



2023/24

# Helpline Annual Report

## About the helpline

---

We established our helpline to bridge a critical gap in service provision for victims, survivors, and professionals. Our helpline offers assistance to anyone facing challenges related to Honour Based Abuse.

Our commitment to combating Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage is deeply rooted in data-driven insights. We understand the importance of accurate information to drive effective strategies and solutions. Here, we present key data points that shed light on the challenges and trends of Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage.

Through these insights, we aim to raise awareness, inform policies, and inspire positive change, creating a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by victims and survivors, as well as on progress towards ending Honour Based Abuse.

Our helpline offers long-term support as well as short-term support. We do not have a case management system, therefore we continue to keep cases open, which allows us to continue to offer support to victims and survivors. In this report, we report on cases with active contacts for the year, which may be new or existing cases.

In our data, some categories have been merged to protect victim's identities. It is also important to note that not all data is captured, as this is based on what a victim chooses to declare on the call. For example, we're only able to report the age of victims on 42% of cases, and the type of client for 87% of cases.



## Overview

---

This year, Karma Nirvana handled **2,962 cases, a 13% increase** from the previous year, averaging 795 contacts and 247 cases monthly.

Nearly half (49%) of individuals were referred by professionals, highlighting the importance of professionals recognising Honour Based Abuse (HBA). The helpline supported an equal number of professionals and victims (45% each), with most professional cases reported by the Police (30%).

The most common barrier victims faced was **fear of repercussions** (1,930 cases), followed by **mistrust of professionals** (688), which has increased significantly compared to previous years. 23% had insecure immigration status, complicating their ability to escape HBA.

The triggers for the abuse in most cases were either a history of Honour Based Abuse (15%) or simply being female (10%). Being **female trigger has risen by 42%** compared to last year (2022-2023).

Many victims faced multiple forms of abuse, with an average of 1.3 abuse categories per case. While HBA was the primary nature of abuse, Domestic Abuse was also prevalent. On average, victims contacted the **helpline 3 times**, but cases involving children often required significantly more contacts than average.

The majority of cases were in West Yorkshire (27%), with Leeds accounting for 21%. Other key areas included London, the West Midlands, Thames Valley, and Greater Manchester.

**Most victims were women (90%)**, aged 18-45, with 36% between 18-25. Among victims who disclosed their sexuality, 72% were heterosexual, and 28% identified as LGBTQI+.

**1 in 4 HBA-related pregnancies were concealed**, and the majority of victims were married (43%) or separated (27%).

Perpetrators were often partners, responsible for 26% of cases. Close male family members accounted for 17% of cases and close female family for 14%. **Victims frequently reported multiple perpetrators**, averaging 1.5 categories per case.

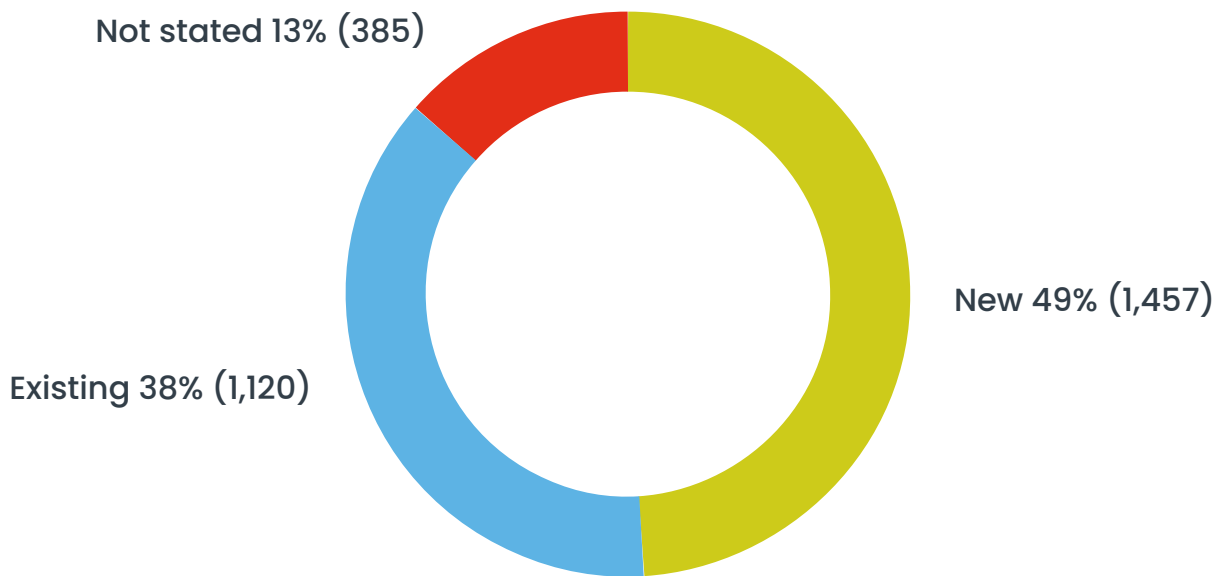
12% of callers spoke English as a second language. Additionally, 1 in 10 had no access to public funds.

## 2023–2024 overall

From April 2023 to March 2024, we handled **2,962 cases and 9,536 contacts**, reflecting a net 13% increase compared to the previous year. This averages **795 contacts** and **247 cases per month**.

**49% of cases were new**, 38% were existing, and 13% were not stated.

### New vs Existing cases



**2023/24**

**2,962** cases

**9,536** contacts

**+13%** increase  
Year on Year

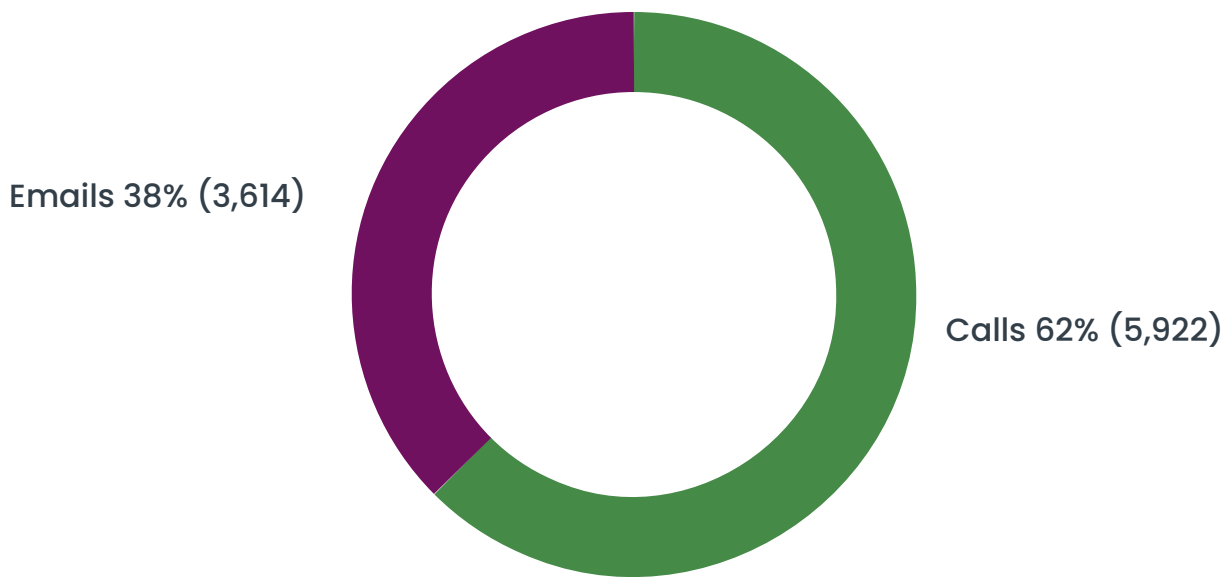
**795** average  
contacts per  
month

**247** average  
cases per  
month

We saw 1,457 new cases, and the majority of our contacts were calls to the helpline (62%), however 38% of contacts were via email.

Additionally, **12% of cases mentioned that English was not their first language**, and 10% of cases had no recourse to public funds, meaning **1 in 10 cases could not access certain welfare benefits and public housing**.

