marriage law sends “powerful message”’, *BBC News*, 16 June 2014.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014.

<sup>168</sup> However, it should be noted that there are some recorded areas of good practice. The Crown Prosecution Service has highlighted a number of areas that have “illustrated good practice on forced marriage and honour-based violence and some Areas have held local conferences”. It points to the North West as an example, which held a conference on forced marriage with a local Asian women’s group. Furthermore, it mentions CPS West Midlands, which participated in a forced marriage conference in March 2013 and is reportedly involved in the local forced marriage working group. It also states that forced marriage and HBV training “will be refreshed in 2013-14, including any new forced marriage legislation for the specialist prosecutors”. See: ‘Violence against Women and Girls Crime Report 2012-2013’, Crown Prosecution Service, July 2013.

<sup>169</sup> On 22 July 2014, British Prime Minister David Cameron hosted the *Girl Summit* with UNICEF which brought together governments, community leaders, the private sector and international organisations to “rally a global movement to end child, early and forced marriage and FGM for all girls within a generation”. See: ‘Campaign to end early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation’, GOV.UK, 24 June 2014, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/news/campaign-to-end-early-and-forced-marriage-and-female-genital-mutilation](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/campaign-to-end-early-and-forced-marriage-and-female-genital-mutilation). Last visited: 24 August 2014.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.2.1 Roles of Communities

Families and members of the community often play an integral role in the perpetuation of HBV and 'honour' killings in the UK through protecting the 'honour' systems and codes that are central to such crimes. This can manifest itself in different ways, namely: disbelief; silence; complicity; and, defending the principle of 'honour'.

Communities have been described as having adopted a "shroud of secrecy"<sup>172</sup> regarding 'honour' crimes they know or suspect have taken place. In the documentary 'Killer in the Family: the Firestarter', a neighbour speaks of Accrington-based killer, Mohammed Riaz, who set his house on fire in 2006, thus killing his wife, Caneze, their four daughters, and himself. The neighbour claimed that Mohammed could not be blamed, as "the house was cursed".<sup>173</sup> Similarly, the uncle of Shafilea Ahmed, the teenager who attempted suicide before being murdered by her parents (See: 'Case Study: Shafilea Ahmed', page 19), said: "If there were problems in the family then we did not know about them. They kept it to themselves."<sup>174</sup> Members of family and the wider community keeping silent about and/or denying knowledge of 'honour' killings, can inhibit police investigation and deny justice from being carried out.

Furthermore, some perpetrators of HBV have been reported to receive heightened levels of respect by members of their local community as a result of their actions. Nammi reports that, in some communities in the UK, "When someone kills a woman for the reason of honour, they will be treated generally with respect and would be considered as heroes in their communities".<sup>175</sup> Defending the 'honour' system therefore perpetuates the cause of HBV and 'honour' killings.

Community actions are often directly countering help offered to women. Those attempting to challenge HBV and protect its victims - whether family members or women's groups - have become targets themselves. UK women's groups have faced intimidation from members of their local communities in an attempt to force them to curtail or end their activities.

Nammi reports that, when she formed IKWRO twelve years ago, the "[...] threats, violence, blackmailing, isolation, against me especially - was kind of extreme". She reports that, while the number of threats has decreased in recent years, "we do receive threats still" - from "people who are from the [victims'] families and are not happy with us helping women, or fundamentalists who feel like we break their rules". She and her organisation receive threats in the form of verbal threats in person, telephone calls, and emails.<sup>176</sup>

#### 3.2.1.1 Online, Verbal and Written Abuse and Disturbance

Karma Nirvana's Jasvinder Sanghera has reported receiving the following recent threats and disturbance, much of which was from members of local or online communities:

Many people protest what we do and this can be heard on social networking sites; [...] [there have been] incidents in the past 12 months whereby the [Karma Nirvana] website has been

<sup>172</sup> 'A local newspaper', in: Welchman, L; Hossain, S., (2005), *"Honour": Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence Against Women*, (New York: Zed Books).

<sup>173</sup> 'Killer in the Family: the Firestarter', *CI, YouTube*, available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUjhQZxMrP0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUjhQZxMrP0). Last visited: 6 August 2014.

<sup>174</sup> Crilly, R., 'The Pakistan village where Shafilea drank bleach to avoid an arranged marriage', *The Telegraph*, 3 August 2012, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9449488/The-Pakistan-village-where-Shafilea-drank-bleach-to-avoid-an-arranged-marriage.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9449488/The-Pakistan-village-where-Shafilea-drank-bleach-to-avoid-an-arranged-marriage.html). Last visited: 18 July 2014.

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

hacked into with disgusting remarks [...] We get our website hacked into, this has happened a couple of times in the last 12 months and receive nasty messages about what we do; [...] We still get hate mail at the office;

People stand up in the public forum and say ‘you have no shame. You don’t love your parents, doing this and running away from home.’ Once, I kid you not, a police officer said that to me in Manchester; [...] I was only on a train about six weeks ago coming from London back to Derby and then somebody got on at Leicester, it was an Asian woman. She had a right go at me telling me that I was encouraging women to run away from home - really threatening.

Verbal attacks can also come from individuals charged with professionally protecting victims of HBV. For example, Sanghera reports that, in 2013, “a police officer stood up in uniform at an event I was speaking at and told me ‘you could not have loved your family if you ran away’. He then stated that I had no honour”.<sup>177</sup>

### *3.2.1.2 Physical Threats*

In terms of physical threats, Sanghera was forced to check her car every day for weeks after the police warned her of the likelihood of a bomb threat.<sup>178</sup> She adds, “Once, when I was in Nottingham, I got chased out of a car park by four Asian guys in a car”.

