

Honour Based Abuse (HBA)



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Her name was Sara Sharif

Karen Ashworth-Blackham: Safeguarding Development Officer

Content:

- What is Honour Based Abuse (HBA)?
- Perpetrator motivation
- Barriers to reporting HBA
- Forced Marriage (FM)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB)
- Safeguarding and Reporting

Health Warning



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What is So Called Honour Based Abuse (HBA)?

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

Crimes Linked to HBA



- Murder
- Threats to kill
- Inflicting physical injury – assaults
- Child Destruction, (procuring a miscarriage)
- Theft
- Blackmail
- Kidnap
- False Imprisonment
- Sexual Offences - Rape, indecent assault, rape of a child
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Domestic Abuse, CCB
- Threats to destroy, damage criminal property
- Perverting the course of justice
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief
- Breaching non-molestation order, force marriage protection order
- Abduction of Child

What is Meant by Community?



- Where people have the same beliefs, practices, sign up to codes of behaviour
- A social unit, a group of people with commonality – religion, values, customs or identity
- Sharing a sense of place - country, village, town, or neighbourhood; or in virtual space through communication platforms



HBA cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities:

- Transcends national and international boundaries
- **A violation of human rights**
- Includes practices that are performed by perpetrators on victims for cultural or socio-conventional motives, that have **harmful consequences:**
- Victims: Female & Male
- **Ideology** – not religion

Recognise the seriousness of the risk to victim, partner, children, associates, siblings.

Consider the risk to the victim from their entire family, the offender's family, and the community.

Perpetrator Motivators

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality **including** perceived promiscuity, pre-marital relationships, being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.
- Protecting family **honour**
- Responding to peer group or family **pressure**
- Assisting claims for **residence and citizenship**
- Attempting to strengthen **family links**

Perpetrator Motivators

- Ensuring land, property and **wealth** remain within the family
- To provide a **carer** for a disabled member of the family
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals (**often be misguided or out of date**)
- Protecting **perceived religious ideals** which are misguided
- **Preventing relationships outside** the ethnic cultural, religion or caste group

Risk Factors

- Refusing to marry a person chosen by the family
- Dowry-related (financial) issues
- Pregnancy outside of marriage
- Disapproved relationships such as inter-faith, inter-caste, inter-cultural, same-sex or outside of marriage
- Pre-marital conflict, reporting domestic abuse, attempts to separate/divorce, disputes over child custody
- Disabilities
- Sexual orientation (including being gay, lesbian, bisexual)

Risk Factors

- Objection/resistance to being removed from, not excelling in or leaving education
- Mental ill health or limited mental capacity
- Rejection of religion or religious instruction
- Being a victim of rape
- Identifying as transgender
- Failing to conceive or producing only female children
- Expressions of autonomy
- Behaviour perceived by the family to be inappropriate such as smoking, dress or make-up, relationships, sexual conduct (including online), truanting
- Being a reluctant immigration sponsor

Naz & Matt Foundation?



Naz & Matt Foundation

[Naz and Matt Foundation - Be The Person You Were Born To Be](#)

Warning Signs

- Fear of harm, forced marriage, deportation, child abduction
- Escalation – threats, violence, restrictions
- Reports of domestic abuse
- Absence from school, college or work
- Reports of missing episodes
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self-harm
- Attempted suicide
- Suicide in the family
- Being subjected to unreasonable restrictions, such as being kept at home by parents/family members, constantly chaperoned or other coercive, controlling behaviours

Warning Signs

- Family or community members taking the role of interpreter at GP or other appointments
- Being abandoned or ostracised by family members
- Late disclosure of pregnancy or pregnancy itself
- Delay in seeking medical help or not receiving any
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Being pressured into going abroad
- Disclosures that a girl has been taken to a doctor to be examined to see if she is a virgin
- Disclosure of hymen repair surgery
- Eating disorders

Barriers to Reporting So Called HBA

HBA is often committed with some level of approval and/or collusion from wider family, community members and sometimes even professionals who share the same codes of 'honour'.

