

# Organisational Processes for Data Recording of Honour-Based Abuse, Forced Marriages and Female Genital Mutilation



27<sup>th</sup> March, 2023  
Final Project Meeting

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# Original Plan



# Fieldwork Conducted

## ❖ *Stage 3: Pilot*

- One-to-one/two-to-one interviews at one of the police forces (participants = 5)
- Focus group with both NGOs (participants = 15)
- One-to-one/two-to-one interviews with both NGOs (participants = 3)

## ❖ *Stage 4: Data Collection*

- Focus groups with 5 police forces (participants = 43)
- One-to-one/two-to-one interviews with call handlers from two of the police forces (participants = 5)
- Google forms

# Conceptual Conundrums: Shift in Focus to HBA

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- From the pilot interviews and focus groups with police forces & NGOs, it emerged that FGM is understood to be a different and more straightforward offence. There is existing literature which posits that FGM doesn't always have to do with honour.
- Notwithstanding the complexities in identifying FM and FGM, the police seemed to have an understanding that HBA is not as clear-cut, in comparison to FM where the actual, potential or perceived threat or incidence of forced marriage is relatively easier to identify. There are clear-cut recording practices around FGM and FM which embolden the police to straightaway crime/log it.



# Change in Methodology

- **Original methodology:** examine quantitative data held by police forces in relation to the recording of HBA, FM and FGM
- However, early pilot interviews, focus groups and blank database templates suggested that making comparisons between data held by different forces would be difficult due to use of different systems/different data being collected
- Also, early data collection suggested that providing snapshots for each force would be difficult due to our findings around how data is recorded.
- **Change:** Instead, we have asked the police forces to fill in google forms re the four recording patterns the team identified, to explore the extent to which they occur within their forces. These will be explained later in this presentation.
- Today's presentation will discuss the key findings from this research project.



## Main Findings

- Recording patterns used by the police for HBA.
- A need to move beyond 'defining' honour-based abuse.
- Cultural connotations continue to affect recording and policing
- Streamlining the functions of informal 'safety net' that exists within police forces
- Formalising engagement and partnership working with third sector organisations

# Recording Patterns

- Police recording of HBA is affected by four key patterns :

- **Under-recording** : where HBA is under-counted on police systems

Example: Due to being recorded as DA, missed in GRT communities, financial/sexual abuse cases having an element of HBA

- **Over-recording**: where instances of HBA are double/triple counted or flagged more than once

Example: an incident being flagged as FM *and* HBA.

- **Creative recording**: Where incidents are not 'typically' perceived as HBA/FM or FGM, but fit under the legal definition (for FM and FGM) and are recorded under this category

Example: Eastern European victim of trafficking receiving threats about her profession becoming news in her family in the home country; a sex worker assaulted in the genital area recorded as FGM.

- **Mis-recording**: where incidents are wrongly categorised as HBA

Example: arranged marriage confused with forced marriage; DV recorded as HBA

# Moving Beyond Definitions: Foregrounding Victims' Experiences and Officers' Practical Knowledge

- Police's understanding of HBA is more representative of victims' experiences rather than relying solely on the CPS definition, or definitions based on academic literature. It is the police's practice and understanding of victim-survivors' experiences that needs to be focused on.
- Victims rarely saying 'we are victims of HBA' instead using a *we are scared this will happen* language with police. No case is a clear-cut HBA case. For example:

*"A female once reported a theft of her mobile by her brother. When we dig deep, I asked the question- what's in that phone that that female wants so desperately back. And it turned out, she's in an intimate relationship and she's got images on social media that she kept completely secret to the family. And brother has twigged on this and is now trying to get access to the phone. That's an incident that's going to lead to a HBA incident, harm to the female and potentially forced marriage risk. And we're not seeing that because we're just dealing with it as a theft". (Strategic Lead, Police Force 4)*

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# Practicalities of 'Culture' Affecting Recording



- Some police forces are moving away from understanding HBA as linked to predominantly South Asian communities with the caveat that there is race anxiety and officer nervousness around aptly dealing with victims from racially minoritised backgrounds.
- This can feed into dismissing DA cases as HBA, or vice-versa, (potentially leading to mis-recording or over-recording) or not asking enough questions out of fear of coming off as offensive or culturally insensitive.
- Ethnicity/religion deciding how the case is recorded by police- cases of DA going to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) but ***“because victim maybe of certain religion or nationality, it automatically gets sent to our team- to think that well actually might be HBA but actually there’s no evidence of that but because of the link s to the country (of origin), it gets recorded in that category”***. (Response Officer, Police Force 2)



# Building on the Informal 'Safety Net' within Police Forces

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- Officers liaise with safeguarding teams to confirm recording of HBA. This is due to lack of confidence in identifying HBA from the outset.
- We call this a 'safety net' to denote the various levels of reliance on each other (for example: call handlers' supervisors, investigative officers, first responders, safeguarding officers).
- Undefined referral pathways for HBA within forces
- In essence, there are 'pockets of good policework' and anecdotal evidence of good practice showing that a.) the likelihood of this good policework is far and in between, and b.) in fact, police do put time and resources into asking the deeper questions, so it is possible to do it.