As a result of threats from members of the community, women’s groups have, at times faced a strain on their activities. Karma Nirvana has to consider the safety of its team when they are travelling to attend events etc., particularly that of its widely known, high profile founder and CEO Jasvinder Sanghera. According to Sanghera:

If I get a train, I tell [Karma Nirvana staff] when I am going and when I am coming back. We have to think about our physical locations in terms of if we are speaking to a public audience. If it’s me [going] there will be a member of my team with me because the risk can be higher because you never know who you’re going to get in the audience.<sup>179</sup>

Violence and intimidation have led to women’s refuges and groups being forced to take measures to protect themselves, including moving away from areas with a high immigrant population.<sup>180</sup> In the case of Karma Nirvana, Sanghera reports the following measures had to be recently taken:

[Karma Nirvana] used to be based in Derby and we decided to leave Derby and move the offices completely because people knew where we were. We always were a drop in service to start with. But on one occasion somebody sent a letter to our office with the threat of anthrax. They had to cordon off all the streets where we were based and all the rest of it. We decided to move completely out of Derby; [...] We are very mindful of the team and we have our own safeguards that have been put in place, in terms of operating under PO Box; [...] We don’t do face to face support [with victims] anymore at our offices. Sometimes we do, but then we would have to risk assess where the member of the team is going.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, September 2014.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, September 2014.

<sup>180</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*.

In regards to the identity of the perpetrators, Sanghera reports the following:

The South Asian community is significant in this. I have said that publicly. Some people will actually say who they are, and they are most often South Asian names; [...] In terms of the website being hacked, we had the things like the Muslim Brothers or something. So again, I’m not just surmising it’s from that community, there is evidence that it is from that community.

Women’s groups are having to take special precautionary measures due to being targeted by members of the same communities in which HBV is most common. This can hinder the groups’ ability to conduct their activities.

### *3.2.2 Challenges in Raising Awareness and Identifying Victims*

Raising awareness among those who come into regular contact with young people and victims of HBV is central to preventing ‘honour’-related crimes from taking place as well as identifying and protecting existing victims.<sup>181</sup> These key areas are: education; police; healthcare professionals; and airport staff. This section looks at the need for raising awareness – largely through training – in these sectors, current obstacles to doing so effectively, and offers recommendations to challenge these barriers.

#### *3.2.2.1 Schools*

Children and young people are the age group most at risk of HBV, and therefore schools in the England and Wales have a fundamental role to play in preventing and dealing with this risk. Education, according to campaigners, is a central pillar of prevention, in that “new generations need to be aware” of HBV<sup>182</sup> and, in order to successfully identify and protect the existing victims among their students, teachers need to be aware of the problem; able to identify the signs of HBV, and know how to take appropriate action.

The concept of tribal ‘honour’ – which includes the view that the female body is a measure of virtue or a commodity – is currently being engrained in the minds of thousands of children living in the UK by families that adhere to an ‘honour’ system. However, a severe lack of both awareness and willingness to cooperate among the majority of schools currently prevents teachers, not only from being able to help prevent HBV through education but also from identifying and protecting victims of HBV. For example, despite Karma Nirvana’s attempts to engage with schools, it has over the years been unable to get more than 12 of all primary and secondary schools nationally<sup>183</sup> to engage in these issues, as the others “are not willing to get involved”.<sup>184</sup>

Schools have been directly invited to take part in HBV training. In October 2013, for example, a law firm wrote to every primary and secondary school in West Yorkshire, including Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield and other neighbouring towns inviting them to a local conference (hosted by the law firm and Karma Nirvana) in Bradford with the local authorities in order to hear about forced marriage and HBV as a child protection issue. However, only two schools signed up for the conference, and “It’s not

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<sup>181</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, *IKWRO*, August 2014.

<sup>183</sup> “On January 2012 there were 3,268 state-funded mainstream secondary schools in England”. See: ‘FOI release: Number of secondary schools and their size in student numbers’, GOV.UK, 9 January 2014, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-secondary-schools-and-their-size-in-student-numbers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-secondary-schools-and-their-size-in-student-numbers). Last visited: 21 August 2014.

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014.

part of what we need to do”; and, “We don’t want to offend communities”, have been common responses from non-attending schools over the years.

The group has also been left “extremely disappointed” by the lack of commitment from the Department for Education to move forward in urging schools to raise awareness about forced marriage and HBV in schools. There should therefore be a stronger commitment to challenging HBV, starting with current Education Secretary Nicky Morgan writing to all schools in England and Wales urging them to implement the statutory guidance to raise awareness among teachers and develop their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programmes in this area.