Individuals may be reluctant to assist with police enquiries due to:

- Fear of or pressure from the family and community
- Previous poor response from support services
- Fear of not being believed
- Self-blame, not recognising themselves as a victim
- Cultural or religious beliefs
- Feelings of shame, being told they have brought shame on the family and or community
- Threats of suicide from family members
- Concern for loved ones
- Immigration status



Shaming or Scandalising

Actions that intend to cause someone else to feel shame for being or doing something that another person(s) feels is wrong or undesirable by their 'community behavioural standards'.

For example, Not conforming to expected behaviour.

Result - damaging a person's image, sense of self-worth and mental health.

Online Traveller Shame Pages:

- Irish Traveller and Romany Gypsy individuals create shame pages to publicly humiliate others within the community.
- This approach has been linked to high suicide rates

Source ['Under the Magnifying Glass': A report on shaming within the Gypsy and Traveller communities \(travellermovement.org.uk\)](http://travellermovement.org.uk)



10-year-old Sara Sharif:

The tragic case of 10-year-old Sara Sharif who was burned and beaten by her father and stepmother.

- Her body was found with dozens of injuries at the family home in Woking, Surrey on the 10th August 2023.
- Her father, Urfan Sharif, called police and told them that he had killed his daughter and left her at the address.
- He had a history of Domestic Abuse against children yet; he was given custody of her by family courts despite this.
- Neighbours had heard concerning disturbances from the address, but they were too afraid to report, fearing accusations of racism on social media.

While HBA was not mentioned in the sentencing remarks, Sara's tragic death reveals patterns of abuse that align with key triggers in Honour Based Abuse cases.

Sentencing Judge's remarks - Sara was treated differently because she was a girl – a significant factor often present in HBA, and Karma Nirvana's most common reported triggers observed on their helpline.

Abuse can stem from deeply rooted beliefs about gender roles, where girls face greater scrutiny and control.

Sara's situation was further complicated by her position within the family – a child from a previous relationship, which can increase risks in HBA dynamics, as children from “different mothers” can be viewed as outsiders, treated as less deserving or targeted for abuse.

Forced Marriage (FM)

A marriage where one or both people do not (or in the case of some people with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage.

In an **Arranged Marriage**, there is always consent, **although a change of heart from one of the parties could result in HBA.**

FM is **NOT** a legitimate cultural tradition, nor is it a religious issue: no major world religion either preaches or condones it.

Age of Consent to Marriage

England and Wales 18 years of age.

Scotland:

Aged 16 and 18 - no need for parental consent to get married

It will not be legally recognised in England and Wales - therefore recognised as FM and therefore parents/carers would be liable for FM / child marriage prosecution. **Norfolk** have had these cases.

Northern Ireland:

Any two people can marry as long as: both are at least 16 years of age on the day of their marriage - anyone under 18 will need permission from their parent or guardian, or if suitable, a court order to allow the marriage to go ahead.

Ireland

The minimum age for getting married in Ireland is 18 years of age. Also, if you are ordinarily resident in Ireland and you wish to get married abroad, you must be aged at least 18.

Offence of Forced Marriage

A Person commits an offence under the law of England And Wales if he or she:

Uses violence, threats or any other form of coercion for the purpose of causing another person to enter into a marriage, and believes, or ought reasonably to believe, that the conduct may cause the other person to enter into the marriage without free and full consent.

Practises any form of deception with the intention of causing another person to leave the United Kingdom, and intends the other person to be subjected to conduct outside the United Kingdom if the victim were in England or Wales.



FMPO Forced Marriage Protection Order

The aim of the order is to protect the person who has been, or is being, **forced into marriage**.

In an emergency the court can make an order in so that protection is in place straightaway.

Applications can be made:

at the same time as a police investigation or other criminal proceedings
when someone is being threatened with a forced marriage
they are in a forced marriage



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FMPO Forced Marriage Protection Order

Children Services (the Local Authority) take the lead on FMPO's where the child in question is open to them.

Adult Social Services (ASC) will take the lead in FMPO's for vulnerable adults.

Adults with capacity can seek to take out an order of their own volition (rare, but this can be done).

The Police will rarely get involved in the application unless it is **linked to a criminal investigation** where an adult of capacity is involved.

