

**Report**  
Final version

Recommendations from the National  
Honour-Based Violence Roadshow 2018

**Dr Mohammad Mazher Idriss**  
Manchester Law School  
Manchester Metropolitan University

## Introduction

1. This is a Final Report drafted by the Manchester Law School at Manchester Metropolitan University on the findings from its Honour-Based Violence (HBV) Roadshow in 2018. The Roadshow was funded by Manchester Metropolitan University's Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) department, which awarded a grant of £5,500 to deliver a number of knowledge exchange events across the UK in partnership with the UK charity Jeena International.
2. The Roadshow was delivered between May and July 2018. Its launch on 30 May 2018 at Manchester Metropolitan University began with an invitation-only roundtable discussion including a range of stakeholders with expertise in the field of Honour-Based Abuse/Violence (HBA/V) and forced marriages. They included:
  - Dr Mohammad Mazher (Maz) Idriss – Roadshow organiser and Lecturer in Law at Manchester Law School.
  - Dr. Annapurna Waughray – Reader in Law at Manchester Law School.
  - Jasvinder Sanghera CBE – Founder of Karma Nirvana.
  - Abda Khan – Solicitor and author.
  - Rani Bilkhu – CEO of Jeena International.
  - Harmeet Singh – a male survivor of HBA/V.
3. The discussion was followed by a public event where academics from Manchester Metropolitan University along with other colleagues including Shahien Taj MBE shared their research findings and expertise on the issues around HBA/V and forced marriages.
4. Subsequent events were held at University of Leeds (May 2018), University of Wolverhampton (June 2018), and the House of Commons (July 2018). All of these events were published on Eventbrite, and held free of charge and open to the public. This final report will be presented to a Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded event in November 2018 with keynotes from Dr Maz Idriss, Jennifer Calverley (CEO of The Elm Foundation) and victims who have experienced HBA/V and forced marriage. This report will also be presented to the House of Commons at a later date.
5. In total over 170 key stakeholders and policymakers – e.g. police, the CPS, support agencies and MP representatives – attended the roadshow, exchanging experiences, expertise and policy recommendations. The House of Commons event welcomed Virendra Sharma MP and Pat McFadden MP

along with prestigious speakers Jagdeesh Singh, the brother of victim Surjit Athwal who was murdered in India in a suspected 'honour killing', and Clive Driscoll, a retired London Metropolitan Police Detective who served as lead detective in the Surjit Athwal and Stephen Lawrence murder cases.

6. Other stakeholders and organisations that attended the events included representatives from:

- Adult social care organisations.
- Arts organisations including theatre directors.
- BAWSO.
- Police Forces of Bedfordshire, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Staffordshire, and Thames Valley.
- Community mental health teams and mental health NHS trusts.
- Community volunteers and domestic abuse charities and helplines.
- Homelessness support agencies.
- Manchester City Council and Leeds City Council.
- Sikh and Muslim communities.
- MEND.
- Rape Crisis Centre.
- Refugee community organisations.
- Universities of Hertfordshire, Wolverhampton, Leeds, Derby, Manchester and Bradford.
- Various law firms including Cameron Clarke Solicitors.
- Women of Wolverhampton.
- Several local schools.

7. The following findings have been collated from a range of sources including participant questionnaires, roundtable and workshop discussions, and notes taken at all the events.

## Recommendations for Action

1. Attendees recommended that the Government should establish a new **national framework** to address HBA/V. This includes the implementation of a standalone HBA/V strategy in addition to that of forced marriages.
2. Currently, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) at the Home Office both devise and carry out plans of action on forced marriages, which are designed to achieve the long-term aim and objective of preventing forced marriages and providing appropriate

intervention for victims/survivors who have been forced into marriage, often abroad.

However, no such strategy exists for HBA/V as a standalone issue. While it is conceivable that forced marriage cases will often overlap with honour rationales and HBA/V, not every HBA/V case will inevitably result in a forced marriage. Therefore, a separate strategy is required in order to address HBA/V as a separate issue. Through having a carefully conceived HBA/V strategy, this could help to determine the direction of government policies for the foreseeable future and help map out plans to meet the needs of those victims and survivors of HBA/V who have not experienced forced marriage.