Cultural relativism and political correctness often prevent the necessary steps being taken to identify and protect those at risk of HBV and ‘honour’ killings.<sup>185</sup> Some teachers are still encouraged not to get involved in ‘honour’-related issues and to “turn a blind eye” due to it being a ‘cultural’ issue. According to Sanghera:

Yesterday [30 July 2014], I was [delivering] training at the Teach First conference; this was to new teachers in their first year of teaching, who heard my presentation and were moved to tears. Afterwards some came over and expressed cases of concern about girls going missing from education and how, when they reported them to child protection, they were told to not get involved as it was cultural. The teachers I spoke to were also afraid that their own jobs would be jeopardised were they to raise alarms today and all I could do was encourage them, offer our services and help. It angered me how these girls are not afforded the same level of protection as their white counter parts and how we are giving perpetrators of this abuse more power!<sup>186</sup>

In order to counter this problem, schools must treat HBV as a child protection issue rather than a diversity issue. Furthermore, in order to raise awareness throughout schools, Ofsted<sup>187</sup> inspectors should, through an amendment to the framework, inspect schools’ compliance in training staff to recognise signs of HBV. For example, teachers should be aware that, in the period leading up to a forced marriage, young women are often withdrawn from school;<sup>188</sup> and can be imprisoned in the family home or elsewhere, and subjected to HBV.<sup>189</sup> Schools should therefore regularly check pupils’ absences and follow up on suspicious cases of girls having long ‘holidays’ abroad.

All teachers should undertake basic training in recognising signs of HBV in order to feel confident reporting any concerns to the schools’ safeguarding officer (there is one officer per primary and secondary school).<sup>190</sup> Additionally, safeguarding officers need specialist training in how to investigate a case and take the appropriate actions including, where necessary, police involvement. Groups that specialise in the issue should be commissioned by the government to design and provide training packages for teachers and safeguarding officers.

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<sup>185</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition), ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>187</sup> Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) is a non-ministerial department of the UK government which inspects and regulates schools.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>189</sup> ‘Honour based violence; Point 6; Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage’, The Crown Prosecution Service.

<sup>190</sup> According to the Metropolitan Police, students can approach Safer Schools Officers about HBV as part of the Safer School Partnerships programme launched in 2002. See: ‘Honour Based Violence’, Metropolitan Police Service, available at: [www.safe.met.police.uk/crimes\\_of\\_honour/been\\_a\\_victim\\_and\\_need\\_some\\_help.html/](http://www.safe.met.police.uk/crimes_of_honour/been_a_victim_and_need_some_help.html/). Last visited: 6 August 2014.

### 3.2.2.2 Police

Despite recent improvements, police forces continue to inadequately identify, record, and report ‘honour’-based crimes, a prominent barrier to the protection of HBV victims given that the risk to victims is highest at the time of reporting the incident.<sup>191</sup>

Over the past five years there have been three reported cases of ‘honour’ killings or attempted killings where the victims had prior contact with the police but were not adequately protected - two in Manchester, and one in Forest Gate, London. In Oldham, Manchester, Fakhanda Younis was stabbed 19 times in April 2013 by her husband. The police watchdog, IPCC, is currently investigating her contact with the police prior to the killing and how it was handled.<sup>192</sup> In the other reported Manchester case, in June 2013 Rania Alayed was killed by her husband after numerous interventions prior to the murder by the police, the Citizens Advice Bureau and solicitors (See: ‘Case Study: Rania Alayed’, page 15). In Newham, London, Sabeen Thandi was killed in July 2013 by her husband. She had previously reported death-threats over a divorce petition (See: ‘Case Study: Sabeen Thandi’, page 34).

These incidents fit into a wider picture generated by previous research. In 2011, 13 out of 53 police forces failed to respond to the IKWRO’s Freedom of Information requests regarding the number of HBV cases they had received. While a total of 2,823 ‘honour’-based violence (HBV) incidents - including threats, abduction, acid attacks, beatings, forced marriage, mutilation and murder - were found to have been reported to the 39 police forces (out of 52 in the country) that responded, the number of incidents are unknown in the areas where the 13 forces did not respond.

In 2012, half of all former Scottish police forces - Dumfries and Galloway, Northern, Fife and Strathclyde - failed entirely to flag HBV cases, as did three forces in England: Staffordshire Police, Gloucestershire Constabulary and Derbyshire Constabulary. In addition, five forces - Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Hampshire Constabulary, Police Service Northern Ireland, West Mercia Police and Surrey Police - “were found to have flagged only HBV crimes and not incidents”, while Bedfordshire Police, Cleveland Police and Lancashire Constabulary had not flagged HBV charges.<sup>193 194</sup> More recently, a 2014 study revealed that one in five police forces are putting lives at risk by failing to properly record ‘honour’-based violence cases, including in some of the areas with communities in which HBV is most likely to occur.<sup>195</sup>

Current guidance for police officers, implemented from 2008, states its aim as achieving a consistent policy in reporting, analysing, and processing honour based crimes across police forces. However, it says only that such strategies are being developed across police forces which should lead to the establishment of “a ‘core’ agreed template for collation and analysis,” yet does not specify what this might be, only that such work is, “significantly underway.”<sup>196</sup> As such, despite claims of implementation, there remains little consistency in police force’s ability to record ‘honour’-based crimes.

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<sup>191</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Farkhanda Younis murder: Husband jailed for life for stabbing’, *BBC News*, 20 March 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-26670987](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-26670987). Last visited: 28 March 2014.

<sup>193</sup> ‘“Failings in police recording” of honour violence’, *BBC News*, 6 February 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26056209](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26056209). Last visited: 17 July 2014.

<sup>194</sup> ‘Nearly 3000 cases of ‘honour’ violence every year in the UK’, *IKWRO*, 3 December 2011.

<sup>195</sup> ‘Postcode lottery: police recording of reported ‘honour’ based violence’, *IKWRO*, January 2014, available at: [www.ikwro.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/HBV-FOI-report-Post-code-lottery-04.02.2014-Final.pdf](http://www.ikwro.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/HBV-FOI-report-Post-code-lottery-04.02.2014-Final.pdf). Last visited: 17 July 2014.