### Contact types



**12%**

mentioned English was not their first language



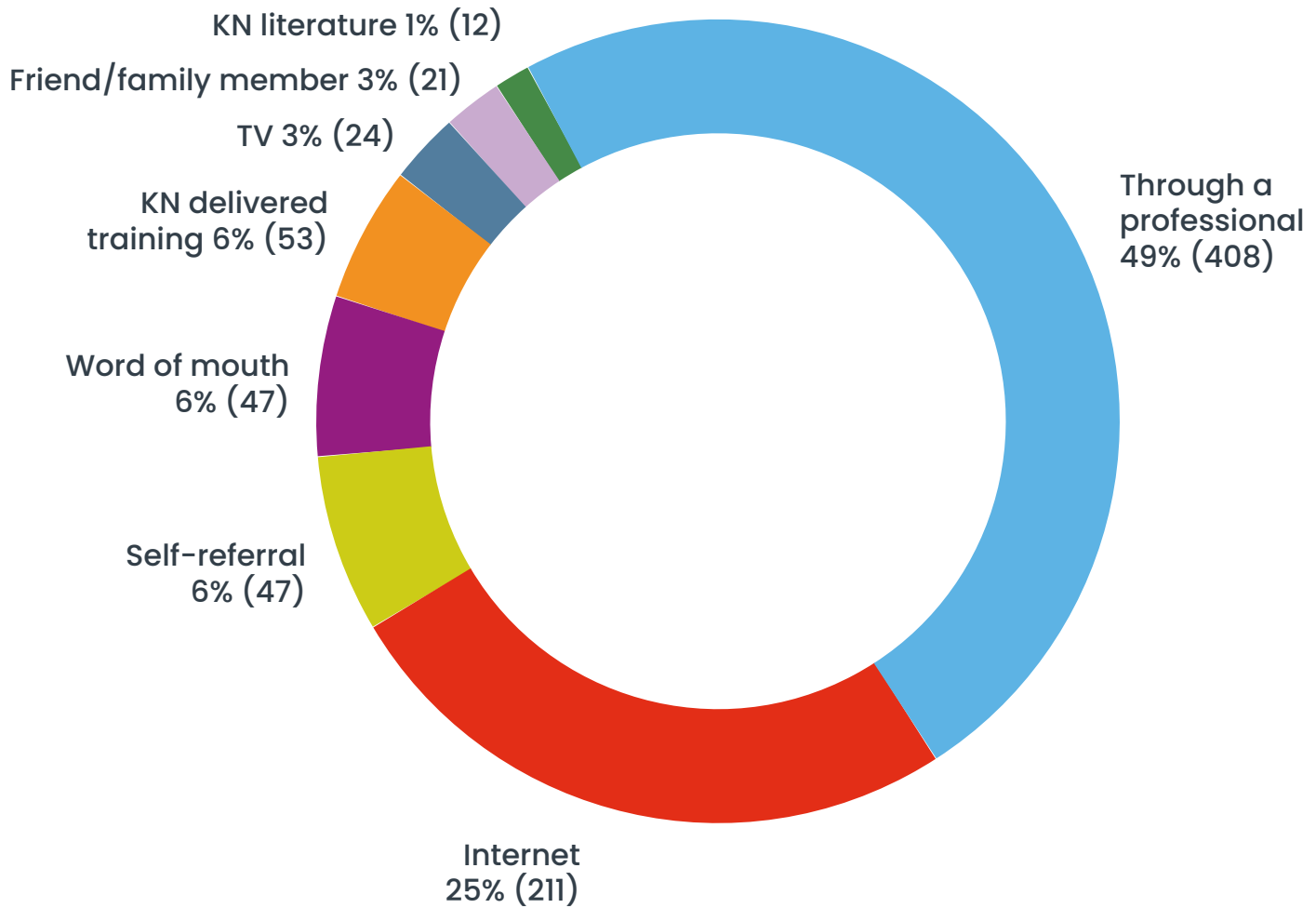
**1 in 10**

had no recourse to public funds



Most people heard about our helpline through a professional, **highlighting professional’s crucial role in understanding and identifying Honour Based Abuse** to ensure victims get the help they need. A significant number of people also found the helpline through the internet (25%).

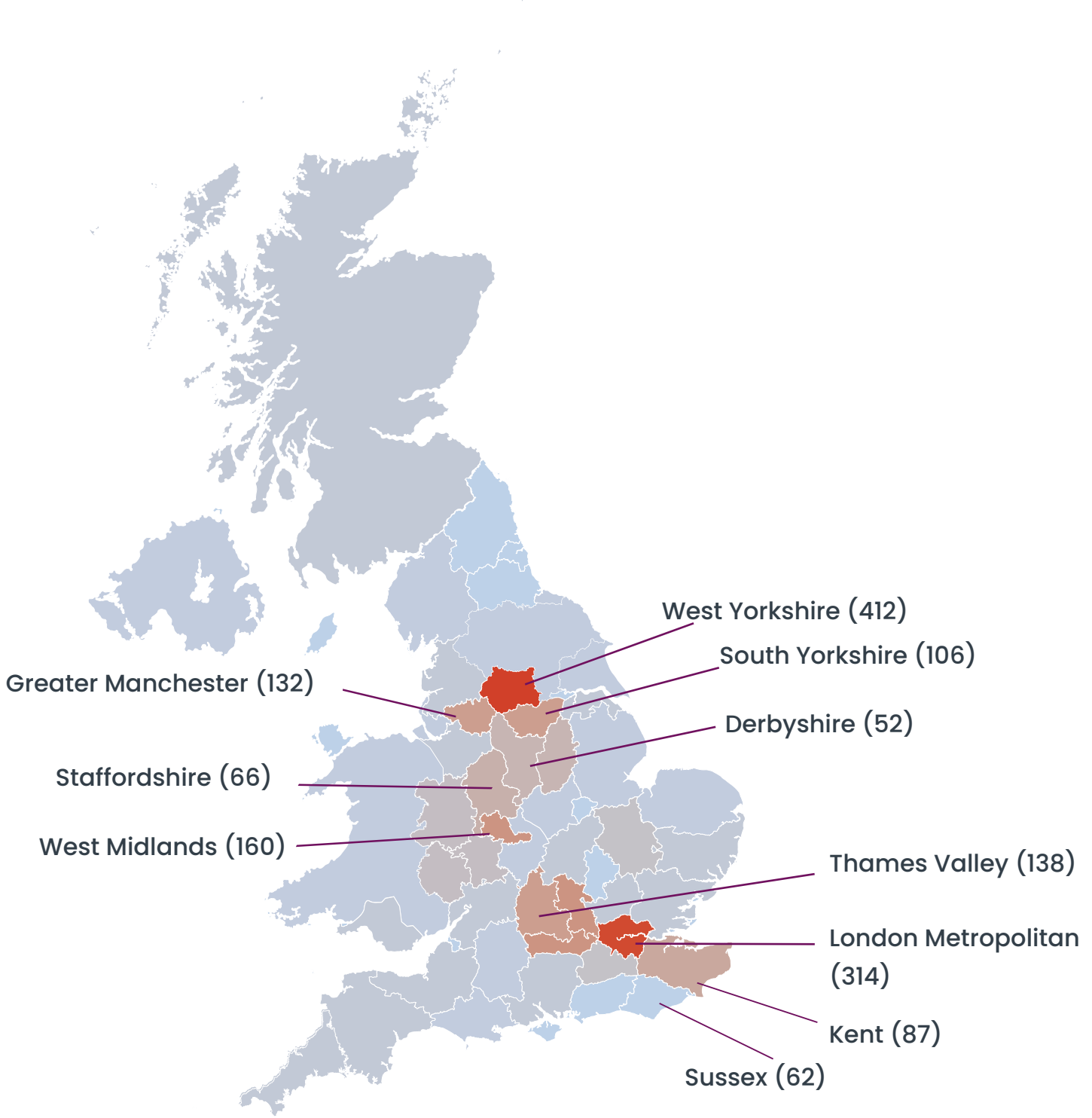
### Where did you hear about the helpline?



