



Joint Briefing for Peers

Police and Crime Bill – Committee Stage

Amendments 353, 354 & 355



Executive Summary

This briefing urges Members of the House of Lords to support Amendments 353, 354 and 355, which will:

- **Introduce a statutory definition of Honour Based Abuse (HBA)** (Amendment 353)
- **Recognise honour as an aggravating factor in criminal sentencing** (Amendment 354 – “Somaiya’s Law”)
- **Require statutory multi-agency guidance to identify and respond to HBA** (Amendment 355)

These amendments reflect:

- Clear evidence of persistent systemic failures to recognise HBA.
- Direct calls from survivors and bereaved families (including the #Push4Change and Somaiya’s Law campaigns).
- Growing cross-sector consensus among 60+ specialist VAWG organisations.
- The Government’s commitment on 26th August 2025 to legislate in this area at the earliest opportunity.

Why it matters:

HBA is the least prosecuted form of VAWG. In 2024/25, only 95 prosecutions were brought forward, of which only 46 led to successful convictions. Victims often face multiple perpetrators, including extended family members, yet these perpetrators are rarely accounted for in criminal justice outcomes.

Supporting these amendments will:

- Support earlier identification of HBA, ensuring it is properly identified, recorded and prosecuted.
- Increase survivors’ trust and engagement by demonstrating that the law recognises the experiences they have endured.
- Enhance early intervention and safeguarding through clearer pathways and improved multi-agency risk coordination.
- Deliver greater clarity, consistency and accountability for frontline professionals responding to HBA.

Karma Nirvana, alongside 60+ organisations dedicated to ending Violence Against Women and Girls, urges Parliamentarians to support our amendments to improve the way Honour Based Abuse is addressed across England and Wales.

Introducing the Statutory Definition and Statutory Guidance for Honour Based Abuse

On the 26th August 2025, after years of campaigning, the government announced six new measures to tackle Honour Based Abuse. Part of the announcements included legislating at the earliest opportunity to introduce multi-agency statutory guidance and an accompanying statutory definition of HBA to support statutory agencies to better identify HBA and encourage multi-agency working. **Supporting our amendments allows this to take place, at the earliest opportunity, and supports the calls of survivors and campaigners that have been at the heart of this campaign.**

Amendment 353 and 355: #Push4Change Campaign

Launched on **8th March 2024** in honour of **Fawziyah Javed**, who was murdered by her husband, the #Push4Change campaign seeks to ensure her legacy drives systemic change. *The Push* documentary on Channel 4 highlighted persistent failures within statutory systems to recognise **Honour Based Abuse**, which often involves multiple perpetrators acting collectively. Current approaches, designed for intimate-partner abuse, overlook the extended familial and community dynamics central to HBA.

Led by **Yasmin Javed**, Fawziyah's mother, the campaign calls for stronger protections and improved recognition of HBA across all agencies.

Developing a Statutory Definition:

From **2022 and over a 14-month period**, survivors collaborated with the **University of Nottingham** to develop a working definition of HBA informed by lived experience. This process identified the limitations of **existing non-statutory definitions** and produced a detailed, policy-based definition capturing the collective and coercive nature of HBA.

Building on this survivor-informed foundation, **barrister Naomi Wiseman (1 King's Bench Walk)** led sessions with **VAWG sector partners** to draft a statutory definition. Over several months and through multiple iterations, consensus was reached on a formulation that accurately reflects the complexity of HBA, with an agreement that it must be supported by **statutory guidance** to ensure consistent recognition and effective application.

To date, this process has engaged **11 survivors, 60+ organisations**, and specialist legal expertise. It represents a rigorous, survivor-led collaboration aimed at achieving legislative change that properly defines and addresses Honour Based Abuse.

We urge Members to support Amendments 353 and 355, to embed this survivor-led definition into law and safeguard future victims.

Amendment 353 – Statutory Definition of Honour-Based Abuse

After Clause 109, insert the following new Clause –

“Interpretation: sections (Honour as an aggravating factor in sentencing) and (Duty to issue statutory multi-agency guidance)

For the purposes of criminal law “Honour-based abuse” means an incident or pattern of violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion, control or abuse (including but not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, economic, spiritual, faith-related or emotional abuse) motivated by the perpetrator’s perception that an individual has shamed, or may shame, the perpetrator, the family, or community, or has otherwise broken, or may break, the perceived norms of the community’s accepted behaviours, including by speaking out about the abuse, and where the perception of shame may also prevent a victim from accessing support or help.”