<sup>196</sup> ‘Honour Based Violence Strategy’, Association of Chief Police Officer of England, Wales & Northern Ireland, available at: [www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2008/200810CRIHBV01.pdf](http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2008/200810CRIHBV01.pdf). Last visited: 14 November 2014.

*CASE STUDY: Sabeen Thandi*

In July 2013, Sabeen Thandi was strangled to death by her husband, Mohammed Badiuzzaman, a fortnight after the police had arrested him for making death threats and after she had been granted a restraining order against him.<sup>197</sup>

After several years of living with her husband, Sabeen sought a divorce in June 2013.<sup>198</sup> In the same month, she got a restraining order against Badiuzzaman, forbidding him from entering her house<sup>199</sup> in order to protect herself and her children.<sup>200</sup>

Several days later, upon discovering that Sabeen had met a man from Pakistan via Facebook,<sup>201</sup> Badiuzzaman duped her into their car by saying he was going to drive her to work. Instead, he began threatening her while driving her around for three hours.<sup>202</sup> He told her that he had a hammer in his car boot and that if she did not revoke the order against him she would never see her son again and that police would find “parts of her body in bits in bin bags”.<sup>203</sup> He also made his intentions clear to his colleagues by citing several high-profile cases of husbands alleged or known to have murdered their wives or girlfriends, such as Oscar Pistorius and Shrien Dewani.<sup>204</sup>

Sabeen’s solicitors telephoned the police upon learning that she had been forced to revoke the restraining order against her husband. Badiuzzaman was arrested on suspicion of threats to kill and unlawful imprisonment. However, he was later released,<sup>205</sup> after which the police received two silent 999 calls from the couple’s property, where they subsequently found Sabeen’s ead body.<sup>206</sup> Police officers from the Hertfordshire constabulary are now under investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission for releasing Badiuzzaman,<sup>207</sup> and for misconduct during their contact with Sabeen.<sup>208</sup> In 2014, Badiuzzaman was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum of 17 years.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> ‘Controlling Muslim husband who forced wife to convert to Islam and wear a hijab before he killed her while she was pregnant is jailed for 17 years’, *Daily Mail*, 27 May 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2640681/Controlling-Muslim-husband-forced-wife-convert-Islam-wear-hijab-killed-pregnant-jailed-17-years.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2640681/Controlling-Muslim-husband-forced-wife-convert-Islam-wear-hijab-killed-pregnant-jailed-17-years.html). Last visited: 19 July 2014.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Mohammed Badiuzzaman pleads guilty to murdering Sabeen Thandi in Forest Gate’, Metropolitan Police, 6 May 2014.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> ‘Controlling Muslim husband who forced wife to convert to Islam and wear a hijab before he killed her while she was pregnant is jailed for 17 years’, *Daily Mail*, 27 May 2014.

<sup>201</sup> ‘Controlling Muslim man forced wife to convert and wear a hijab before killing her while she was pregnant’, *Malaysia Chronicle*, 28 May 2014, available at: [www.malaysia-chronicle.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=291051:controlling-muslim-man-forced-wife-to-convert-and-wear-a-hijab-before-killing-her-while-she-was-pregnant&Itemid=4](http://www.malaysia-chronicle.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=291051:controlling-muslim-man-forced-wife-to-convert-and-wear-a-hijab-before-killing-her-while-she-was-pregnant&Itemid=4). Last visited: 19 August 2014.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Man forced wife to convert to Islam before he strangled her while she was pregnant’, *SundayWorld.com*, 28 May 2014, available at: [www.sundayworld.com/top-stories/crime-desk/donal-macintyre-s-crime-cafe/woman-forced-to-convert-to-islam-then-strangled-while-pregnant](http://www.sundayworld.com/top-stories/crime-desk/donal-macintyre-s-crime-cafe/woman-forced-to-convert-to-islam-then-strangled-while-pregnant). Last visited: 19 August 2014.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> ‘Controlling Muslim husband who forced wife to convert to Islam and wear a hijab before he killed her while she was pregnant is jailed for 17 years’, *Daily Mail*, 27 May 2014.

<sup>205</sup> ‘Mohammed Badiuzzaman pleads guilty to murdering Sabeen Thandi in Forest Gate’, Metropolitan Police, 6 May 2014.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Controlling Muslim husband who forced wife to convert to Islam and wear a hijab before he killed her while she was pregnant is jailed for 17 years’, *Daily Mail*, 27 May 2014.

<sup>207</sup> ‘Mohammed Badiuzzaman jailed for strangling pregnant wife’, *BBC News*, 27 May 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-27592397](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-27592397). Last visited: 17 July 2014.

<sup>208</sup> ‘Mohammed Badiuzzaman pleads guilty to murdering Sabeen Thandi in Forest Gate’, Metropolitan Police, 6 May 2014.

<sup>209</sup> ‘Mohammed Badiuzzaman jailed for strangling pregnant wife’, *BBC News*, 27 May 2014.

