



# Honour Based Abuse: Spotlight Data from Local Authorities

## Honour Based Abuse

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Karma Nirvana's Strategy is to establish a National Data Set for Honour Based Abuse in the UK.

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) remains a complex and often overlooked issue in the UK. The lack of comprehensive and consistent data on HBA makes it difficult to provide specialised support services to victims and survivors of this form of domestic abuse. To address this challenge, Karma Nirvana has made it a top priority in our three-year strategy to establish a national data set to gain a deeper understanding of the scope, scale, and prevalence of Honour Based Abuse in the UK.

HBA is often not recognised as a form of domestic abuse, even though data shows that 98% of victims have a personal connection to their abuser. In the UK, the lack of comprehensive and consistent data makes it difficult to address this issue, hindering the provision and sustainability of specialised support services for victims and survivors of HBA.

### Initial Findings from FOIRs

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Our first step was to send Freedom of Information Requests (FOIRs) to local authorities across the UK, asking if their case management systems facilitate tagging or marking case files for victims identified as at risk or experiencing honour-based abuse.

The results help us to map where victims can expect their experience of abuse to be recognised for what it is, as well as identify gaps where victims' experiences are not evidenced as Honour Based Abuse. **130 of the 224 local authorities** sent a response, providing a crucial first step in building a comprehensive national data set on HBA in the UK.

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The initial results of Karma Nirvana's Freedom of Information Requests (FOIRs) to local authorities across the UK have highlighted a significant disparity in the way cases of Honour Based Abuse (HBA) are being tagged. **Only 22% (35 LAs) of responses** indicated that this was being done in practice, with a small number of local authorities incorrectly categorising HBA cases under "**Abuse linked to faith or belief,**" despite clear reporting guidance that HBA and forced marriage are not always related to faith or belief.

Our research has also shown that the lack of central government direction on capturing HBA data in the **Child in Need** census is a contributing factor to the inconsistent picture across local authorities. Among those local authorities that are tagging HBA cases, this is often due to the number of cases they encounter.

Despite social workers frequently supporting cases of HBA, there is currently no statutory requirement for frontline staff to complete HBA safeguarding training. This leaves decision-making and risk assessing open to individual interpretation and/or limited to the statutory assessment framework criteria, hindering the provision of specialised support services for victims and survivors of HBA. *In the last year, 202 social workers contacted the national Honour Based Abuse helpline, many of them supporting multiple victims.*

Our research has exposed a significant flaw in the way HBA data is gathered and analysed, resulting in a lack of comprehensive victim records and limited attention given to the issue in government strategies for addressing violence against women and girls. This hinders the allocation of resources and limits the availability of specialist support services, perpetuating a cycle of neglect instead of progress towards **greater recognition of Honour Based Abuse as a priority issue.**