3. The last meaningful strategy on HBA/V was considered by the House of Commons' Home Affairs Select Committee in 2008 (HC 263-II, 13 June 2008) where a cross-section of political parties considered evidence on the types of strategies and intervention needed in regards to domestic abuse, forced marriage and HBA/V cases. In addition, the Association of Chief Police Officers produced its *Honour-Based Violence Strategy* (30 September 2008) and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) published *Honour-Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation: A Policing Strategy Report* (8 December 2015) for 2015–2018.

The ACPO and NPCC strategies apply to policing but do not provide clear strategies or guidance for other state agencies or individual departments. There appears to be a lack of will and leadership from the Government and policymakers to prioritise HBA/V as a separate issue to forced marriages; one that is applicable to all departments.

4. In addition, participants also suggested the establishment of a dedicated government minister in order to develop policies and a national strategy to support detection, prevention, protection, intervention and prosecution in HBA/V cases.

**Action:** Implement a separate strategy for HBA/V that is regularly reviewed and updated with the appointment of a dedicated minister.

5. During his presentation at the House of Commons event, Mr Jagdeesh Singh called on the UK Government to develop international agreements with other foreign governments to facilitate the investigation of suspected 'honour killings' abroad.

Surjit Athwal, the sister of Jagdeesh Singh, was murdered in an 'honour killing' during a visit to India. Although her body was never recovered or

even found, Surjit's mother-in-law and husband were convicted of her murder and sentenced to life imprisonment in the UK. While these two perpetrators have been brought to justice, Jagdeesh Singh believes the real killers are still at large in India and that the Indian Government have shown a lack of interest in bringing them to justice.

6. By having agreements with international governments about the detection, investigation and prosecution of 'honour killings' committed abroad, this could pave the way for families of UK victims who are killed abroad to achieve justice. It could also help send a strong message to foreign perpetrators of British nationals killed in suspected 'honour killings' abroad that they will be vigorously pursued both by the UK and their own national governments.

*'We need more international dialogue and protocols to protect and safeguard those affected.'* – Roadshow Participant

**Action:** Develop international legal agreements with foreign governments.

7. Attendees recommended the creation of a new HBA/V Unit similar to the FMU. The remit of the FMU relates to forced marriages as there is still no government agency that single-handedly addresses HBA/V where forced marriage is not involved. Whilst many cases can be dealt with by local agencies such as the police and local authorities, other cases may prove more complex with multiple victims and perpetrators involved from different policing areas.
8. In addition, potential victims of HBA/V may be taken abroad on the pretext of a family event only to be murdered for 'dishonouring' the family, but where there is no forced marriage involved (e.g. the Surjit Athwal case).
9. There is, therefore, a case for the creation of a separate HBA/V unit to respond to complex cases such as these where the detection, investigation, extraction and prosecution of HBA/V perpetrators is led by dedicated experts.
10. There is also an argument for the expansion of the current FMU to embed a new HBA/V unit as a partner unit, or to rebrand the existing FMU as the 'Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage Unit' (HBA & FMU).
11. Attendees highlighted the need for better cooperation and communication between agencies arguing that a new dedicated HBA/V unit would enable local authorities and police forces to coordinate responses and share information with one another through partnership working. Partnership

working is particularly useful in complex cases where strategical and tactical approaches to intervention and extraction are needed to rescue victims.

12. A new unit would also be responsible for coordinating a national network on HBA/V and for raising the profile of crimes at a national level. A lack of a national strategy has resulted in slow progress and inconsistency amongst state agencies, which can ultimately place victims at risk of further harm. A new HBA/V unit would fill this gap by taking the lead on a national strategy under the leadership of a government minister.

**Action:** Implementation of a separate HBA/V unit or expand the current FMU to encourage improved practice and consistency across multi-agency working.

13. A new unit would also be responsible for fulfilling a mandatory requirement to record separate data on incidents of HBA/V including complaints made in each police area, prosecutions pursued, and cases that have either been discontinued or where no further action has been taken. A new unit would be responsible for the collection of data on interventions, rescues and repatriation of cases where there has been no involvement with other state agencies, i.e. the 'HBA/V Unit' has been directly approached for support without police intervention. The collection and interpretation of available statistics is vital to the process of formulating strategies to address HBA/V and to understand the prevalence of HBA/V.