*CASE STUDY: Banaz Mahmud*

**On 24 January 2006, Banaz Mahmud was gang raped and murdered by her male relatives in her home.<sup>210</sup> Her body was later found in a suitcase in Birmingham.<sup>211</sup> She had previously been returned to her family five times by the police in Mitcham, London.<sup>212</sup>**

Banaz was forced into marriage at the age of 16, but left her husband after two years. She reported to the local police in the West Midlands that her husband had raped her at least six times and routinely beat her.<sup>213</sup> After she left her husband, she met and started a relationship with Rahmat Sulemani. This new relationship with a man who had not been selected by her family and was of a different Kurdish sect to her own, added to the fact that she had not yet finalised her divorce, angered her family and they began threatening her.<sup>214</sup>

In early December 2005, her uncle Ari Mahmud told her to break off her relationship with Rahmat or “face the consequences”. Banaz’s father, Mahmud Mahmud and members of the Kurdish community met at Ari’s house, where they discussed murdering Banaz and her new boyfriend.<sup>215</sup>

Banaz then began making a series of visits to Mitcham police station in South London. However, the police officers she spoke to did not believe the gravity of the threat she had been subjected to, despite an earlier attempt on her sister’s life by their brother.<sup>216</sup> On the last occasion, just weeks before Banaz was killed in early 2006, she was seen by police at A&E after she had escaped from her father who had forced her to drink alcohol and had attempted to strangle her while wearing surgical gloves. Banaz had managed to flee from her father by jumping over a neighbour’s fence and running to a nearby café where the police was called.

Detective Chief Inspector Caroline Goode, who headed the investigation into the murder of Banaz, reported: “The officer turned up [at the hospital], but simply did not understand what it was that [she] was being told. She had no prior knowledge of HBV”.<sup>217</sup> In fact, Banaz and her insistent pleas for help were dismissed as “dramatic and calculating” by Police Constable Angela Comes, the officer called to the scene, who informed her father that she had issued a complaint and threatened to charge his daughter with criminal damage for breaking a window during her escape.<sup>218</sup>

Even before this first attempt on her life, Banaz had given a letter to Mitcham Police Station containing the names of people she said would kill her, a list that turned out to be correct, yet

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<sup>210</sup> ‘Dad guilty in “honour” killing’, *This is Local London*, 11 June 2007, available at: [www.thisislocalondon.co.uk/news/topstories/1463629.print/](http://www.thisislocalondon.co.uk/news/topstories/1463629.print/). Last visited: 29 July 2014.

<sup>211</sup> ‘Police failed to heed pleas from honour victim’, *The Telegraph*, 2 April 2008, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1583629/Police-failed-to-heed-pleas-from-honour-victim.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1583629/Police-failed-to-heed-pleas-from-honour-victim.html). Last visited: 17 July 2014. See also: “‘Still now they follow me’: Footage of Banaz Mahmud warning police before her “honour” killing to be shown for the first time’, *The Independent*, 24 September 2012, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/still-now-they-follow-me-footage-of-banaz-mahmud-warning-police-before-her-honour-killing-to-be-shown-for-the-first-time-8168099.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/still-now-they-follow-me-footage-of-banaz-mahmud-warning-police-before-her-honour-killing-to-be-shown-for-the-first-time-8168099.html). Last visited: 17 July 2014.

<sup>212</sup> ‘Dad guilty in “honour” killing’, *This is Local London*, 11 June 2007.

<sup>213</sup> ‘The tragic story of Banaz Mahmud: she fell in love at 19, so her family killed her’, *Daily Mail*, 12 June 2007, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-461378/The-tragic-story-Banaz-Mahmud-fell-love-19-family-killed-her.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-461378/The-tragic-story-Banaz-Mahmud-fell-love-19-family-killed-her.html). Last visited: 1 September 2014.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> ‘Murder girl’s five cried for help that were ignored’, *Daily Mail*, 12 June 2007, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-461280/Murder-girls-cries-help-ignored.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-461280/Murder-girls-cries-help-ignored.html). Last visited: 29 July 2014.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with DCI Caroline Goode in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>218</sup> ‘Murder girl’s five cried for help that were ignored’, *Daily Mail*, 12 June 2007.

was not taken into consideration until her after death. Within two weeks of Banaz signing Comes’ account of the attack as a true record, she was raped, garrotted with a bootlace, and stamped to death before being buried in a suitcase under a freezer in Birmingham.<sup>219</sup> The five names she had listed in her letter were later convicted for her murder and all received life sentences.<sup>220</sup> Her uncle Mahmud was sentenced to a minimum of 23 years, while her father was sentenced to 20 years.<sup>221</sup> A third man, Mohammad Hama, who carried out the murder alongside her father and uncle, was given a minimum 17 year sentence.<sup>222</sup>

In 2013, DCI Goode admitted that “the Police clearly did fail Banaz on that occasion”.<sup>223</sup>

Both case studies are clear examples of failures on behalf of the police to communicate with the families as well as to differentiate HBV from other safeguarding such as child protection and domestic violence, where establishing contact with the family is considered good practice. In incidents such as the Banaz Mahmud case, police have turned victims away due to a lack of understanding in how to recognise and deal with signs and/or reports of HBV.

One of the greatest challenges faced by groups fighting HBV is a lack of multi-agency engagement between the government and other organisations, services, and educational settings.<sup>224</sup> While women’s groups such as IKRWO and Karma Nirvana have a unique level of understanding and knowledge of HBV, their efforts to reach out and engage with schools and police forces have so far largely been ignored or rejected.

For example, Karma Nirvana’s founder and CEO Jasvinder Sanghera, wrote to all 43 Chief Police Constables in August 2014, urging them to consider a three-day training course and adopt a specific risk assessment tool about how to identify signs of HBV. While 17 forces have signed up and seven are still currently in discussions about whether or not to do the training, over half have either declined or not yet responded. London is included in those that have not responded, despite being in the top three regions from where Karma Nirvana receives the higher number of calls to its helpline for victims. In January 2015, Sanghera will write again to all Chief Constables who have not responded, urging them to consider the training.