Virginity Testing

- **“I was forced to have a virginity test and it destroyed my life.”**
- Zara, not her real name, says her “whole world broke down” when she was forced by her family to have a ‘virginity test’.
- The British-born Bangladeshi in her 20s had a forced marriage, but before the wedding her groom's family demanded to know that Zara was a virgin.

Health and Care Bill: banning virginity testing March 2022

FMU (Forced Marriage Unit)

A joint-initiative with the Home Office offering confidential advice and assistance to:

- Those who have been forced into marriage
- Those at risk of being forced into marriage
- People worried about friends or relatives
- Professionals working with actual or potential victims of FM

Forced Marriage Unit

fmu@fcdo.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7008 0151

From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 0151

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Out of hours: [Find out about call charges](#) 020 7008 5000

Her Name was Banaz

Banaz Mamood 2006

A 20-year-old Iraqi Kurdish woman from south London was murdered on the orders of her family in an honour killing, because she ended a violent and abusive forced marriage and started a relationship with someone of her own choosing.

Her body was put in a suitcase and taken to the Midlands before being buried in a make-shift grave in a Birmingham back-garden.

Banaz's father, and uncle were jailed for life in 2007, after being found guilty over their part in the honour killing.

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What is FGM?

The World Health Organisation describes it as:

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

Why is male circumcision still legal?



Operation Limelight

Action to protect and safeguard young girls.

- FGM happens to **British girls in the UK** as well as overseas particularly during the **school holidays periods**
- **summer holidays** are commonly known amongst anti-FGM campaigners, not without good reason, as the 'cutting season'
- Frontline staff are crucial in identifying and protecting against FGM

Types of FGM

TYPE 1: CLITORIDECTOMY

Partial or total removal of the clitoris.

TYPE 2: EXCISION:

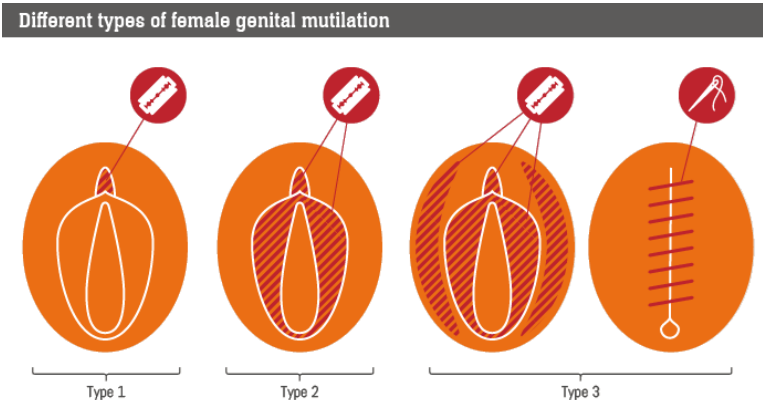
Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora,

TYPE 3: INFIBULATION:

Narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal.

TYPE 4:

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



Real Reason for FGM?

- Power & control - ensures pre-marital virginity, inhibits extra-marital sex - reduces women's libido.
 - A business, bringing the cutters wealth & status.
 - It is not contained in ANY religious texts.
- Mothers do it out of love – safeguarding their daughters future e.g.; “marriage prospects.”
 - Women fear the pain of re-opening the vagina and are afraid of being discovered if it is opened illicitly.
 - A girl may be opened and closed several times due to childbirth or marital sex.

Why is FGM Practiced?

- Preserves a girl's virginity/ chastity
- A rite of passage
- Viewed as being desirable
- Belief that it makes sexual relations safer/more pleasurable for men
- Upholds family Honour
- Is seen to cleanse and purify a girl
- Fulfils a religious requirement believed to exist

- Social acceptance, especially for marriage
- Gives the family a sense of belonging to the community
- Preserves a custom/tradition
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth safer for the infant
- Is seen to rid the family of bad luck or evil spirits
- Believed to reduce a woman's libido, preventing extramarital affairs

Other Names Used for FGM?

Female circumcision – by drawing a parallel with male circumcision, this term creates confusion between two very distinct practices, de-emphasising the severity of the procedure performed on females.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) – the most widespread term in international use. Mutilation is the removal of healthy tissue.' 'FGM' has a negative connotation and emphasises the gravity of the harm caused by the practice.