Fawziyah Javed
(1989 – 2021)

Amendment 355 – Duty to Issue Statutory Multi-Agency Guidance

After Clause 109, insert the following new Clause –
Duty to issue statutory multi-agency guidance

- (1) The Secretary of State must, within 12 months of the day on which this Act is passed, issue guidance concerning identifying signs of possible honour-based abuse for when a person's safety may be at risk for—
 - (a) police forces and Crown Prosecution Service;
 - (b) local authorities and social services;
 - (c) health professionals and NHS bodies;
 - (d) education settings (schools, colleges and universities);
 - (e) Border Force and immigration officials;
 - (f) voluntary and community sector organisations supporting victims
- (2) The guidance under subsection (1) must include guidance on—
 - (a) identifying signs of criminal offences which may be defined as “honour based abuse” under section (Interpretation:sections (Honour as an aggravating factor in sentencing) and (Duty to issue statutory multi-agency guidance));
notifying the appropriate authority when a person's safety may
 - (b) be at risk;
providing consistency across relevant authorities on protecting
 - (c) person's from honour based abuse.
- (3) Guidance issued under this section must be kept under review and revised when the Secretary of State considers it appropriate to do so.

Amendment 354: Somaiya's Law

The tragic murder of **Somaiya Begum** exposed a critical gap in the criminal justice system: the failure to recognise **honour as an aggravating factor** in criminal sentencing. Despite having an active **Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO)**, Somaiya was murdered by a family member. Evidence adduced at the murder trial demonstrated the role of **family pressure and honour dynamics in the case**, yet the court concluded:

- “It is not possible to identify a motive for this dreadful attack.”
- “I reject the prosecution’s suggestion that I should treat this as any form of so-called honour killing.”

In his defence statement, the defendant explicitly relied on notions of ‘honour’ to shift blame onto other family members. Despite this, the judge did not recognise the honour motive during sentencing. This exposes a clear gap in how honour is identified and applied in criminal cases and shows how the lack of formal recognition allows key motivations to be overlooked – ultimately weakening **accountability and justice**.

Systemic Failures:

Somaiya’s case illustrates several wider systemic issues in how Honour Based Abuse is responded to:

- **Erasure of victims and survivors:** Experiences of HBA are often invisible in criminal proceedings. When courts fail to name or acknowledge “honour” motivations, survivors and families can feel unseen and invalidated, deepening mistrust in the justice system and perpetuating silence.
- **Unreliable data:** Sentencing judgements rarely reference “honour,” creating a false perception that HBA cases are rare or absent, despite evidence to the contrary.
- **Low prosecution rates for HBA:** Between April 2024 and March 2025, there were only 95 prosecutions for Honour Based Abuse, of which just 46 (48.4%) resulted in a successful conviction (CPS, 2025). Despite data showing increases in reports of HBA, the proportion reaching the criminal courts remains extremely low, making HBA the least prosecuted form of VAWG and highlighting significant systemic under-recognition.

The Campaign:

The Somaiya's Law campaign, led by **Karma Nirvana, alongside 60+ VAWG sector partners**, seeks to recognise honour as an **aggravating factor in criminal sentencing**.

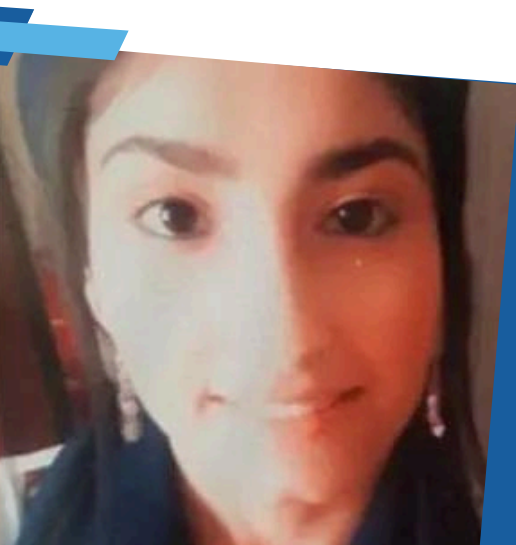
This would ensure that:

- There is **earlier identification** of HBA in Police Investigations and criminal prosecutions;
- Criminal sentencing reflects the **aggravating nature of honour based abuse**;
- **Safeguarding is strengthened** for victims at risk from multiple family or community member perpetrators;
- A stronger **deterrence** message is sent to perpetrators who enforce and endorse honour based control.