*“I cannot express the relief at finding this charity, and speaking to someone who understands and who can identify the abuse that I’ve been facing all my life from my family. I have real hope I can find peace, and know now there are Karma trained police officers I can talk to help protect me. The advice and support from this charity is incredible, thank you for the amazing work you’re doing.”*

24% of cases were based in Leeds, 21% were based in London, 11% were based in Birmingham and 10% in Bradford. A smaller percentage of cases were seen in Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Kent, Surrey and Bristol.

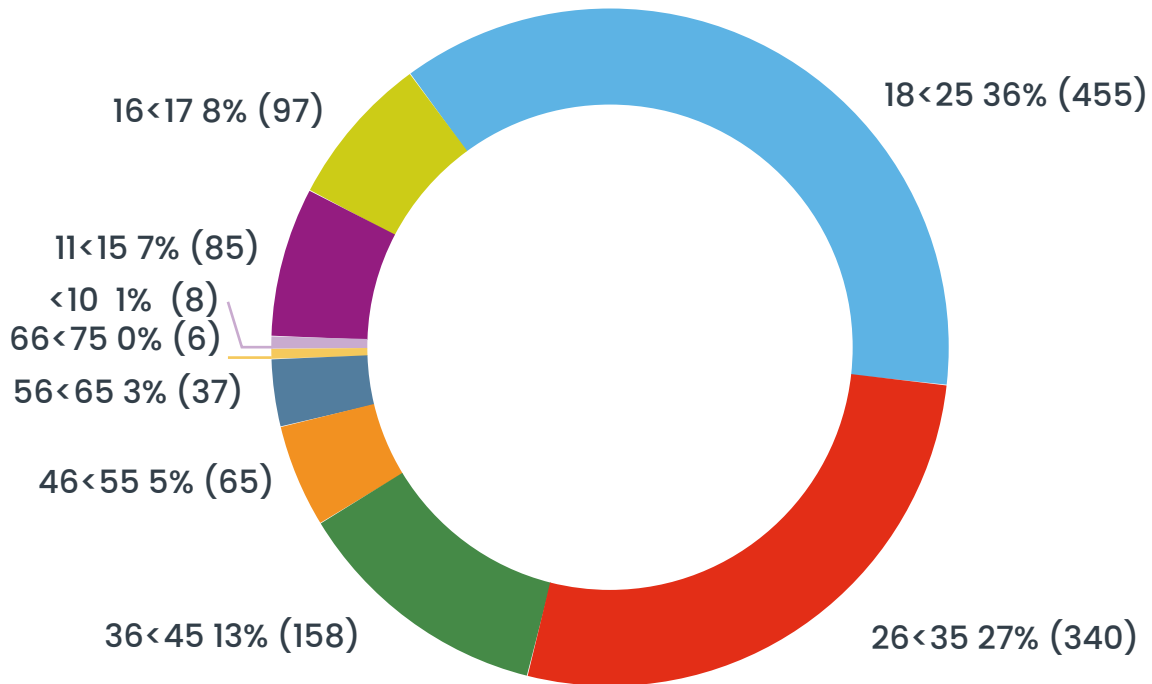
**27% of known cases were from the West Yorkshire police area**, 21% in the London Metropolitan area, 10% in the West Midlands, and 9% each in Thames Valley and Greater Manchester. Smaller proportions were in South Yorkshire, Kent, Staffordshire, Sussex, and Derbyshire police areas.



## Case demographics

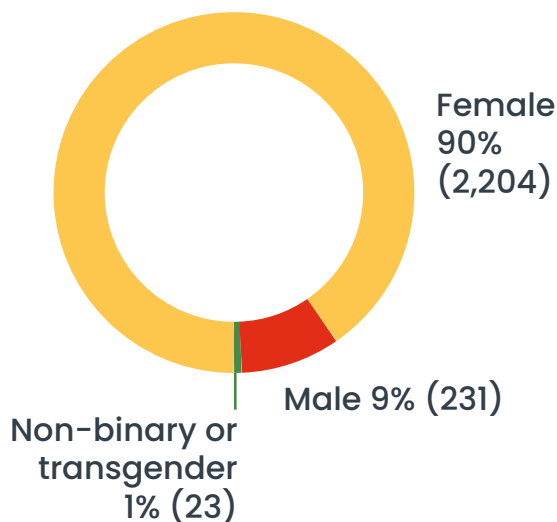
Most victims with known ages were **between 18–45 years old**, with 36% between the ages of 18–25, and 27% between 26–35. There were **93 cases concerning children under the age of 15**, with 8 under the age of 10.

### Age of the victims

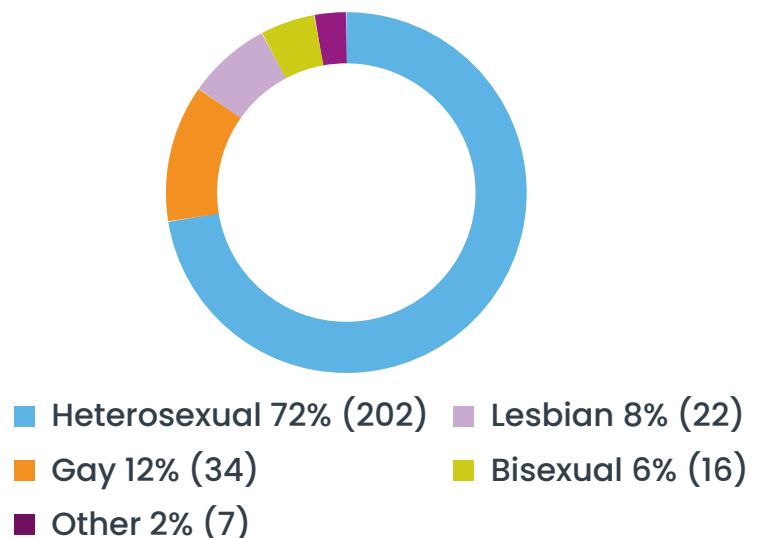


The vast majority of cases seen by Karma Nirvana in 2023–2024 were **female, accounting for 90% of cases**. 9% of cases were male, and 1% were non-binary or transgender. Victims that shared their sexuality disclosed that 72% were heterosexual, and 28% were LGBTQI+.

### Gender of victims



### Victim's sexuality



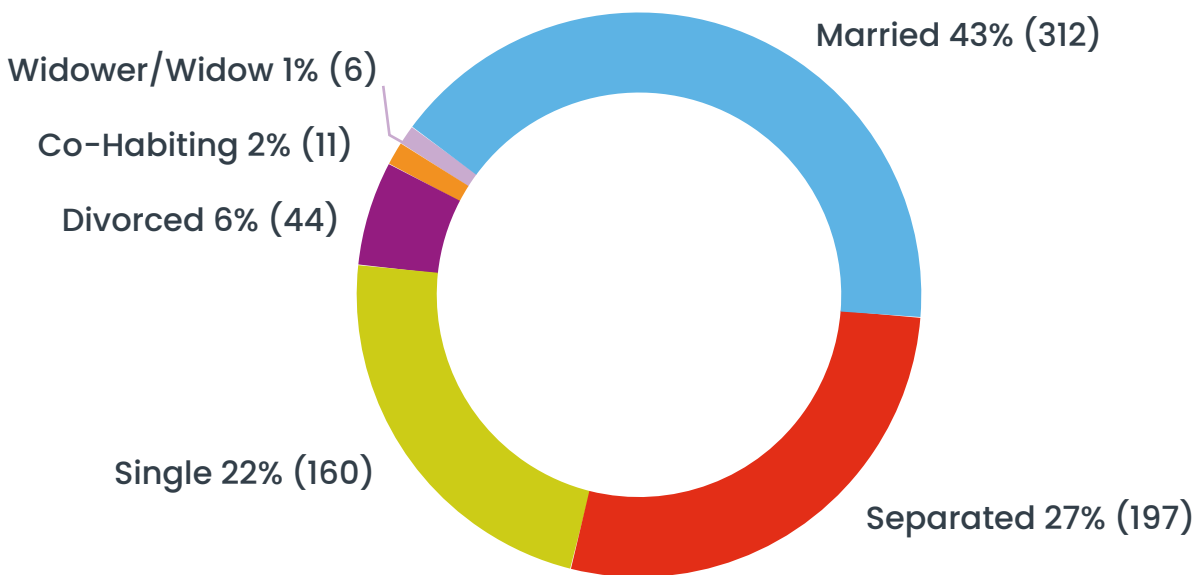


85 victims were pregnant, and 21 of these victims were concealing their pregnancy, meaning we saw **1 in 4 pregnancies in Honour Based Abuse cases being concealed.**