*'We definitely need more comprehensive recording of stats and data, which can be shared across different agencies and partners.'* – Roadshow Participant

**Action:** Implementation of a new National HBA/V database.

14. A new unit would also be responsible for implementing a national strategy and awareness campaign by working closely with key stakeholders, policymakers, and a dedicated government minister on HBA/V. This would include devising a national awareness campaign, marketing HBA/V through posters and leaflets in GP surgeries, libraries, community centres, schools, HEIs and religious institutions. The new unit would also invest in the Third Sector and work closely with NGOs and charities to undertake much of this work and to achieve these objectives. In a current climate of budget cuts, NGOs and charities undertake such work through their own funds – this is unsustainable in the long term and attendees recommended that the Government should provide more funding to raise awareness on HBA/V.

**Action:** Break the taboo in communities through a national advertising and raising awareness campaign.

15. Attendees mentioned issues relating to the use of translators and interpreters in HBA/V and forced marriage cases. Attendees indicated a lack of trust in interpreters citing breaches of confidentiality, inaccuracies revealed in their accounts of the events, and/or disclosing the actions of complainants to members of the community or the complainants' families. A new unit should provide new or revised guidelines on the use and regulation of interpreters in HBA/V cases, and help to establish codes of conduct so that interpreters are independent, trusted, and understand the interpretation needs of HBA/V victims.
16. Attendees requested guidance on what to do if/when interpreters are incompetent. What should state agencies do if they suspect that an interpreter is not proficient? Police officers, in particular, commented on a lack of clarity regarding how to deal with incompetent interpreters. Domestic abuse charities commented that any professional who witnesses incompetent interpretation should ask to stop police interviews as a matter of good practice; they also agreed that written guidance on this matter would be beneficial for clarity. This, too, could be developed by a new unit.

**Action:** Devise new guidelines and requirements to ensure consistency of training for interpreters working on behalf of victims, especially in areas of accuracy and confidentiality.

17. Male victims who attended and presented at our Roadshow events felt that more could be done to recognise and support male victims. During the Roadshow and through our own research at Manchester Metropolitan, a number of male victims reported failings in the way police forces dealt with their calls. Issues of masculinity, 'male honour', 'shame', and being abused by women were among the factors cited as contributors preventing men from not coming forward to disclose their abuse. Attendees recommended better education, training, recognition and acceptance of male victims and the types of victimisation that men can experience, will help to improve disclosure and intervention for men. A lack of recognition can lead to a minimisation and disrespect for men's experiences, further contributing to their vulnerability.

**Action:** To explore more innovative ways in which the issue of male abuse in society can be highlighted, e.g. in schools, police training, GP surgeries and hospitals.

18. Reporting rates continue to be low for men, which can also have an impact on service provision and funding for male services. Male victims continue to be 'invisible' to society and this can hamper efforts to create nuanced and gender-responsive statutory services and impede understanding at a national,

regional and local level with an under-provision of resources and funding. Dr Maz Idriss supports the creation of a parallel strategy entitled *Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys Strategy* – parallel to the *Ending Intimate Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy/VAWG* – to ensure that policy-makers, and society in general, have a more modern, inclusive and equality-based view of victims of domestic abuse, HBA/V and forced marriages. Policy issues on male victims should begin at the highest level. As the government categorises domestic abuse and other forms of violence through its VAWG strategy, no message is given about male victims. In 2017, the FMU reported that 20% of the people they supported were men. And if, as it is accepted, statistics are under-reported, the actual prevalence of male victims is likely to be much higher (as it is for women too).