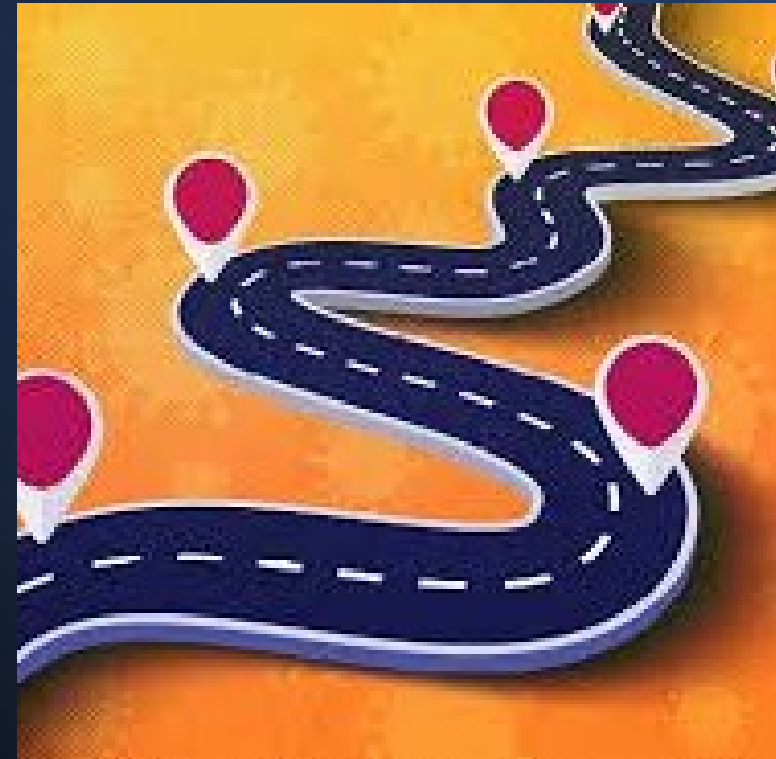
# Formalising Partnership- Working with Third Sector Organisations

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- Engagement with third sector organizations at points of crisis or only when cases get complex.
- Issues with multi-agency partnership indicating lack of cohesion with third sector and specialist organisations deemed as 'repositories of knowledge and expertise' without formal recognition.
- Capacity issue faced by specialist orgs when the officers/points of contact they have trained leave/move.
- Nervousness around challenging police: the more they challenge police, fear about police potentially retreating.
- Knowledge of the one-chance rule: it is discussed and profiled within the police but can be more effectively applied by engaging with specialist organisations from the onset.

# Recommendations

- ‘Murky semantics’ (Strategic Lead, Police Force 4): Police understands the problems and limitations with the term honour in that it legitimises an act of HBA. While we cannot get rid of the term honour, conceptually speaking, devising a new HBA definition would not be helpful because it does not represent the lived experiences of survivors.
- Based on the lived experiences of survivors, a pathway could be established to ensure that police are able to record instances of HBA more clearly.
- DASH risk assessment questions are not fully beneficial to identify risk. Police often asks alternative questions to establish ‘triggers’. Therefore, a line of inquiry based on survivor experiences is suggested.
- ‘Safety net’ within police forces should be formalised and streamlined, alongside better training.
- We strongly recommend that formal pathways are established which recognise the value of the knowledge that specialist and third sector organisations bring to supporting police responses to HBA.
- More work needs to be done to map how the lived experience of survivors is integrated into procedural justice followed by the police.
- More work needs to be done to explore how the current understanding of HBA can best represents survivors’ experience.



THANK YOU

Discussion and Questions



# Some Discussion Points for Your Groups

- Questioning the existing conceptualisation of HBA within the police
- What do you think of the 'safety net' we mentioned? How can it be used as a tool for good police practice?
- Should we be formalising the role of specialist organizations in equipping police with specialist knowledge about identifying HBA incidents? How can we most effectively achieve this?