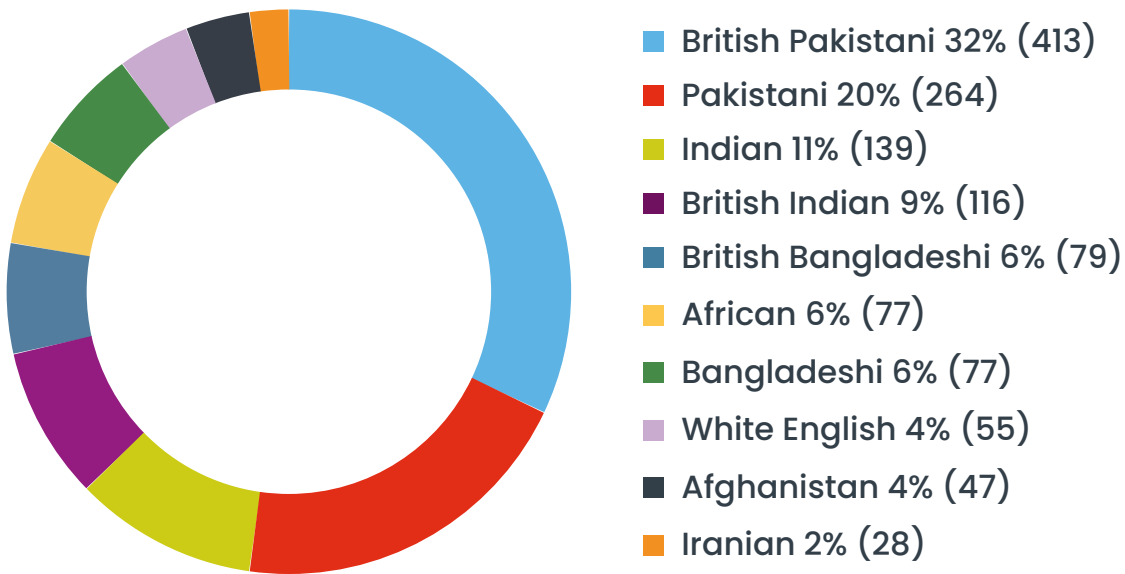
Most cases concerned victims who were married (43%) followed by separated individuals (27%).

### Marital status of victims



The ethnicities of victims showed 32% of cases were of British Pakistani decent, followed by Pakistani (20%), Indian (11%) or British Indian (9%). British Bangladeshi, African, Bangladeshi, white English, Afghanistan and Iranian ethnicities were also seen. Ethnicity of the victim was only collected for 44% of victims, therefore there may be other ethnicities of callers that have not been collected.

### Ethnicities of victims



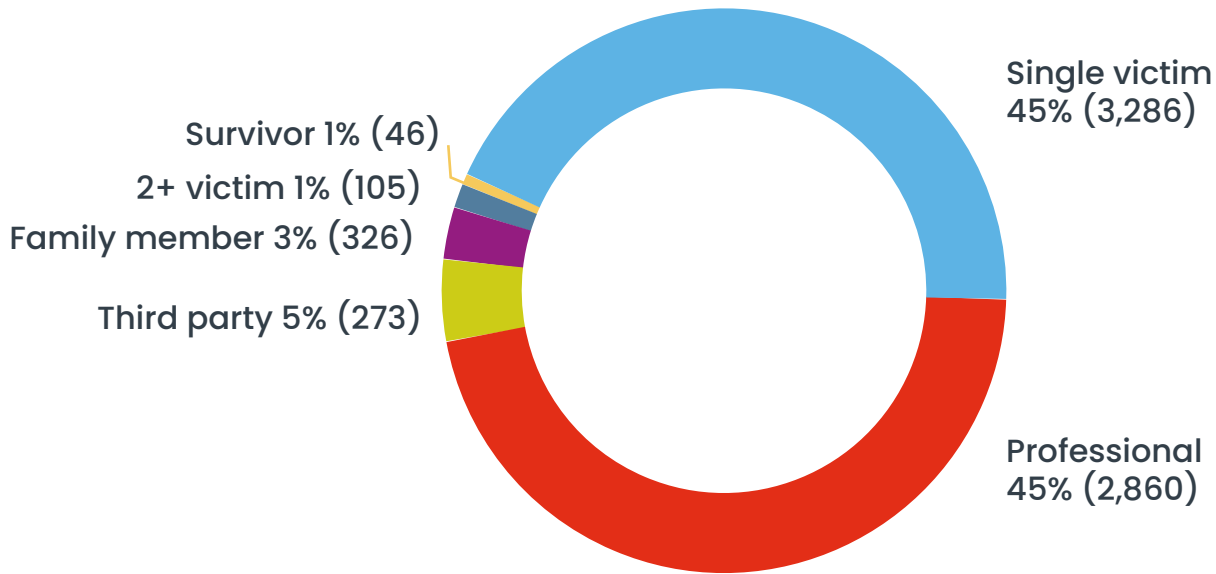
*“I work in a school and had a concern regarding a Forced Marriage of one of our young people shared with me that made me incredibly worried about their safety. The advice and support from the adviser I spoke was excellent and provided me with an opportunity to reflect upon my knowledge of the situation and explore my understanding of the risks posed to the young person.*”

*Speaking to a knowledgeable adviser really helped me in making considerate and appropriate decisions regarding what actions I should take to promote this young person’s safety. We will continue to use this brilliant charity and recommend their support to any of our students struggling with concerns regarding Honour Based Abuse.”*

## Supporting Professionals

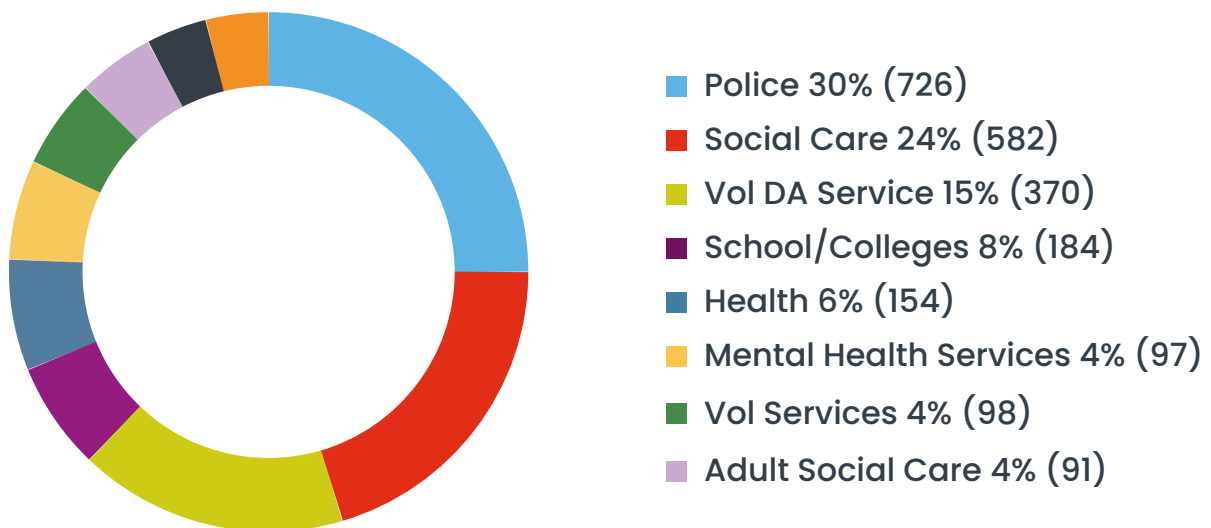
Our helpline supported almost equal numbers of professionals and single victims (45%). A small percentage of cases involved a third party contact, such as a family member, employers, or friends.