**Action:** Implementation of a new strategy entitled: *Ending Intimate Violence Against Men and Boys Strategy*.

19. A parallel strategy will help to support male victims and improve service provision. The Elm Foundation, a domestic abuse charity providing services to both women and men, presented their findings at the HBV Roadshow events. While The Elm Foundation receives funding to support women, it is one of only 10 organisations in the country that has a dedicated male refuge. There is a urgent need for funding male services and it was suggested that a parallel 'Violence Against Men and Boys Transformation Fund' would provide separate funding and service provision for men and boys. The intention here is not to detract from VAWG initiatives or take away funding from women's services. All those who attended the Roadshow events fully recognised that women experience the majority of domestic abuse, HBA/V and forced marriage – and that men are often the primary perpetrators. Attendees similarly recognised that the bulk of funding should be used to support women. However, it is also necessary to recognise that men are often the victims of patriarchal family structures and violence. Women, as highlighted by some of the male victims who attended our Roadshow events, can also abuse men and, unfortunately, there is still some way to go before there is proper recognition that women can also be perpetrators.
20. National and regional funding should be ring-fenced to allow charities and NGOs to target support to the various types of people who are victimised in HBA/V and forced marriage cases. A parallel 'Violence Against Men and Boys Transformation Fund' would allow any service provider to apply for budget funding to provide services for men where there is an evidential need for male services. At the Roadshow events, agencies were encouraged to learn from The Elm Foundation to be gender inclusive wherever possible. We recognise that this will not always be possible, especially in cases of sexual

abuse and rape against women and those services who wish to remain all-women. However, we believe that all service providers should have the choice in whether they wish to provide services for both women and men, or women alone or men alone. In the 21st century we can no longer ignore male victims, nor should we continue to ignore the gender inequality that exists in the provision of male support services and refuges. Manchester Metropolitan University remains committed in its policies to promote equality and support disadvantaged groups.

**Action:** Devise and implement a new funding stream, i.e. a 'Violence Against Men and Boys Transformation Fund'.

21. The drivers for HBA/V are complex and varied but these can include engaging in relationships with partners perceived as 'unsuitable', such as partners of the 'wrong' caste or for refusing to marry 'within' caste. Caste discrimination is a lesser known and less understood phenomenon than HBA/V but there is considerable scholarship in the Indian subcontinent that identifies caste as a driver for HBA/V. In the UK caste discrimination and HBA/V has not been sufficiently recognised or examined at policy level. Dr Annapurna Waughray's research seeks to address this gap.
22. Men can also be victims of HBA/V if they engage in relationships with women of different sects, castes and religions. There have been high-profile killings and attacks on men in the UK – the murder of Arash Ghorbani-Zarin, for example, who was killed by Chomir Ali and his sons for dating his daughter. Arash was an Iranian Muslim and Chomir was a Bangladeshi Muslim, who among other reasons, was incensed that his daughter had been dating a man from a different background.
23. An examination of the academic and grey literature, and other data on caste in the UK from non-academic sources such as media and NGO research, reveals a linkage between caste and HBA/V. Caste has been linked to HBA/V in UK asylum cases. Caste was also mentioned as a factor in HBA/V during the Home Affairs Select Committee hearings on domestic violence, HBV and forced marriage in 2008. The police and CPS in their guidance documents identify marriage outside the caste group as a factor in HBA/V.

The Government decided not to add caste as a specific aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010 on its belief, based on recent case law, that caste discrimination was already covered by the Equality Act as a form of discrimination on grounds of ethnic origins – itself a subset of race. Under hate crimes legislation, race is an aggravating factor for sentencing courts. If caste is included in civil legislation, Dr Waughray has recommended that it

should also be included in the concept of race under criminal law and hate crime legislations.

24. If hate crimes legislation is used to address racial violence, then this should also be used to address caste-based HBA/V. If caste is a factor in an HBA/V incident, and if caste is to be included in the concept of race for hate crime sentencing, this is one way the criminal law can make a stand against HBA/V and forced marriages. No one should suffer violence or abuse because they belong to a different race or caste. Perpetrators of such crimes should be penalised by increased sentences, sending an important declaratory message that caste-based HBA/V is socially, and legally, unacceptable.

**Action:** To include caste in the concept of race under civil law, criminal law and hate crime legislation.

25. An issue that persists in the UK is the No Recourse to Public Funding (NRPF) for non-British nationals and those arriving to the UK on spousal visas. Roadshow attendees recommended changes to this policy since the NRPF can prevent migrant women coming forward and disclosing abuse.

