

## **Lewisham's VAWG COVID-19 response**

Domestic violence and abuse is likely to increase during this period based on evidence from countries a few weeks ahead of us in this pandemic. In turn we want our VAWG partners to know that support is available for victims during this time.

### **Honour Based Violence**

Honour based abuse is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour.

Violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims, which can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members.

Males can also be victims, sometimes as a consequence of their involvement in what is deemed to be an inappropriate relationship, if they are gay, or if they are believed to be supporting the victim.

Honour based abuse cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities, usually where a culture is heavily male dominated. Relatives, including females, may conspire, aid, abet or participate in honour based abuse, for what might seem a trivial transgression.<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Forms of 'honour'-based violence**

'Honour'-based violence includes:

- Forced marriage
- Domestic violence (physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse)
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence (rape and sexual assault or threat of rape and sexual assault)
- Threats to kill
- Social ostracism or rejection and emotional pressure
- Denial of access to children
- Pressure to go or move abroad

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- House arrest and excessive restrictions of freedom
- Denial of access to the telephone, internet, or passport/key documentation
- Isolation from friends and own family <sup>[2]</sup>

### What possible offences are being committed?

Honour based abuse is a serious offence which can involve a number of crimes:

- Common assault
- Domestic abuse
- Forced marriage
- Cruelty to persons under 16 (including neglect and abandonment)
- Failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil
- Theft (e.g. passport)
- Child abduction
- Abduction of an unmarried girl under the age of 16 from parent or guardian
- Abduction of a woman by force or for the sake of her property
- Forced repatriation
- Rape
- Aiding and abetting a criminal offence
- Kidnapping
- False imprisonment
- Murder <sup>[1]</sup>

### Spot the signs

You could be a victim of 'honour'-based violence if you feel threatened or are abused when you try to:

- Separate or divorce
- Start a new relationship
- Talk to or interact freely with men
- Become pregnant or give birth outside of marriage
- Have interfaith relationships or marry outside a specified religion
- Have sex before marriage
- Marry a person of your own choice



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- Access higher education without approval of your family <sup>[2]</sup>

### An example of Honour Based Violence

“A hard-hitting drama with a devastating finale, this is a story about the power and the limits of love in communities where 'honour' means everything”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p03nnns9/murdered-by-my-father>

Warning: contains strong language, some violence and disturbing scenes.

### Honour Based Violence during lockdown

During this period of “lockdown” where we have no choice but to stay at home, Karma Nirvana have seen on the helpline an increased amount of calls relating to this form of abuse, by not just partners but in-laws too. One caller described feeling like a slave within the house – being made to cook/clean and provide for the family, whilst working full time and feeling unwell. Many victims we speak to are sworn at, isolated, beaten, sexually abused and treat like slaves.

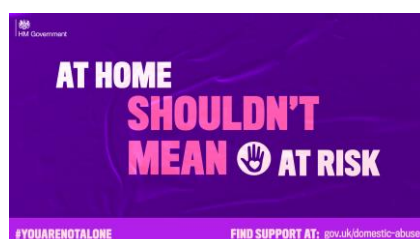
Please, whilst we are being told by the government to “stay at home” remember that “home” – for some, is not a safe place to be and can mean increased abuse.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Karma Nirvana – National Honour Based Statistics

*“As we report data as per fiscal year, in 2019/20 we supported 252 victim cases living in the London Met area of jurisdiction. Of those 252 victims, we know that 6 were living in Lewisham. Since the 1st of April 2020, we supported 91 victims living in the London Met area of jurisdiction, none of whom we know were living in Lewisham.*

*We receive calls from victims all over the UK who do not disclose where they are living, so we can only report on what victims share, and what professionals supporting victims who contact us know”*

Ann Bonner – Karma Nirvana



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### Useful help and advice on Honour Based Violence

If you are victim of 'honour'-based violence or forced marriage please contact:

**Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247**

**Forced Marriage Unit on +44 (0) 20 7008 0151 or [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk)**

If you, or anyone that you know is experiencing any kind of abuse, know that Karma Nirvana are still here during this difficult period, and our helpline is accessible not just over the phone but by email too. <sup>[2]</sup>