### Types of caller



The majority of professional cases came from the Police (30%), followed by Children’s Social Care Services (24%). We also saw cases from schools or colleges, Health services, Adult Social Care Services and Mental Health Services. Its positive to see the wide range of professionals calling the helpline supporting victims and survivors.

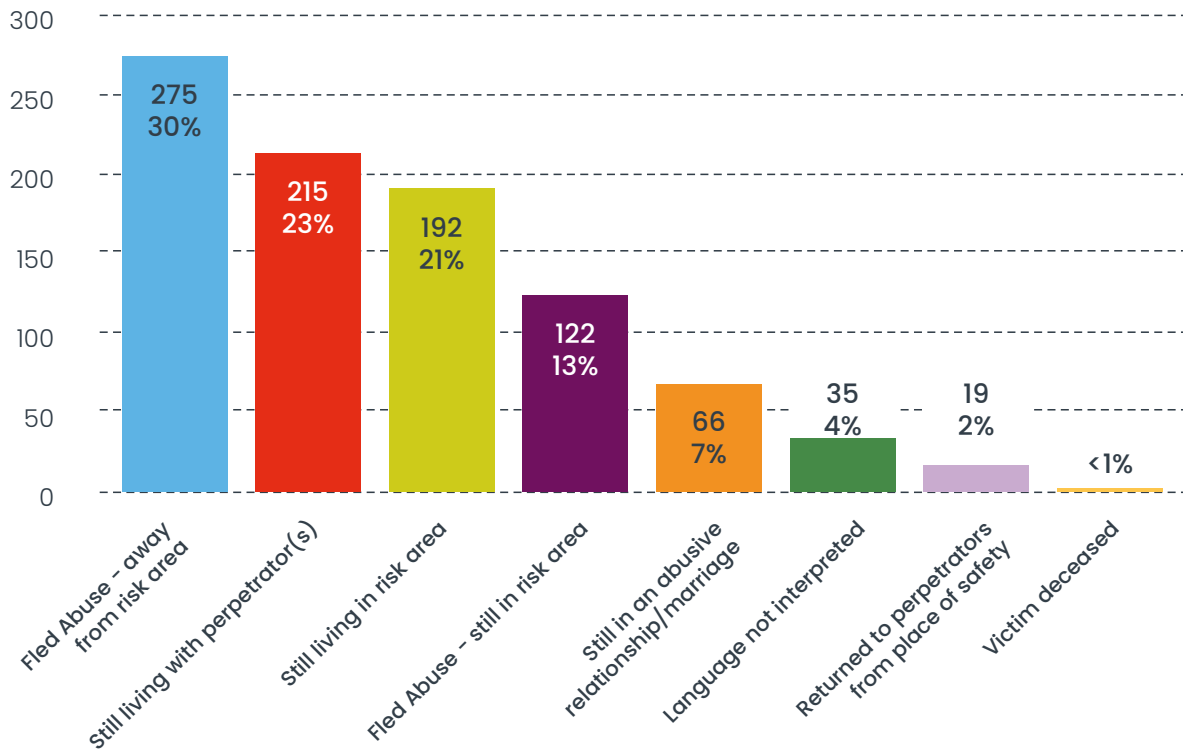
### Types of professionals contacting us



## Victims' living circumstances

A high proportion of victims told us that they had fled abuse and were away from the risk area (30%), however a high proportion of victims were still living with their perpetrator(s) (23%). An additional 21% were still living in a risk area, therefore were still at risk, and an additional 2% of victims had returned to live with perpetrators from a place of safety.

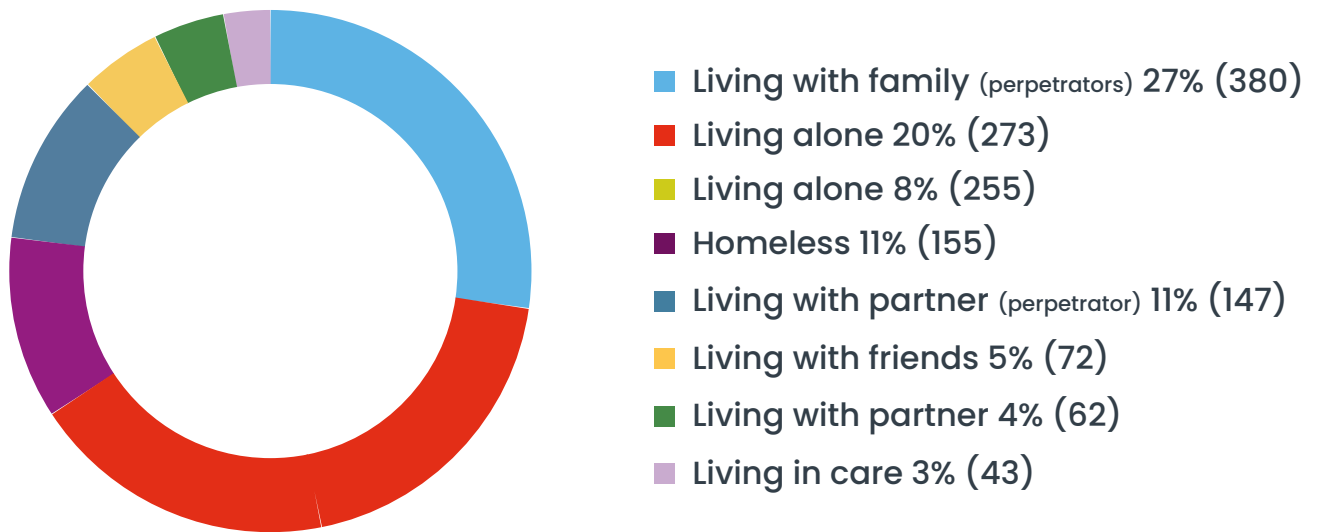
### What victims told us



27% of victims were living with family who were the perpetrators of the abuse they were facing, and 11% were living with a partner who was a perpetrator, meaning a total of **38% of victims with known living circumstances were still living with the perpetrators** of the abuse they were facing. 20% were living with family and 18% were living alone. Worryingly, 11% of cases had a victim who was homeless and 3% were living in care.