Call For Support:

Supporting **Amendment 354** would address the **systemic erasure of victims in the Criminal Justice System**, improve data and understanding of HBA, and ensure that courts formally acknowledge honour-based motives in sentencing. Embedding this into law would protect future victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and give survivors and families the recognition and justice they deserve.

We urge Members to support Amendment 354 to recognise “Honour” as an aggravating feature in criminal sentencing.



Somaiya Begum
(2002 – 2022)

Amendment 354 – Honour as an Aggravating Factor in Sentencing

After Clause 109, insert the following new Clause –
“Honour as an aggravating factor in sentencing

- (1) This section applies where a court is considering the seriousness of an offence in which honour-based abuse is a feature.
- (2) An offence is aggravated by honour-based abuse if, at the time of committing the offence, or before or after doing so, the offender perpetrated or encouraged another person to perpetrate honour-based abuse towards the victim.
- (3) Where this section applies, the court must –
 - (a) treat the fact that the offence was aggravated by honour-based abuse as an aggravating factor, and
 - (b) state in open court that the offence is so aggravated.
- (4) In this section “honour-based abuse” is an incident or pattern of abuse as defined in section (Interpretation: sections (Honour as an aggravating factor in sentencing) and (Duty to issue statutory multi-agency guidance)).”

Survivor Testimony

Survivor-Led, Legally Sound

Survivors have been at the heart of shaping this work. The proposed statutory definition has been developed in consultation with those with lived experience to ensure it reflects the reality of HBA, while being legally robust through drafting by barrister Naomi Wiseman. The amendments are supported by Yasmin Javed, mother of Fawziyah Javed, whose **#Push4Change** campaign has driven national attention and directly influenced the Government's August 2025 announcement committing to a statutory definition and multi-agency guidance. Read a statement from Karma Nirvana's Survivor Ambassador Panel below.

"As individuals with lived experience, we, the Survivor Ambassador Panel (SAP), stand together in strong support of the proposed statutory definition of Honour Based Abuse. This definition has been shaped through years of collaboration between survivors, practitioners and partners across the sector, combining lived experience with professional expertise to bring clarity and consistency to how Honour Based Abuse is recognised and addressed.

We began building this definition in 2022, grounded in our own experiences and developed in partnership with the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab and legal expert Naomi Wiseman. As one survivor said, *"Honour Based Abuse means different things to different survivors, but this definition reflects what we've been through and still are."*

