



Campaign Briefing

Honour Based Abuse Manifesto

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مركز الحسنية للنساء المغربيات



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women's aid
until women & children are safe

advance
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Empowering People, Empowering Change

Introduction

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) is a silent epidemic, often overlooked in governmental strategies aimed at responding to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). This hidden harm remains underrepresented in official initiatives to address VAWG. **In response, the specialist sector has united to demand change through our 'HBA' General Election manifesto.**

This manifesto calls for a comprehensive approach to tackle HBA, focusing on three key areas: **a statutory definition and guidance, ring fenced funding for HBA specialist services, and stronger governmental accountability.**

It is imperative that the next government addresses these issues with urgency and commitment. Failure to act swiftly not only perpetuates harm but also actively contributes to it.

Here are the three areas we seek government commitment on:

01 Establish a Statutory Definition of Honour Based Abuse with Accompanying Guidance

Prior to the calling of the General Election, the specialist sector came together to agree on a statutory definition for Honour Based Abuse. On the 7th May 2024, as a collective of 24 organisations, we wrote to the Minister of Safeguarding and VAWG, calling on the government to adopt our sector agreed definition and to make it statutory. A copy of our letter can be found [here](#). Our Campaign Briefing and Legal Briefing outlines the essentiality of the introduction of a statutory definition for Honour Based Abuse.

The Call:

- **Legal Definition:** Introduce a statutory definition for Honour Based Abuse to ensure consistent recognition and handling across all sectors, including law enforcement, education, healthcare, and social services.
- **Guidance for Implementation:** Develop comprehensive statutory guidance to support the implementation of this definition, ensuring that all professionals are equipped to identify and respond to Honour Based Abuse effectively as a gendered issue and form of VAWG.

02 Ring-Fenced Funding and Commissioning for 'By and For' Black and minoritised women's services and specialist Honour Based Abuse services

The specialist VAWG sector, particularly 'by and for' organisations, faces a funding crisis, creating a postcode lottery for survivors who are often turned away. These organisations, led by and for Black and minoritised women, are uniquely trusted due to their understanding of multiple discriminations, cultural and linguistic accessibility, intersectional practice, and expertise in specific VAWG forms like Honour Based Abuse, forced marriage, and FGM.

In 2023, the government launched a VAWG Support and Specialist Services fund after years of advocacy for ring-fenced funding for specialist services. However, the fund's design failed to meet the sector's needs. A 2024 joint VAWG sector letter to the Treasury criticised inadequate definitions and criteria that allowed non-specialist services to access funding. Minimum bid values excluded many small but vital organisations. Additionally, only one HBA-specific organisation received funding, limited to one region, and representing just 3.8% of the £8.3M fund.

To address the unmet demand for specialist Honour Based Abuse support services, we call on the government to commit to ring-fenced funding for 'by and for' Black and minoritised women's services, including specific allocations for HBA-specific services.

The Call:

- **Ring-fenced funding for by & for services that support victims of HBA:** Commitment to multi-year funding and reforms to ensure funding is accessible to smaller organisations which lack the resources to compete with larger providers in complex commissioning processes. This must include funding that is specifically allocated to specialist HBA services that provide support, including housing and counselling.

03 Stronger Governmental Accountability and Inclusion in VAWG Strategies

For over three decades, UK organisations have tirelessly campaigned to end Honour Based Abuse, sparking public debate since the late 1990s. Despite our persistent efforts, effectively addressing Honour Based Abuse remains a challenge. Since the government launched its first VAWG strategy in 2010, the lack of recognition of all forms of Honour Based Abuse within governmental strategies has been an ongoing concern. The government's focus on addressing HBA primarily within the context of Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has limited understanding and response to this issue.

Most recently, the government's failure to respond meaningfully to the Women and Equality Committee recommendations on Honour Based Abuse¹ serves as yet another example of the government's lack of prioritisation of these critical issues.

The Call:

- **Clear Government Accountability to tackle HBA:** HBA must be proportionately reflected within government strategies to tackle VAWG, ensuring it receives the attention and resources it requires.
- **Response to Recommendations:** Commit to a robust and adequate response to the Women and Equalities Committee recommendations on HBA, addressing previous shortcomings and ensuring comprehensive action. This should include a clear action plan focusing on the commitments and priorities to tackle HBA, using the Women and Equalities Committee recommendations as a reference point for action.
- **HBA Cross-Governmental Taskforce:** Establish a cross-governmental HBA taskforce to oversee and support accountability in the implementation and monitoring of the government's commitment to tackle HBA.

Conclusion

Honour Based Abuse must be addressed with the same urgency and seriousness as other forms of VAWG. By committing to these three critical areas, the next government can make substantial progress in protecting victims, supporting survivors, and eradicating HBA.

We call on all political parties to adopt these measures in their election platforms and work towards a society where everyone can live free from fear and oppression linked to Honour Based Abuse.