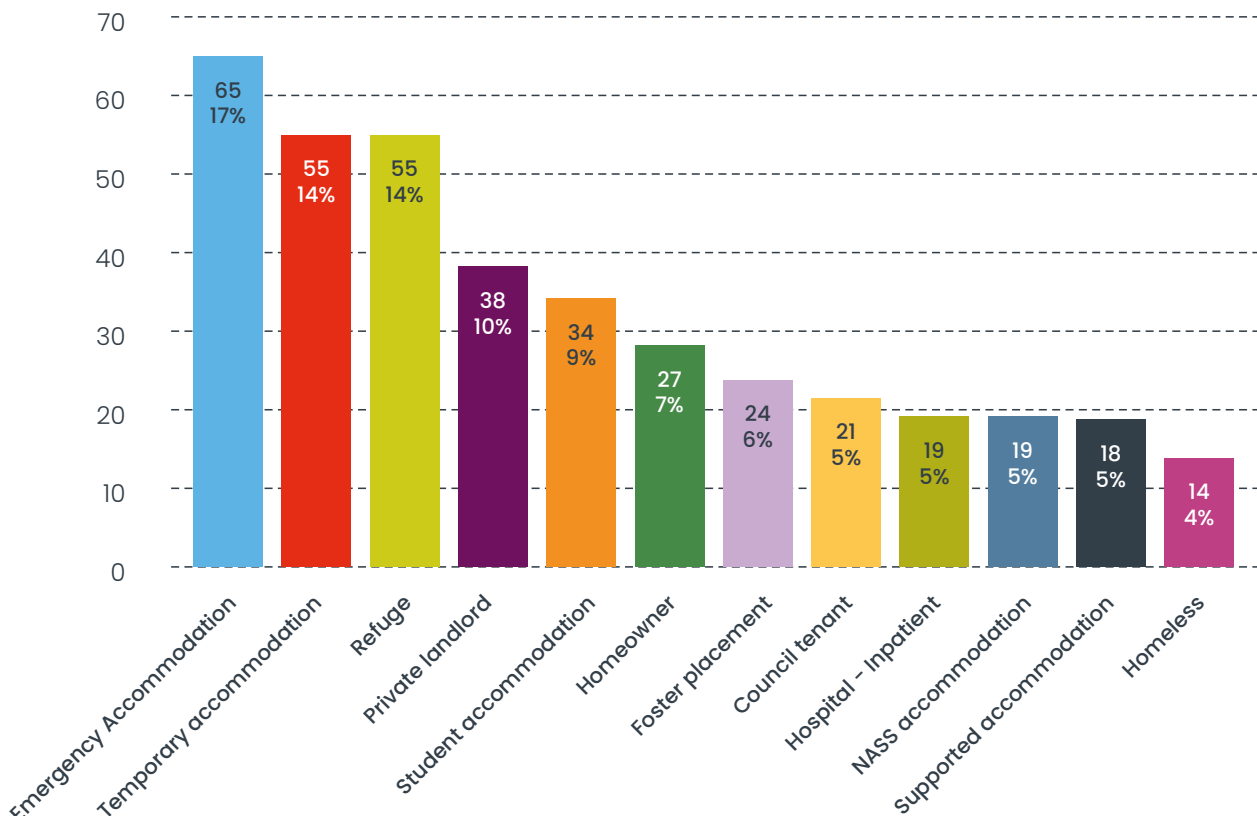
**38%**  
of victims with known living circumstances were still living with perpetrators of abuse

## Living circumstances



The majority of victim cases were in emergency or temporary accommodation, as well as in a refuge or in a foster placement. This represents 7% of victims calling Karma Nirvana did not have long-term accommodation, and only 13% of total cases had a known accommodation status, meaning this figure is likely higher.

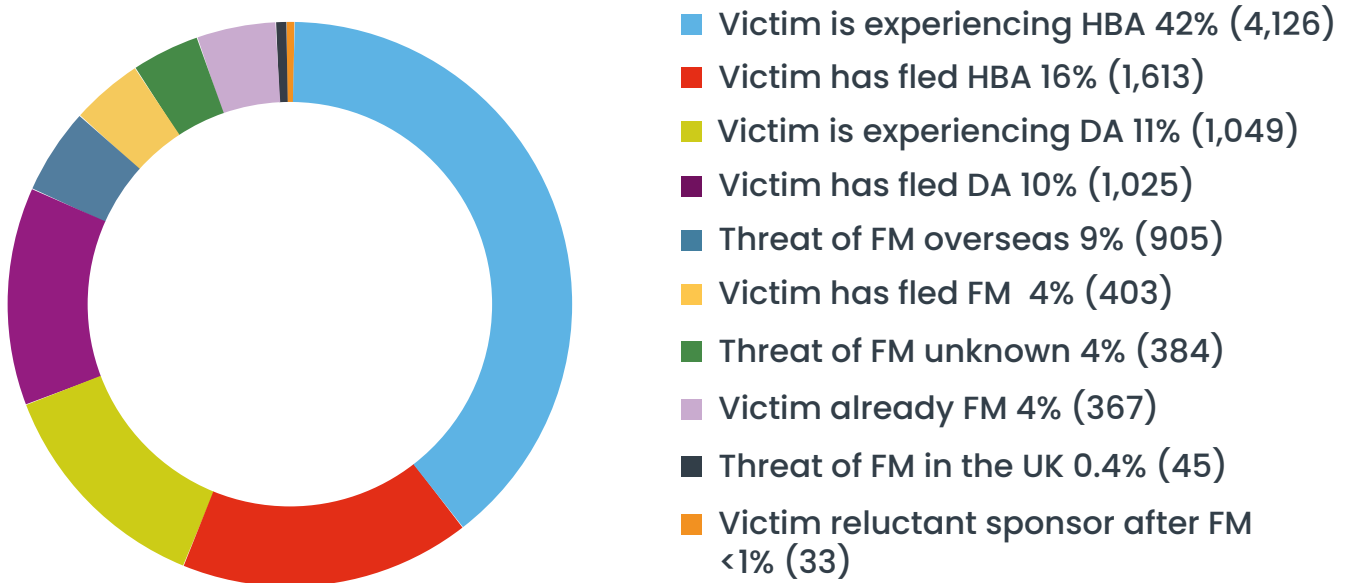
## Accommodation type



## What victims faced

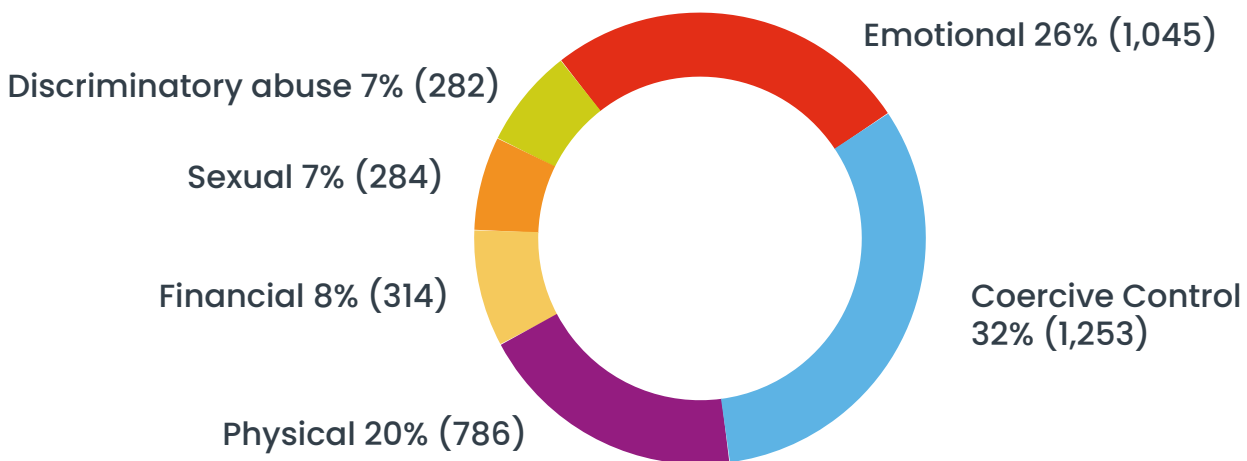
We received 4,126 contacts from victims experiencing HBA (42%) and 16% of contacts were from victims who had fled HBA. 21% of contacts also included a victim facing or fleeing Domestic abuse. 21% of contacts were also for victims facing a Forced Marriage outside or within the UK, as well as already being in a Forced marriage.

### Prompt to contact



The most common types of abuse callers faced were coercive control (32%), emotional abuse (26%) and physical abuse by the perpetrator(s) (20%). A takeaway from this is that **coercive control and emotional abuse are seen more frequently than physical abuse**, so it's important to recognise the signs of emotional abuse and coercive control, as well as physical abuse. A smaller but substantial number of cases also saw financial, sexual or discriminatory abuse.