Some police forces reportedly have claimed that, in “times of austerity”,<sup>225</sup> they cannot financially justify paying for the training. However, the cost of training 18 police officers and adopting a specific risk assessment tool is less than £5,000 and, according to Sanghera, if they wanted to carry out the training, they could: “It’s not about money, it’s about prioritising”.<sup>226</sup>

The training has already proven to be hugely effective. From the regions that have received training, there has been an increase in reporting of HBV. According to dialogue amongst police officers

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<sup>219</sup> ‘Two-hour rape and torture of honour killing girl murdered by her family’, *Daily Mail*, 20 July 2007, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-469553/Two-hour-rape-torture-honour-killing-girl-murdered-family.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-469553/Two-hour-rape-torture-honour-killing-girl-murdered-family.html). Last visited: 30 July 2014.

<sup>220</sup> ‘Murder girl’s five cried for help that were ignored’, *Daily Mail*, 12 June 2007.

<sup>221</sup> ‘Banaz Mahmud ‘honour’ killing cousins jailed for life’, *BBC News*, 10 November 2010, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-11716272](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-11716272). Last visited: 1 September 2014.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> Interview with DCI Caroline Goode in ‘Honor Diaries’, 2013.

<sup>224</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014.

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, December 2014.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

following the training, this has been due to the fact that officers are beginning to identify cases that they previously would not have.<sup>227</sup>

In the case of Leicestershire Police, Karma Nirvana’s training of 32 police officers has resulted in improved policing confidence, responses and increased reporting. In late 2014, they successfully prosecuted a father who had slit his daughter’s throat and stabbed her husband, and he received a 23 year sentence. Higher levels of awareness amongst a team can therefore shift cases forward to successful outcomes.

Furthermore, an HMIC inspection of all 43 police forces starts in January. This will provide the first benchmark to show where police forces are in terms of awareness and levels of training, which will provide a clearer idea of how much work needs to be done and where.

While every victim requires a multi-agency response, as a result of the current lack of consistency on a national level, the type of response they receive from the local authorities is dependent on who the individual the victims sees on the day and the level of awareness about HBV they happen to possess.<sup>228</sup>

Not only is there still a lack of understanding and awareness surrounding HBV, there is reportedly still a reluctance to treat HBV as a child protection issue. As in educational settings, there have been reports of cultural relativism within the police forces, which acts as a barrier to protecting victims.<sup>229</sup> It has also been reported that members of the police have defended the ‘honour’ system rather than victims of HBV. According to Sanghera, a police officer stood up in uniform at an event she was speaking at in 2013 and told her “you could not have loved your family if you ran away”, before stating that “I had no honour”.<sup>230</sup>

While high profile cases such as Banaz Mahmood’s have highlighted such weaknesses, changes to the level of understanding needs to be enforced across all police forces and all levels of staff. It is imperative that every police officer, from the telephone operator to those handling the case face-to-face can identify an HBV case, secure the trust of the victim and act appropriately to ensure that they are not further endangered – for example, by never communicating with their family or community, from whom they are at risk.<sup>231</sup>

Despite a clear need for improvement within the police force in dealing with HBV cases, a review of the Association of Chief Police Officers 2008 “‘honour’-based violence strategy” which was originally scheduled to take place 30 September 2010, is long overdue but has yet to be published.<sup>232</sup> This should be reviewed as a matter of urgency with regards to raising awareness among all police forces, who should receive ‘honour’-based violence training as part of their ongoing professional development.

There are nascent signs that progress will be made in 2015. The police inspection programme 2014/15 outline states that an investigation into police handling of HBV across the UK will be conducted.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, December 2014.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>229</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, September 2014.

<sup>230</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>231</sup> “Failings in police recording” of honour violence’, *BBC News*, 6 February 2014.

<sup>232</sup> ‘Postcode lottery: police recording of reported ‘honour’ based violence’, *IKWRO*, January 2014.

<sup>233</sup> ‘HMIC’s 2014/15 inspection programme’, Criminal Justice Inspectorates, 2014, available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/inspection-programme-2014-15.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/inspection-programme-2014-15.pdf), p13. Last visited: 14 November 2014.

According to the inspection timetable, however, HBV investigations have not yet been scheduled (only the first two quarters have been finalised).<sup>234</sup> In addition, it appears unlikely that all police groups will be investigated, as the HMIC website states that issues are investigated by surveying “a representative number of forces”.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, the topics of thematic inspections are reviewed every year, and so while issues relating to specific topics may be investigated as part of more general force inspections, there is no guarantee that specific issues will be investigated on an annual basis. Moreover, the HMIC’s consultation response document on its 2014/15 programme of inspections highlights a current inability to ensure its recommendations are enforced in the long term, stating that, “while police forces will be obliged to respond to our recommendations, they will have no ongoing obligation to update us on their subsequent work to implement them.”<sup>236</sup>

### 3.2.3 Government Funding

#### 3.2.3.1 Women’s Groups

Women’s support groups for victims of forced marriage and HBV currently provide a unique service<sup>237</sup> within the UK. Despite filling the gap in public services, they do not receive adequate long-term financial support from the government.