Female genital cutting (FGC) – used by some medical professionals and international organisations to avoid the stigmatisation of practising communities.

Excision – In some practising communities, 'non-excised' girls are the ones who are socially mistreated.

Africa and beyond, including the word sunna (referring to all types except infibulation) in countries such as Somalia and Sudan and local variations such as angurya (the scraping of tissue surrounding the opening of the vagina), Gishiri (cutting of the vagina) in Nigeria.

Sensitivity to language is an essential element of building trust with people in order to understand their perspectives and initiate change.



Tools used for FGM

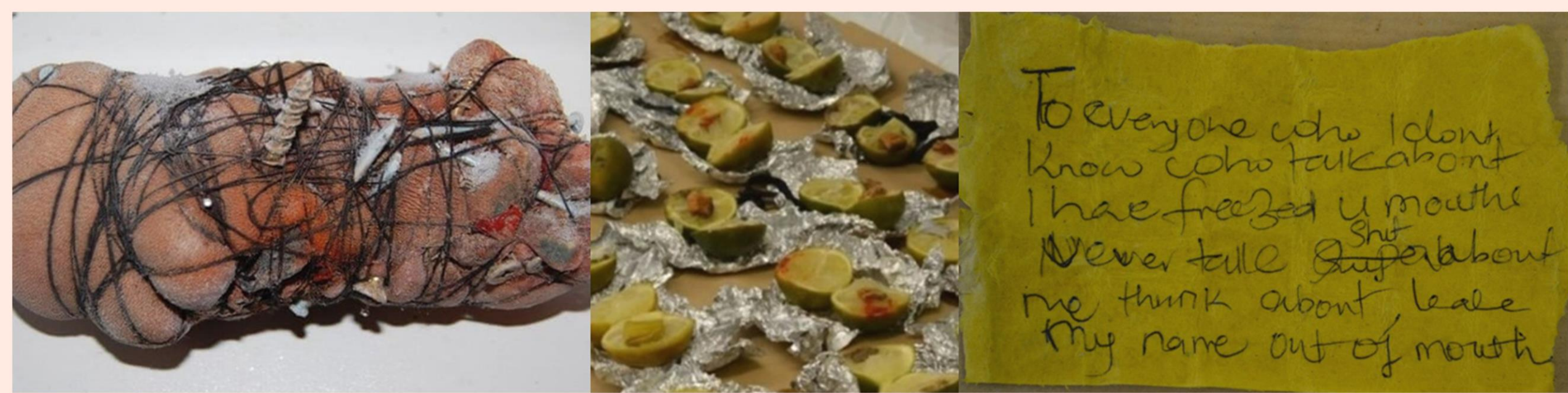
- Cut glass, Knives, Scissors, Razor Blades, Tin lid
- Cutters are mainly Female however, can be male
- Mothers are pressured into continuing with this harmful practice because it is expected, and no-one wants to be considered as a bad mother by the community.

Those at Risk of FGM?

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

Results of FGM

- Severe pain
- Difficulty in passing urine/urine infections
- HIV
- Infertility and damage to organs
- Genital tissue Swelling
- Death
- Difficult labour
- Impaired wound healing
- Excessive bleeding: (hemorrhage)
- Shock caused by infection, pain
- Psychological consequences **(PTSD)**



UK's First FGM Conviction

February 2019: The mother of a three-year-old girl has become the first person to be found guilty of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the UK in a landmark case welcomed by campaigners.

Police Search of the property uncovered evidence that the victim's parents had prepared a curse or spell to silence those involved in the investigation.

40 limes containing the names of police, doctors and social workers were discovered so they would "shut up" and "freeze their mouths".

Woman Convicted of Aiding FGM of Young Girl in Kenya

First Conviction of it's kind

26th October 2023

- Amina Noor, 39, from London, had denied assisting a non-UK person to mutilate the female genitalia of a British citizen overseas
- Victim – a young girl at the time with no ability to resist this incredibly harmful practice
- Investigation launched by the Met Police in November 2018 after the victim (then aged 16) informed a teacher she had suffered FGM as a young child
- Noor had taken the victim to Kenya a decade earlier where she was subjected to FGM by a Kenyan woman

Woman Convicted of Aiding FGM of Young Girl in Kenya

First Conviction of it's kind

26th October 2023

- She claimed in police interview that she believed the victim would be injected or pierced in a “procedure” known as “Gudniin” – an Arabic word meaning “circumcision”
- Also claimed the victim did not appear to be in pain following the procedure.
- Medical experts who examined the victim found she had not simply been injected – she had suffered severe mutilation of her genitals.