Attendees also highlighted the inconsistency of this policy. Whilst the Government continues to campaign against domestic abuse, their policies support victims who are British nationals. If the Government wants to pursue the 'right to exit' abusive relationships and other humanitarian policies, it should not negate those policies by simultaneously advocating the NRPF policy for foreign nationals on a spousal visa. The 'right to exit' must also be coupled with a right to indefinite leave to remain in the UK, together with access to public funds if migrant women are to leave abusive relationships.

26. In the context of NRPF and male victims on spousal visas, NGO organisations noted that obtaining support for such men can be extremely hard. Rani Bilkhu, CEO of Jeena International, stated that in her experience the amount of evidence required to support male victims – e.g. to secure support from the Home Office under the current domestic violence concession – can take double the work and can take even longer to process in comparison to female victims with NRPF. There still seems to be an element of non-acceptance within Government departments that migrant men can also be victims of domestic abuse, HBA/V and forced marriages.
27. To compound male victims' sense of injustice, when investigating complaints of abuse by men with NRPF, the police can treat male victims with suspicion, acting as border control agencies by making enquiries about the victim's immigration status, and suspecting that male victims fabricate stories in

order to secure permanent stay. Support organisations in attendance at our Roadshow events wanted further guidance and clarity from the Home Office about HBA/V victims with insecure immigration status. Furthermore, they advised that police forces should not turn into the 'immigration police' since this is not their primary role, function or purpose.

**Action:** For government to amend existing policies on NRPF and provide access to public funds for migrant women and men on spousal visas.

28. Improved training, education and awareness were common themes recommended in the majority of the evaluations. A system of training is required for all those working in state agencies, many of whom find it difficult to understand the concept of 'honour' in BME communities. There is an urgent need for different agencies to learn more about HBA/V because there is limited knowledge and experience in dealing with such cases. This could include the police, local authorities, healthcare, housing and social services, family and criminal courts, airports, and immigration and border control to name but a few. Agencies such as these require regular training as staff turnover can also be high. Attendees recommended that training should be simple and clear to get the important messages across.
29. Delegates also raised concerns around the additional stigma facing young people from LGBT communities and those with learning disabilities and mental health issues. We need to ensure these groups receive improved targeted support through better multi-agency training and practice.
30. Improved training was recommended for call-takers and police officers who are the first point of contact when reporting abuse, and not just specialist police officers in Public Protection Units as they are often not the first point of contact.

*'Police need to be aware of the stigma of HBV victims speaking out against their families and the impact this will have on their futures.'* – Roadshow Participant

31. One recurrent theme was that professionals working in this area should be recruited from relevant communities in order to enhance integration and working together, i.e. community cohesion.
32. Attendees from support agencies commented that professionals struggle to fully understand the complexity of HBA/V since very little mandatory training is offered or provided. Stakeholders commented how grateful they were that Manchester Metropolitan University had hosted an HBV Roadshow and stated it should be an annual event.

*'I wasn't aware of the excellent research being done until this event – more research like this is definitely needed!' –Roadshow Participant*

**Action:** Improved training for agencies involved at all stages of combating HBA/V is essential.

33. There were some recommendations that training should also be extended to private employers and HR departments as an employment, workplace and wellbeing issue. Private employers may find their own employees experiencing HBA/V or forced marriages and an important message was that everyone has a responsibility to address this form of abuse – not just state agencies or the police. Some attendees provided examples of victims working for some of the UK's largest retailers who were experiencing forced marriage and that, from equality, dignity and wellbeing perspectives, HR departments of private employers should be trained and equipped to deal with employees experiencing this form of abuse.
34. Attendees argued that training must also go beyond professionals and into educational establishments and within the communities themselves, highlighting a trend that everyone has a role to play in addressing HBA/V.
35. Attendees recommended mandatory and consistent training for staff in educational establishments such as primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities as a matter of safeguarding policy and student welfare.

**Action:** Mandatory training introduced across all sectors, e.g. private organisations, education and community settings.

36. Elements of good practice in individual schools are also hard to determine because local authority approaches differ, There is no consistent policy under the National Curriculum to provide awareness of HBA/V and forced marriages to school pupils and students. There is also resistance within some schools with some preferring not to offend local communities by raising issues about HBA/V and forced marriages. Some of the attendees commented that local authorities prioritise competing agendas, e.g. child sexual exploitation (CSE) and extremism, over and above HBA/V issues despite HBA/V being as relevant within other important areas of child safeguarding, e.g. female genital mutilation (FGM). It would appear that Ofsted does not intend to include HBA/V and forced marriages on the inspection agenda.