The group Karma Nirvana, for example, provides the only national helpline for victims of forced marriage and HBV in Britain. The helpline currently receives over 850 calls per month and that number is increasing.<sup>238</sup> Due to the fact that there has so far been no commitment to keep the helpline going beyond March 2015 (the government’s funding cut-off point), the group remains in a position of not knowing whether their helpline will continue beyond the forthcoming general elections in May 2015. As it stands, the group is struggling to keep up with the number of calls per day – missing around 115 per month during closing times.<sup>239</sup> Founder and CEO Jasvinder Sanghera voiced concern about the wellbeing of victims and potential victims following the helpline’s possible closure, due to the fact that victims rely on the helpline.<sup>240 241</sup> While change is still possible – the group is still in discussions with the government – the short period of time before the helpline closes is causing the group “really urgent concern”.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> ‘HMIC interim inspection schedule’, Criminal Justice Inspectorates, available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/interim-inspection-schedule-2014-15.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/interim-inspection-schedule-2014-15.pdf). Last visited: 14 November 2014.

<sup>235</sup> ‘Thematic inspections’, Criminal Justice Inspectorates, available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/inspections/thematic-inspections/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/inspections/thematic-inspections/). Last visited: 14 November 2014.

<sup>236</sup> ‘Consultation on HMIC’s Proposed 2014/15 Inspection Programme’, Independent Police Complaints Commission, February 2014, available at: [www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/speeches/IPCC\\_response\\_to\\_HMIC\\_Proposed\\_2014-15\\_Inspection\\_Programme.pdf](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/speeches/IPCC_response_to_HMIC_Proposed_2014-15_Inspection_Programme.pdf), p2. Last visited: 14 November 2014.

<sup>237</sup> For example, Karma Nirvana run the only nationwide helpline for victims of HBV and forced marriage in the UK. While certain police forces have a specific HBV unit, these are uncommon. Cambridgeshire Police ran a 24-hour helpline between June 2008 (although the Cambridgeshire Constabulary website states the helpline was launched in June 2007) and January 2011, called ‘Choice hotline’, for victims of HBV and forced marriage. They received over 1,000 calls during that time period, and police officers were deployed 374 times in response, although it is unclear what happened as a result of these call-outs. They would also signpost the callers to support groups. The helpline is reportedly still active and receives around 20 calls per month. They refer callers to a ‘multi-agency referral unit’ which encompasses “colleagues from adult social care, children’s social care, fire service, probation, mental health, health and the domestic abuse advocacy service”. See: ‘Choice hotline’, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 2014, available at: [www.cambs.police.uk/help/honour/hotline.asp](http://www.cambs.police.uk/help/honour/hotline.asp). Last visited: 6 August 2014; see also: ‘Report on the Implementation of the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for Dealing with Forced Marriage’, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2008, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/136371/Guidance\\_for\\_dealing\\_with\\_forced\\_marriage\\_A4\\_v1.6\\_WEB.PDF](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136371/Guidance_for_dealing_with_forced_marriage_A4_v1.6_WEB.PDF). Last visited: 6 August 2014.

<sup>238</sup> ‘Summary stats: 2008-2014’ (available upon request), *Karma Nirvana*.

<sup>239</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014. See also: ‘Summary stats: 2008-2014’ (available upon request), *Karma Nirvana*.

<sup>240</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, May 2014.

<sup>241</sup> Interview with Jasvinder Sanghera, founder and CEO, *Karma Nirvana*, August 2014.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

Another women’s group, IKWRO, has received no commitment for long term funding. The group’s director, Diana Nammi, reports that they are currently attempting to set up the UK’s first refuge for Middle Eastern women to accommodate the many immigrant and refugee women staying in refuges who do not speak English. According to Nammi, “many refugees have difficulties in communicating with the services and, because of this, many refuges try not to take any Middle Eastern women who do not speak English into their refuges”.<sup>243</sup> While IKWRO has located a building for the new refuge, a lack of government funding is preventing it from opening. As a result Nammi believes that women at risk of HBV are forced to remain isolated and vulnerable:

Imagine a woman who is at risk, has suffered violence and has nowhere to go, no family or anyone or around her. While the main purpose of refuges is to support these kinds of women, they will be unable to do that. So [these women] will be victims again because of the cap in services.<sup>244</sup>

Moreover, with the existing funding IKWRO receives from the London Council for “advice, counselling and training”, Nammi adds that “the threat of not renewing it is always there. We always have to fight for funds – and the commitment is always three years, two years, one year – and it becomes stressful work”. Nammi shares Sanghera’s fears that existing funding will be cut off after the general election in May 2015: “beyond the elections there may be many changes [...] there are lots of uncertainties”.<sup>245</sup>

This has meant that many groups have had no option but to turn women away, often leaving them vulnerable to abuse or forcing them to return to abusive and potentially dangerous situations.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, consistently having to fundraise as a result of a lack of government funding commitment is a waste of staff time that could be given to directly supporting victims, the numbers of which are currently both increasing and overwhelming. In order for women’s groups to cope with the increasing demand and continue to provide support for those at risk, the government must incorporate these groups into its core, long term funding provision.

### 3.2.3.2 ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ and the ‘Domestic Violence Rule’

Certain groups of women still do not receive adequate protection from HBV because of their Visa status. They are in the UK on other visas (non-spousal); migrant domestic workers; overstayers; and, human trafficking victims. The ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ (NRPFs) condition, introduced in Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, prevents immigrants on spousal visas from claiming most benefits, tax credits or housing assistance within their two year probationary period of arriving in the UK.<sup>247</sup> As a result, women who had recently arrived in the UK were often unable to escape violence from their husbands or in-laws<sup>248</sup> due to the fact that abused immigrant women had no

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<sup>243</sup> Interview with Diana Nammi, director, IKWRO, August 2014.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Brandon, J. & Hafez, S., (2010, Second Edition) ‘Crimes of the Community; Honour Based Violence in the UK’, *Centre for Social Cohesion*.