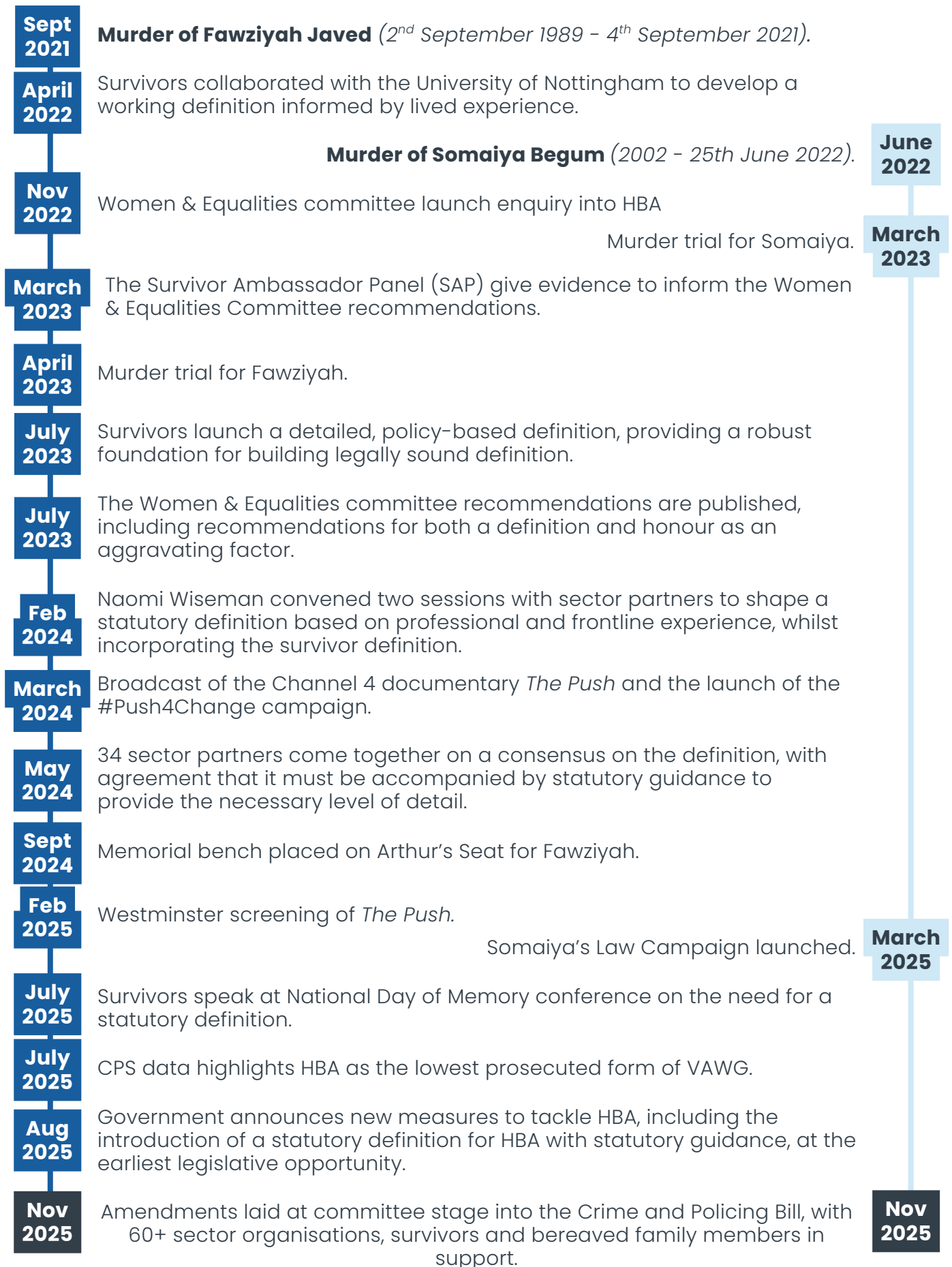
The reality is that we are losing far too many lives to Honour Abuse – either at the hands of perpetrators or through suicide, when victims feel death is their only escape. We must stop standing on the sidelines and speaking in hindsight after such tragedies. We must act now to prevent them. **As survivors, we have lived the consequences of a system that does not name or understand our abuse.** This definition reflects a shared consensus that Honour Based Abuse is a distinct and serious form of harm that demands legal recognition.

A statutory definition is not symbolic; it is a moral and legal necessity. It will provide clarity and consistency so police, prosecutors and safeguarding professionals can recognise Honour Based Abuse and act decisively. It will strengthen protection, prevention and early identification through understanding and training. The absence of a definition has allowed our abuse to be misunderstood, minimised and dismissed.

We urge Parliament and the House of Lords to enshrine the statutory definition of Honour Based Abuse in law at the earliest opportunity – to ensure protection and justice for survivors, victims and families, and to show that as a country we stand united in wanting to eradicate all forms of Honour Abuse. This is a vital first step in ensuring that victims are no longer dismissed; that our experiences are understood, and that every person subjected to Honour Based Abuse can be protected and believed."

– The Survivor Ambassador Panel, Karma Nirvana

Campaign Journey at a Glance



Amendment 353 – *Introduction of a Statutory definition for Honour*

Amendment 354 – *To treat offences involving Honour Based Abuse as aggravated in seriousness for the purposes of criminal sentencing*

Amendment 355 – *Duty to issue Statutory Multi-Agency Guidance on Honour Based Abuse for frontline safeguarding professionals*



Somaiya Begum
(2002 – 2022)

Fawziyah Javed
(1989 – 2021)



karmanirvana.org.uk

Registered UK Charity No. 1089477