Noor’s knowledge of the FGM procedure was proven

She received a 7 year jail sentence.

FGM Legislation

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

- Excise, infibulate, or otherwise mutilate the whole or any part of a girl's (includes woman) labia majora, labia minora or clitoris.
- Perform FGM in England and Wales
- Assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself
- Assist from E & W a person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a UK national or UK resident

Click [here](#) for CPS guidance.



FGM Legislation

In summary the new powers relating to FGM are:

Extends the extra-territorial reach of female genital mutilation offences and providing anonymity to victims. **(Sections 70 and 71)**

A new offence of failing to protect a girl under 16 from the risk of female genital mutilation. **(Section 72)**

Provision for female genital mutilation protection orders to protect victims and likely victims. **(Section 73)**

A new duty on professionals to notify the police of acts of female genital mutilation. **(Section 74)**



FGMPO (Female Genital Mutilation protection Order)



Aim of the FGM Order

To **protect** the person who is at risk of FGM, or a female against whom an FGM offence has been committed: Orders may be made against people who are not named in the application



Applications

Applications can be made at the same time as a police investigation or other criminal proceedings



Courts

The court will have regard to all the circumstances of a case including the need to secure the health, safety and wellbeing of the potential or actual victim.

Good Practice Multi Agency Guidelines 2020

- Offer access or referral to support such as the FGM Specialist Clinics
- Ensure no family or community member is present – Consider appropriate adult
- Ensure a female professional is available to speak to the girl/woman
- Make no assumptions and give the individual time to talk
- Create a safe opportunity to disclose and take detailed notes
- Be sensitive as it's a subject with an intimate nature and the victim will be loyal to parents
- Don't blame or judge



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Good Practice Multi Agency Guidelines 2020

- Give accurate information about the urgency of the situation
- Use simple language and straightforward questions
- Use terminology the individual will understand
- Avoid loaded or offensive terms like barbaric
- Use neutral terms: Have you been closed down there, were you circumcised
- Be direct as not to embarrass or cause discomfort to the patient
- Discuss clearly how FGM is illegal and that the law can be used to help the family avoid FGM



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CALFB Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief

Spirit Possession

The belief that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling him or her.

Witchcraft

The belief that a child is able to use an evil force to harm others.

Exorcisms

Attempting to expel evil spirits from a child.

Jin or Jinni

In some cases, to be able to possess a person.

A literal belief in Jinn, much as many people believe in angels.



Potential Victims?

- Learning difficulties
- Behavioral concerns
- Disability
- Beautiful
- Gifted and talented
- A parent of the child dies- Child accused of being possessed and causing the death
- Epilepsy
- Bad luck in the family
- Mother dies during childbirth
- Divorce

Types of Faith or Belief

Beating: Beating the spirits out of the victim

Burning: Extreme heat thought to burn the evil - Having chilli pepper, salt or ginger applied to eyes or genitals

Cutting/ stabbing: Creating a way out for the evil

Semi-strangulation: squeezing the life out of the spirits

Isolation: Preventing the spreading of the evil by being locked up

Deprived of sleep: Stop spirits entering the body during nightmares and those possessed from causing disasters or death worldwide during sleep

Made to sleep in or have cold baths: Control of body temperature

Types of Faith or Belief

- **Starvation:** Weaken the spirit and prevent contaminated salt from entering the body (thought to assist the spirits to possess of the victim)
- **Being held under water:** Drowning the spirit

Sexual exploitation and abuse:

- exploiting the belief to silence the victim as a form of control or threat.
- Subjected to practices through the deliverance process that are sexually abusive e.g., bathed undressed in the presence of others.
- Trafficked children from some countries have been subjected to such practices designed to control them.

