



Joint Briefing for Peers

Police and Crime Bill – Second Reading, 16 October 2025



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Please raise the issue of Honour-Based Abuse in the Second Reading of the Police and Crime Bill.

At Committee Stage, amendments will be tabled to:

- ① **Introduce a statutory definition of Honour-Based Abuse (HBA).**
- ② **Require statutory multi-agency guidance on HBA.**
- ③ **Make “honour” an aggravating factor in criminal sentencing.**

These amendments are survivor-led, supported by over 30 VAWG sector organisations, and drafted by barrister Naomi Wiseman.

Top Lines

- **Clarity:** There is no statutory definition of Honour-Based Abuse, leading to inconsistent recording and practice across policing, safeguarding, and the courts.
- **Recognition:** Honour as a motive is not reflected in sentencing, leaving courts unable to recognise the full seriousness of these offences.
- **Commitment:** On 26th August 2025, the Government announced its intention to introduce a statutory definition and guidance. This Bill provides the earliest legislative opportunity to do so.

The Current Law / Position

- The Domestic Abuse Act provides a general framework but does not capture the **collective, honour-driven nature of HBA**.
- **No statutory guidance** exists to ensure consistency across agencies.
- “Honour” is not recognised in the Sentencing Council guidelines as an aggravating factor.
- Official data indicates **a decline** in police-recorded offences (3,008 in 2023 → 2,755 in 2024). However, the national Honour Based Abuse helpline operated by Karma Nirvana supported **2,962 victims in the same period – a 13% rise**. This discrepancy suggests under-recording or misclassification by police forces rather than a real reduction.
- CPS data confirms that HBA offences continue to have the **lowest conviction rates** among all flagged crimes.

The Impact

- **Misidentification:** Cases are often misidentified and inaccurately recorded, obscuring prevalence and limiting victim protection.
- **Missed perpetrators:** Collective and family involvement is not consistently recognised in investigations.
- **Judicial inconsistency:** Courts lack a clear framework for identifying and addressing “honour” as a motive.
- **Professional inconsistency:** Without guidance, responses vary between agencies, reducing confidence among frontline professionals and leaving victims without adequate safeguarding.

Proposals for Change

01 Statutory Definition of Honour-Based Abuse

- Survivor-led and sector-backed.
- Recognises collective perpetration, honour-based motivations, anticipated breaches of “honour,” and the silencing effect of shame.
- Provides a consistent basis for identification, recording, and intervention.

02 Statutory Multi-Agency Guidance

- Duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance, updated regularly.
- Ensures consistent practice across policing, safeguarding, and criminal justice.
- Supports early identification, appropriate referral, and effective protection for victims.

03 Honour as an Aggravating Factor in Sentencing

- Brings parity with other aggravating factors (such as hostility based on sexual orientation or disability).
- Requires courts to acknowledge honour motives where present.
- Ensures sentencing reflects the seriousness and wider impact of these crimes.

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.*

Draft Amendments

Amendment 1 – Statutory Definition of Honour-Based Abuse

“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.

Amendment 2 – Duty to Issue Statutory Multi-Agency Guidance

1. The Secretary of State must issue guidance about the exercise of functions by public authorities in relation to Honour Based Abuse.
2. Guidance issued under this section must be kept under review and revised where appropriate.

Amendment 3 – 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.

This is a **critical moment for CHANGE**. Honour-Based Abuse remains hidden, misunderstood, and under-prosecuted. The Government has already promised action. These amendments give Parliament the opportunity to:

- Establish a statutory definition, at the earliest opportunity.
- Deliver statutory multi-agency guidance.
- Recognise honour as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Peers are urged to support these amendments to ensure recognition, justice, and protection for victims and families.