Karma Nirvana is an award-winning National charity supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage. Our opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

**Helpline: 0800 5999 247**

**Email: [support@karmanirvana.org.uk](mailto:support@karmanirvana.org.uk)**

**If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police – the police will continue to respond to emergency calls.**

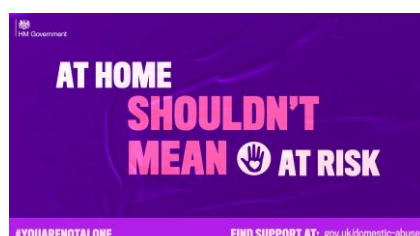
**If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call 999 and then press 55. This will transfer your call to the relevant police force who will assist you without you having to speak. <sup>[3]</sup>**

### National resources for guidance

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for victims of domestic abuse**  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse)

**Apps to support those experiencing domestic abuse**  
[www.hestia.org/brightsky](https://www.hestia.org/brightsky)

**COVID-19/Coronavirus: Safety Advice for Survivors**



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[www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-safety-advice-for-survivors](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-safety-advice-for-survivors)

### Domestic abuse and COVID-19

[www.safelives.org.uk/news-views/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19](http://www.safelives.org.uk/news-views/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19)

### National campaign to raise awareness of the Silent Solution system

[www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/national-campaign-raise-awareness-silent-solution-system](http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/national-campaign-raise-awareness-silent-solution-system)

## Useful numbers and websites

### Athena

Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Abuse

Helpline: 0808 2000 247

[www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/one-stop-shop-services/athena](http://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/one-stop-shop-services/athena)

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

### Early Years Alliance - Lewisham Children's and Family Centres

[www.lewishamcfc.org.uk](http://www.lewishamcfc.org.uk)

**The Deaf Health Charity – Sign Health** [www.signhealth.org.uk/our-projects/deafhope-projects/](http://www.signhealth.org.uk/our-projects/deafhope-projects/)

Text: 07970350366

### RASASC (Rape and sexual abuse centre)

0808 802 9999

### African Advocacy Foundation

[www.africadvocacy.org](http://www.africadvocacy.org)

020 8698 4473

### Rights of women:

[rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://rightsofwomen.org.uk)

### National stalking helpline – Suzy Lamplugh Trust

[www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)

0808 802 0300

### Respect Helpline for men

0808 8010327

[respectphoneline.org.uk/help-for-domestic-abuse-victims](http://respectphoneline.org.uk/help-for-domestic-abuse-victims)



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### Women's Aid live chat

This is an online chatting service which is ideal for victims who are self-isolating and do not want to be heard.

[chat.womensaid.org.uk](https://chat.womensaid.org.uk)

[www.womensaid.org.uk](https://www.womensaid.org.uk)

0117 944 44 11

### GALOP National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

0800 999 5428

[www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse](https://www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse)

## Future Training Sessions in Lewisham

### Africa Advocacy Foundation - Harmful practices awareness training

Harmful Practices are everybody's business. They affect us all directly or indirectly.

Join our virtual training to update/improve your knowledge & understanding of FGM,

CALFB, breast flattening, trafficking & child marriage.

- 14/07/20: Child abuse linked to faith and belief (CALFB)
- 21/07/20: Breast flattening & trafficking
- 18/08/20: Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- 15/09/20: Child & forced marriage

All sessions will be from 11-12:30pm on Zoom.

Please contact Anne Flaherty if you would like to join these sessions.

[anne@africadvocacy.org](mailto:anne@africadvocacy.org)

### Future bulletins

Please let me know if there is anything you would like to feature or promote within these bi-weekly bulletins.

[isis.pottinger@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:isis.pottinger@lewisham.gov.uk) or

[charlene.noel@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:charlene.noel@lewisham.gov.uk)

For any other enquires please email

[Vawg@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Vawg@lewisham.gov.uk)

For MARAC enquires please contact

[Theresa.Stone@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Theresa.Stone@lewisham.gov.uk)

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### References

[1] <https://www.bedfordshire.police.uk/information-and-services/Crime/Honour-based-abuse/What-is-honour-based-abuse>

[2] <https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/honour-based-violence/>

[3] <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/living-with-honour-based-abuse-during-lockdown/>