Spot the Signs

- physical injuries, such as bruises or burns (including historical injuries/scaring)
- a child reporting that they are or have been accused of being 'evil', and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them'
- use words such as 'kindoki', 'juju' or 'voodoo' - all refer to spiritual beliefs
- a child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children
- a child's personal care deteriorating (eg rapid loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, being unkempt with dirty clothes)

Spot the Signs

- it may be evident that the child's parent or carer does not have a close bond with the child
- a child's attendance at school or college becomes irregular or there is a deterioration in a child's performance
- a child is taken out of a school altogether without another school place having been arranged
- Wearing unusual jewellery/items or in possession of strange ornaments/scripts.

Survivor's Story

London — Kevani Kanda was just six years old when her family accused her of being a witch.

She was being molested by a relative and the trauma made her wet the bed and sleepwalk.

Instead of trying to find out what was wrong, Kanda's family were convinced she was possessed by an evil spirit.

For the next five years, she was starved, forced to eat her own vomit, beaten repeatedly and given suppositories containing spices to "get rid of the evil spirits. The torture occurred in a London suburb.

Please **click [here](#)** to read the full article on NBC News.

Case Studies

UK Cases: [Http://Nationalfgmcentre.Org.Uk/Calfb/](http://Nationalfgmcentre.Org.Uk/Calfb/)

Ayesha Ali	2013	Possession
Kristy Bamu	2010	Witchcraft/Possession
Eunice Spry	2007	Possession
Victoria Climbe	2000	Witchcraft
Patrick Erhabor, (Adam)	2001	Sacrifice
Faith Lovemore	2009	Possession
Case Number 14	2008	Evil Spirit

Training Resources:

[Resources for Exploring Concerns – National FGM Centre](#)

A photograph showing two police officers from behind as they walk down a busy, paved street. The officers are wearing black uniforms with 'POLICE' written in white on blue rectangular patches on their backs. They are also wearing black helmets. The background is filled with a blurred crowd of people walking in various directions, suggesting a public area like a city center or a market. The lighting is bright, indicating it is daytime.

Safeguarding & Reporting



Norfolk HBA Team

- Specialist HBA Team dealing with all HBA investigations due to the high risk
- Based at County Hall
- 3 x DS
- Norfolk has over 50 HBA Champions who will be called on to support front-line police and the HBA team
- Around 50 HBA enquiries at any one time – HBA, FGM, FM, CALFB – CALFB incidents are increasing in Norfolk)



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A Deeper Problem than Translation

- The coercive control that victims experience may be based on a culture of expectations around behaviour
- These are embedded at a young age so it is unlikely that these victims would identify what they experience as issues of honour or forced marriage.

Language Barriers:

Young women may not have been allowed to learn English; this barrier to accessing support can be part of the abuse itself

How will you source an Interpreter?

Interpreters

Best Practice:

For accurate information and to achieve full disclosure when using an independent interpreter follow the below best practice guidelines.

- Not from the same community group
- Accredited **REGISTERED INTERPRETER**
- The sex of the interpreter matters
- Should be aware and have training in FGM and where possible FM
- Use telephone service where no credited interpreter is available
- **Do not disclose** details that would reveal the identity of victim or witnesses

We Always

- Believe the victim
- See the victim alone/consider their wishes
- Give reassurance of their confidentiality
- Consider family members at risk
- Secure a safe contact method & code word
- Seek help from S&I Command & MASH
- Take wet fingerprints

We Must Never

- Send the victim away
- Underestimate perpetrators - **they DO kill their closest**
- Approach the family or community leaders
- Share information without victim consent
- Attempt mediation / use family as interpreters
- Assume it is a racial/cultural issue/faith issue

Support Agencies

- Freedom – 24/7 Helpline 0845 607 0133
- FGM Centre
- Karma Nirvana Honour Network Helpline – 0800 5999 247
- IKROW – Iranian & Kurdish Women
- Forced Marriage Unit
- Southall Black Sisters
- Women's Aid
- NSPCC Asian Helpline
- Health, Research & Development (FORWARD)
- The African Well Women's Clinic (AWWC)
- MASH partner agencies





Thank you – Any Questions

Karen Ashworth-Blackham: Safeguarding Development Officer