<sup>247</sup> Public funds; Guidance; UK Visas and Immigration; GOV.UK, 17 February 2014, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-funds-2/public-funds>. Last visited: 23 December 2014.

<sup>248</sup> ‘NRPF Information’, *No Recourse to Public Funds Network*, available at: [www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/Pages/NRPF%20Information.aspx](http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/Pages/NRPF%20Information.aspx). Last visited: 31 July 2014.

recourse to public funds and women’s refuges were obliged to turn many of them away due to overcrowding and financial difficulties.<sup>249</sup>

From 1 April 2012, however, following a sustained campaign involving 27 human rights organisations,<sup>250</sup> the Home Office introduced a concession allowing victims of domestic violence on spousal visas with no recourse to public funds to access benefits and public housing while they apply for settlement under the ‘Domestic Violence Rule’.<sup>251</sup> While this rule eases access to housing and benefits for some (especially given that the spousal visa probationary period has now been extended from two to five years),<sup>252</sup> activists argue that does not provide adequate protection for women in the UK on other visas (non-spousal); migrant domestic workers; overstayers; and, human trafficking victims.<sup>253</sup>

Additionally, even for those women provided for, the process of gaining access to housing and benefits can still take up to eight weeks to be completed, putting women’s lives in danger in cases where local authorities may not be able to provide immediate assistance.<sup>254 255</sup> It is therefore critical that upon entry into the UK, immigrant women are able to access support and protection against HBV and that local councils provide greater accessibility to all in need, regardless of the victims’ immigration status. The burden should be on local councils to process applications in a shorter amount of time and/or establish an emergency relief fund for cases requiring an immediate response. This should be communal to relevant charities and police in each local area, so that victims of HBV are referred to the council rather than the onus being on them to know about the various benefits available.

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<sup>249</sup> Gryffe, H., ‘Immigration rules: The Domestic Violence concession’, *Women’s Aid*, 5 February 2008, available at: [www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-articles.asp?section=00010001002200450001&itemid=1437](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-articles.asp?section=00010001002200450001&itemid=1437). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>250</sup> ‘Campaign to Abolish No Recourse to Public Funds Celebrates victory’, *IKWRO*, 2 April 2012, available at: [www.ikwro.org.uk/2012/04/campaign-to-abolish-no-recourse-to-public-funds-celebrates-victory/](http://www.ikwro.org.uk/2012/04/campaign-to-abolish-no-recourse-to-public-funds-celebrates-victory/). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

<sup>251</sup> Gryffe, H., ‘Immigration rules: The Domestic Violence concession’, *Women’s Aid*, 5 February 2008.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> ‘Campaign to Abolish No Recourse to Public Funds Celebrates victory’, *IKWRO*, 2 April 2012.

<sup>254</sup> Gryffe, H., ‘Immigration rules: The Domestic Violence concession’, *Women’s Aid*, 5 February 2008.

<sup>255</sup> ‘No recourse to public funds’, *Women’s Aid*, October 2009, available at: [www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=00010001001000020001](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=00010001001000020001). Last visited: 23 July 2014.

## Conclusion

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A decade ago, 'honour'-based violence was a problem that not many knew or talked about in the UK. Today, despite being a high-profile issue, the lives of thousands of individuals are continuing to slip through the net. While several women's groups are working tirelessly to fill the large gap in support for victims left open by the state, a lack of government financial commitments means that they are only able to help what they consider to be the very tip of the iceberg.

Recent progress regarding the forced marriage law is not enough. Real, immediate action is needed to prevent further lives from being lost. The government needs to take the lead in helping to raise awareness among services on a local level that have points of contact with victims and/or perpetrators of 'honour'-based violence, from schools to police forces to airport staff to healthcare workers. This will help, not only to deal with crises, but to prevent others from taking place, as professionals will only be able to identify cases of HBV once they have improved levels of awareness.

On the ground women's groups need long-term commitment and engagement from the government and local authorities. In order for these groups to be able to continue providing support for those at risk, as well as coping with the increasing demand, the government must incorporate these groups into its core, long term funding provision. In order to increase government accountability in its dealing with HBV, further independent assessments should be annually carried out regarding its levels of commitment and its findings made public. Until there is real movement on this issue, and the government provides adequate support for victims of 'honour'-based violence, as well as groups that protect them, the rights and hopes of millions of girls and women will continue to be denied.







Thousands of individuals living in the United Kingdom are at risk of losing their lives to an unwritten code of conduct known as ‘honour’. Five years ago, ‘honour’-based violence was a problem that not many knew or talked about in the UK. Today, it is a high-profile issue, yet many cases are continuing to slip through the net. While several women’s groups are working tirelessly to fill the large gap in support for victims and raising awareness, successful efforts are still not being matched by those whose responsibility it is to protect British citizens. As a result, victims are being let down by those who are failing, not only to deal with crises, but to prevent them from happening in the first place.

**‘If you believe in the cause of freedom, then proclaim it,  
live it and protect it, for humanity’s future depends on it.’**

Henry M ‘Scoop’ Jackson  
(May 31, 1912 – September 1, 1983)  
US Congressman and Senator for  
Washington State from 1941 – 1983



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