### Type of abuse described



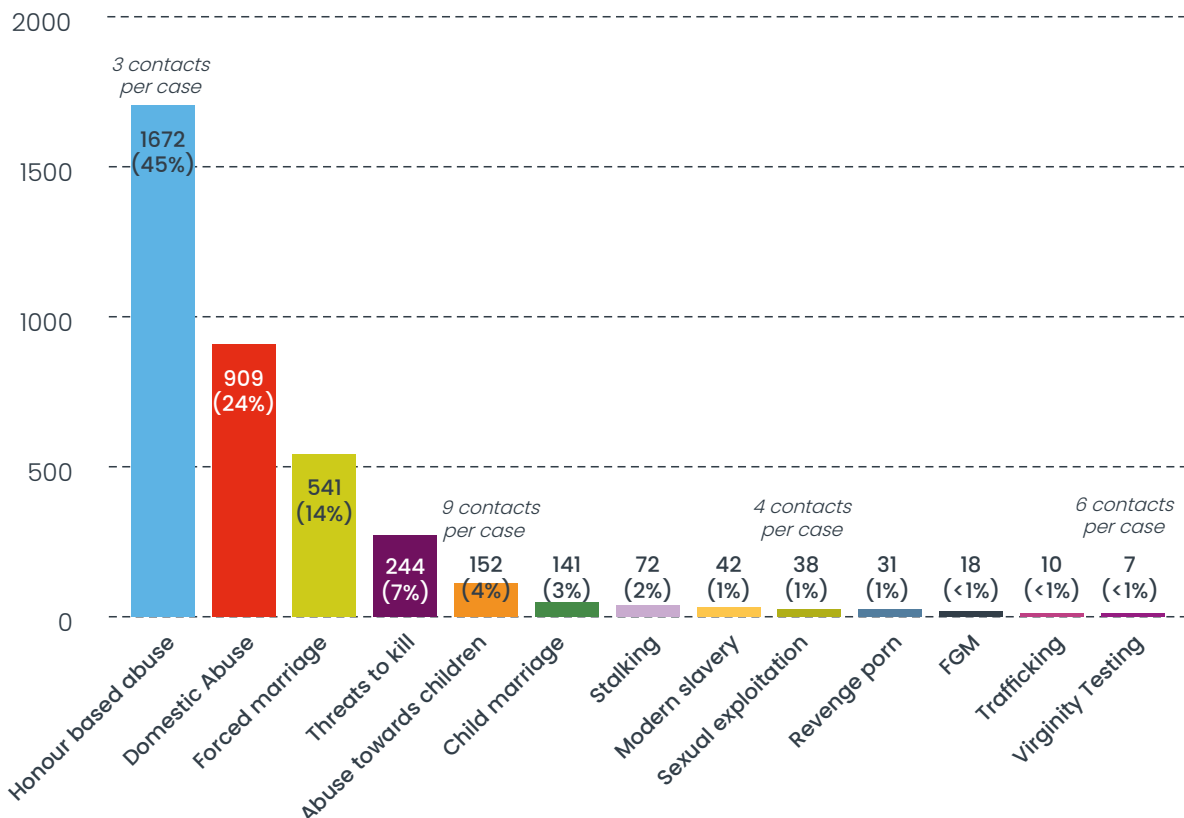
The majority of cases had Honour Based Abuse as the nature of abuse being faced, however we also saw a high number of Domestic Abuse cases last year too. There were 541 cases of Forced marriage and 141 cases of Child marriage. This resulted in 2,017 and 669 contacts for Forced Marriage and Child Marriage respectively. Many victims calling the helpline were facing multiple natures of abuse, averaging 1.3 categories of abuse per case.

**People on average contacted the helpline 3 times, however cases with abuse towards children and child sexual exploitation took an average of 9 and 7 contacts respectively, which is significantly higher than the helpline average.**

We saw 141 cases of Child Marriage, with an above helpline average of 5 contacts per case. A very small proportion of cases had a specific threat to marry an individual, but the majority of these threats when recorded were to marry a first cousin, followed by a member of the victim’s extended family.

The higher number of contacts may be due to the complexity of cases handled, and lower numbers of contacts per case may indicate cases being resolved more quickly. Despite the smaller number of more complex cases, the number of calls for each of these cases shows the time required.

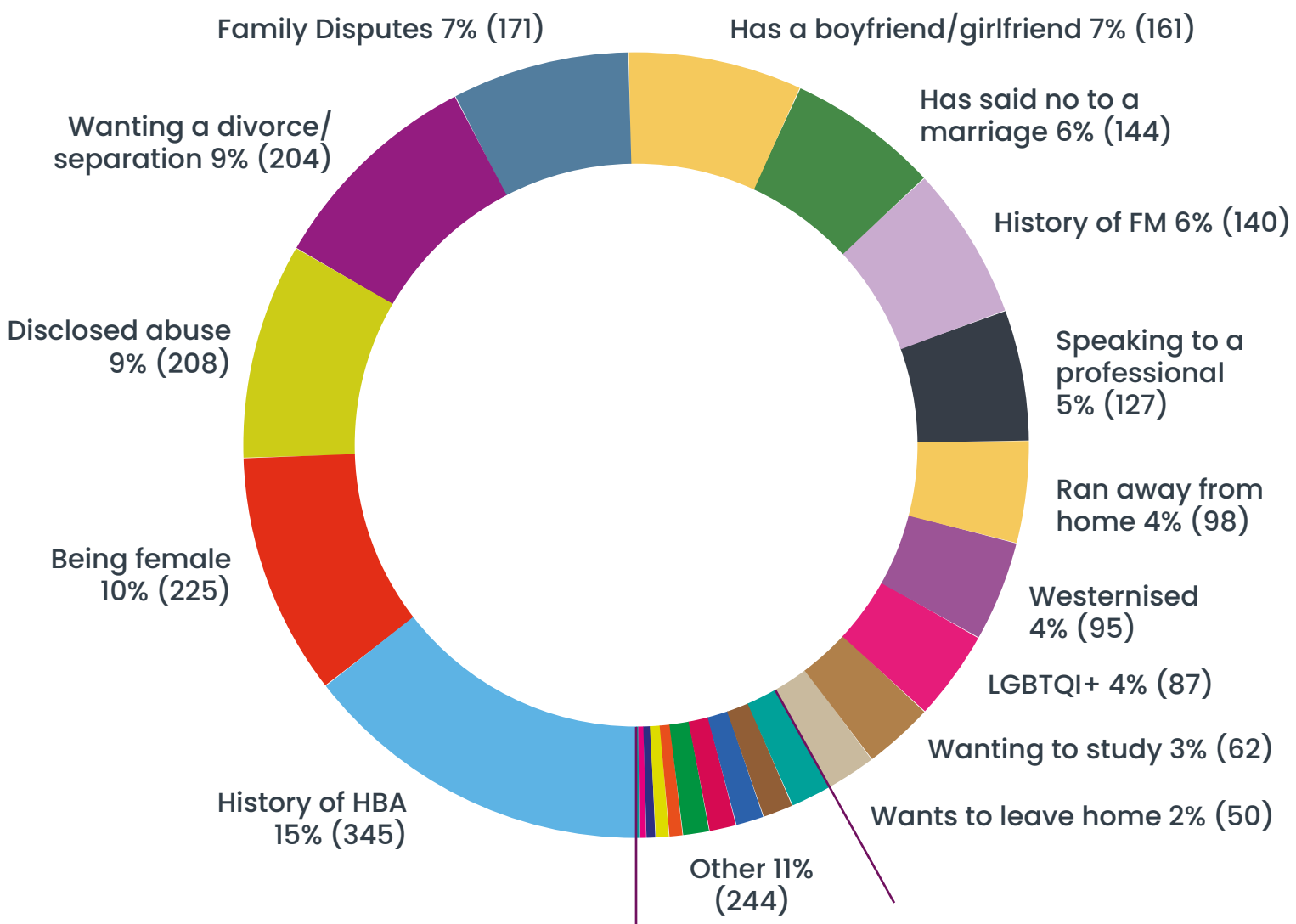
### Nature of abuse



Most cases mentioned that the triggers for the abuse were either a history of Honour Based Abuse (15%) or simply being female (10%). **The Being Female trigger has risen by 42%**, now making it one of the most common reasons, compared to last year (2022-2023), which saw 159 cases with this trigger.

We also saw several cases being triggered by the victim disclosing abuse or wanting a divorce or to separate. A reasonably high proportion had either a history of Forced Marriage or had said no to a marriage. 161 cases were due to the victim having a boyfriend or girlfriend and 87 were due to the victims sexuality being LGBTQI+.