**Action:** Ofsted's national inspection agenda must include HBA/V and forced marriages.

37. Better education and awareness within local communities can also provide opportunities for people to disclose their own victimisation or the victimisation of others. Knowledge of the availability of support mechanisms will enable members of the public to feel empowered to seek intervention, as well as informing communities that HBA/V and forced marriages represent major human rights violations. Education and awareness events for local communities should be funded by the government and supported by specialist NGOs from the same communities. Again, a government minister or a new HBA/V Unit should oversee such strategies.
38. Some attendees suggested developing a HBA/V peer mentoring programme to work within local schools and communities. Similar and successful programmes exist in the area of FGM and the Save Our Sisters project in Greater Manchester, which involves young people. The project delivers emotional support for women who have been diagnosed with FGM or who are at risk of it. Maternity services identify women at risk who often present complex needs associated with depression, isolation or life difficulties. Women are first assessed – those with deeper mental health needs are offered one to one support – while those who might require better education about FGM are referred to a support group. Offering high quality mental health support is considered a vital part of prevention: it helps women to develop confidence to reject the practice of FGM. Similar programmes could be applied to HBA/V with both female and male victims having opportunities to access peer mentors of a preferred gender.

**Action:** Implement a national HBA/V Peer Mentoring Programme to help engage the next generation.

39. Stakeholders discussed the best ways to effectively engage with specific communities, especially those hard to reach people who may be unwilling to, or do not have the opportunity to, attend events like the HBV Roadshow. Community radio channels, TV channels, and community meetings in religious institutions such as mosques, churches, synagogues, Sikh and Hindu temples were all recommended as potential outlets. Other religious community organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain could also be approached in order to support these causes; however, attendees also noted the patriarchal nature of religious institutions and how these institutions can sometimes be difficult to access.

*'Need to think of new creative and innovative ways of educating and raising awareness to change mindsets.'* – Roadshow Participant.

40. Attendees recommended a HBA/V marketing campaign including key stakeholders and policymakers. The campaign would be delivered through posters and leaflets made available in GP surgeries, hospitals, public toilets, libraries and community centres. Some recommended videos on YouTube and other social media platforms to highlight social issues like HBA/V in order to engage young people. More theatre plays, such as *Not in My Honour* (Contact Theatre, Manchester, 2016) and *Beyond Shame* (Derby Theatre, 2018), would increase exposure. As would a collection of survivors' poetries, for example.
41. Participants also suggested holding an annual National HBA/V awareness day every year with events in schools, colleges and universities.
42. Some stakeholders suggested creating holistic or general centres within local authority buildings, attended by people trained in disclosure work who may help to remove the 'taboo' of accessing specific agencies like the police, which some victims may find intimidating.
43. Rani Bilkhu, CEO of Jeena International, created a campaign called 'The Ugly Side of Beauty' that aims to train beauticians, male barbers and beauty salons to spot the signs of HBA/V. By training individuals who interact with members of the local community, this can help victims to receive the right support and intervention, and encourage victims to disclose abuse.
44. As a model of good practice, some Manchester Airport retailers wear Dishonour the Crime wristbands, which include a helpline number. These retailers are trained to support anyone who makes a disclosure of abuse. Such a model could be extended to retailers in other airports and outlets.

**Action:** Explore innovative ways, as outlined by delegates, to engage with hard-to reach communities and individuals.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all the victims who bravely shared their stories during the Roadshow.

Thanks also go to Rani Bilkhu (Jeena International), Jaria Hussain-Lala (Greater Manchester FGM Forum), Jennifer Calverley (The Elm Foundation) and Katherine Roycroft (Manchester Metropolitan University) whose help and advice was both crucial and welcomed throughout.

Finally, a special thank you to Virendra Sharma MP for kindly hosting the Parliament event.



Dr Mohammad Mazher Idriss  
[m.idriss@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:m.idriss@mmu.ac.uk)

Manchester Metropolitan University  
Manchester Law School  
All Saints Campus  
Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M15 6BH