### Triggers of abuse



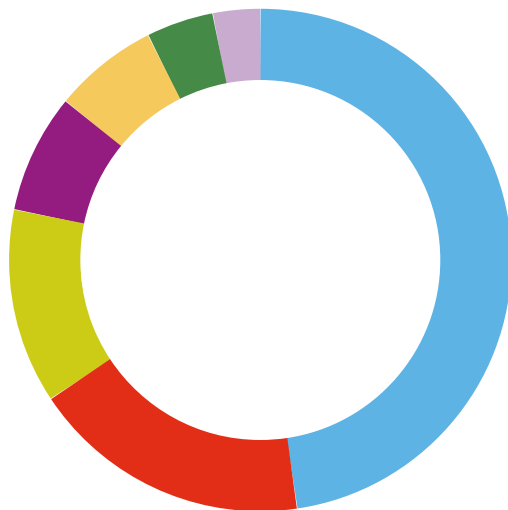
Other reasons:

- Pregnant 2% (41)
- Drinking/Drugs 1% (13)
- Left faith/religion 1% (28)
- Having social media 1% (13)
- Sex before marriage 1% (27)
- Child outside wedlock <1% (10)
- Having a mobile phone 1% (27)
- Family disapprove of career choice <1% (5)
- Having a disability 1% (25)
- Wearing make up <1% (5)



The most common barrier victims faced in cases covered by Karma Nirvana was the fear of repercussions, which was seen in 1,930 of cases. An additional 688 cases also mentioned or expressed **mistrust of professionals, which has increased massively** compared to the previous year, which only saw 111 cases expressing this concern (representing a 520% increase). 523 were unaware of their rights, and a smaller but still significant number of cases showed concern for their immigration status. Some were worried about shame and dishonour, or feared leaving their family environment. Additionally, 163 victims feared repercussions from professionals.

### Barriers

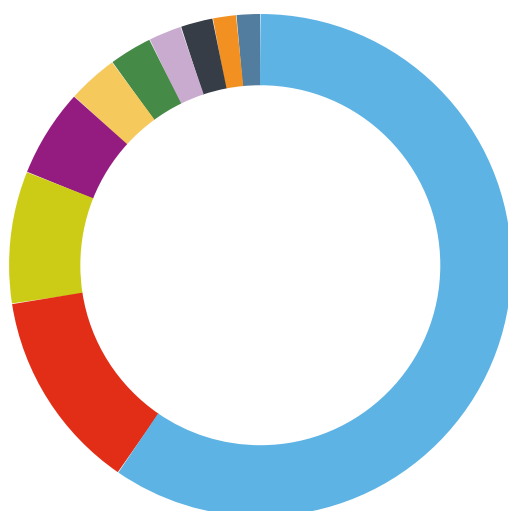


- Fear of repercussions 48% (1,930)
- Mistrust of professionals 17% (688)
- Unaware of their rights 13% (523)
- Immigration status 7% (283)
- Concerned about shame & dishonour 7% (272)
- Fear of repercussions from professionals 4% (163)
- Fear of leaving family environment 3% (153)

Only 35% of cases had the victim’s immigration status mentioned, and the vast majority of these cases handled by Karma Nirvana were British citizens (59%). A significant proportion were also on a spouse visa (13%) and smaller percentages of student visas, asylum seekers or dependant visas were also seen.

23% of known immigration status had an insecure immigration status whilst experiencing Honour Based Abuse, which leads to complications to flee Honour Based Abuse.

### Immigration status



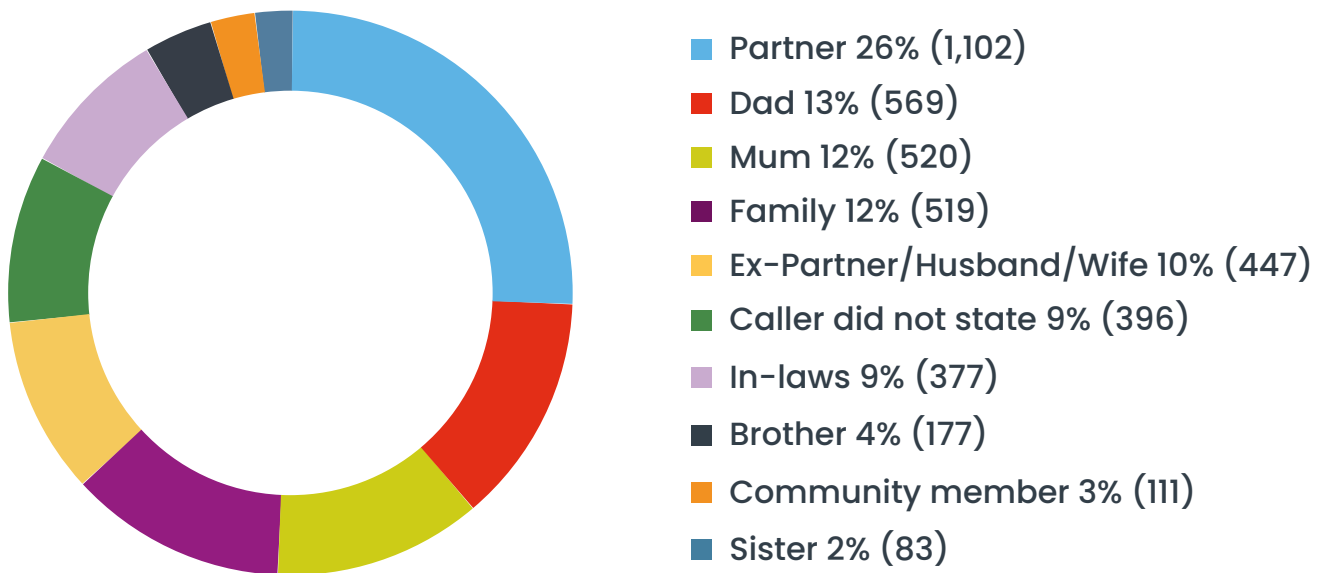
- British citizen 59% (618)
- Spouse visa 13% (139)
- Student visa 8% (85)
- Asylum seeker 6% (60)
- Dependant visa 3% (33)
- Indefinite Leave to Remain 3% (30)
- Economic migrant 2%(23)
- Temp LTR NRPF 2% (22)
- Temp LTR RPF 2% (16)
- EU National 1%(15)

Overall, in **17% of cases, the perpetrator was a close male family member** (father or brother) and in **14% of cases, the perpetrator was a close female family member** (mother or sister). In 13% of cases showed the Father of the victim as the perpetrator, 12% stated their mother a perpetrator, and an additional 12% of cases had the family as a perpetrator, likely indicating multiple perpetrators.

In 26% of cases, the perpetrator of the abuse was a partner, and 10% cited an ex-partner as the perpetrator of abuse, with a further 9% mentioning their in-laws as perpetrators. In 9% of cases, the victim did not mention who the exact perpetrator(s) were, and a very small percentage (3%) mentioned a community member as a perpetrator.

**On average, victims calling the helpline had multiple perpetrators, averaging 1.5 perpetrator categories listed per case.**

### Perpetrators



**17%**

of cases include a close male family member as the perpetrator



**14%**

of cases include a close female family member as the perpetrator



## Feedback and testimonials

---

Overall, the feedback on our helpline was very positive, with **95% of respondents rating being very satisfied with the service.**

*"The team at Karma Nirvana have been absolutely amazing in supporting myself and have helped me get out of the situation I was in. Thank you for your support."*

*"Thank you to the lady who listened to me today. I felt heard and validated. It really helped to hear the things she said. She gave me time to say everything I needed to and has given me good advice about the next steps I can take. Thank you"*

*"I am a mental health professional and have called twice on behalf of young people I have seen. The first call helped me see things through a new lens so that the second time I had concerns, I called straight away and was told immediately what to do to safeguard someone in tricky circumstances."*

*"The helpline was easily accessible and the call handler answered all of the questions I had exceptionally well. I will always signpost clients with relevant needs to Karma Nirvana."*

*"Such a fantastic service with great knowledge and brilliant advice helping to understand the situation and giving guidance on what to do next."*

