

## So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage

So-called 'honour' based abuse (HBA) is widely accepted to be defined as “a crime or incident which has, or may have been, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or community” (15) In some communities, predominately those from South Asia, the Middle East, and North and East Africa and Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Orthodox Jewish and occasionally traveller communities, shame and dishonour can be perceived to be brought upon a family by behaviour they disapprove of. Maintaining the reputation of the family or community can be valued more highly than the safety, rights, or even the life of the individual involved. Abusers and the abused can be both male and female, individuals or multiple perpetrators.

Source (15) <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

## HBA encompasses the following forms of abuse:

- forced marriage – we will look at this in more detail later
- child marriage
- domestic abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial)
- sexual harassment and sexual violence (rape and sexual assault or the threat of)
- threats to kill, physical and emotional violence, murder, and forced suicide
- pressure to go or move abroad
- being kept at home with no freedom, domestic servitude
- not being allowed to use the telephone, internet, or have access to important documents like their passport or birth certificate
- isolation from friends and members of their own family
- virginity testing



## HBA encompasses the following forms of abuse continued:

- enforced abortion
- female genital mutilation (FGM) – we will look this in more detail later
- breast ironing
- disfigurement – acid attacks/burning
- neglect and cruelty
- enslavement and kidnap
- destruction and damage of property
- harassment and stalking
- sending malicious communications
- coercive control **16, 17, 18, 19**

### Sources:

16. <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/honour-based-abuse/honour-based-abuse/>

17. <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

18. KCSIE 2022 p.153

19. <https://safeguardinghub.co.uk/honour-based-abuse-the-facts/>

## Forced marriage



A forced marriage (FM) is where one or both people do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. It's different from an arranged marriage where there's a choice and both people agree to it. It's illegal in the UK to force someone to marry; this includes: taking someone abroad to force them to marry (even if the forced marriage doesn't take place), and marrying someone who can't consent to the marriage **(20)**

Useful links to research forced marriage further are:

<https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

<https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/helpline/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/crime-law/forced-marriage/>

**Source (20)** <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/forced-marriage/forced-marriage/>

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

“FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs” (21).

This injury to the external female genitalia is committed for no medical reason but is a cultural, religious or social act of HBA, sometimes referred to as ‘cutting’ or ‘female circumcision’. FGM is usually committed by a central member of a community such as a birth attendant but there has been an increasing medicalisation of FGM by health care providers which completely goes against medical ethics.

The procedure is often carried out without anaesthetic but instead with the use of restraint, and knives, scalpels, scissors, glass or razor blades are used without antiseptic treatment. Girls are at risk of the procedure from birth to just before marriage. Whilst FGM is known to happen in the UK, according to UNICEF, “FGM has been performed on at least 200 million girls and women in 31 countries across three continents, with more than half of those subjected living in Egypt, Ethiopia and Indonesia” (22).

Sources (21) KCSIE 2022 p. 153

(22) <https://www.unicef.org/protection/female-genital-mutilation>

## Reporting cases of FGM

FGM is illegal and teachers, along with other professionals, have a legal obligation to report cases of FGM. Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 “requires teachers (and other professionals) to make a report to the police if, in the course of their professional duties, they:

- are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl’s physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth” **(23)**

### Source (23)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/573782/FGM\\_Mandatory\\_Reporting\\_-\\_procedural\\_information\\_nov16\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf)

## Reporting cases of FGM continued



FGM must be reported to the police by the teacher who has initially raised the concern.

The report must take place by dialling 101 as soon as possible ideally before the end of the next working day. Clear instructions are given in Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation sets out the procedure for reporting FGM:

**[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/573782/FGM\\_Mandatory\\_Reporting\\_-\\_procedural\\_information\\_nov16\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf)**

Teachers should never physically examine a child to confirm or rule out a case of FGM and would only see physical evidence in rare circumstances such as in assisting a young child to use the toilet or changing a nappy. There are, however, signs that point to FGM having taken place or will take place, and a child may make a disclosure of FGM performed on themselves or of worries that it may happen to someone they know.

## Signs of girls at risk of FGM



- Girls can be of any age but are at particular risk before puberty
- Other members of the girl's family have undergone FGM, or the girl comes from a culture where FGM is practised
- Conversations about being cut/an initiation/a ceremony/a forthcoming visit from a family or community elder may be overheard or reported
- Spoken support for the practice of FGM from the girl and/or her family
- Exemption from sexual education classes, family evades discussion of FGM
- An extended holiday planned to a country where FGM is practised
- Running away from home
- Long absence planned from school
- Increasing anxiety as a holiday approaches



## Signs FGM has taken place



- Changes in behaviour on returning to school after a lengthy absence, showing signs of anxiety, depression, trauma, self-harm, may be quiet or withdrawn
- Shows signs of pain between legs, pain in standing, walking and/or sitting
- Medical problems particularly related to urinary or menstrual problems, and reluctance to seek medical help
- Frequent and lengthy visits to the toilet
- Keeping a secret about what happened
- Implausible requests to be excused from PE and swimming activities
- Asking for help but reluctant to be explicit due to embarrassment or fear of getting into trouble with her family or worried about getting her family into trouble

**For further information on FGM use the links below:**

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

<http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>

[www.dofeve.org](http://www.dofeve.org)

## Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse may sometimes be carried out in the context of a faith community. Acts of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect are justified because of the beliefs of the abuser. Children can be used as a scapegoat for problems being experienced by the family. In 2012, the Department for Education published an Action plan to stop child abuse in the name of faith or belief.

A good summary of the types of abuse children can suffer due to CALFB can be found on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-plan-to-stop-child-abuse-in-the-name-of-faith-or-belief#:~:text=The%20National%20action%20plan%20to,and%20act%20to%20protect%20the m.>



### Signs of CALFB:

The signs that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect linked to faith or belief include all of the signs for abuse and neglect but there are additional signs:

- A child reporting that they are or have been accused of being evil, and / or that they are having the devil beaten out of them.
- A child made to wear some form of paraphernalia that could be of a religious nature **(25)**

Source (25) <https://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/>

## Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is the exploitation of a power imbalance to use children to commit criminal activities. The reasons that children become involved in CCE are complex and children rarely disclose involvement because of the high levels of fear, violence, confused loyalties, and control exerted by the exploiter. The methods used in CCE are found to induce trauma, shame and worthlessness in the victim.

### How do children become involved in CCE?

1. Hope of gain – children may initially become involved with CCE with a hope to gain something they lack or feel they lack. Exploiters may seem to offer what the children want; this may be money, food, accommodation, clothes, or online gaming credits; what they may perceive to be friends, a family and affection; status or recognition; or a perception of safety. This is a grooming entrapment.
2. Debt bondage - The Children’s Society defines debt bondage as “a form of entrapment that can lead to people feeling as though they are caught in a situation from which they cannot escape” (26). This tactic is commonly used in County Lines which will be discussed later on in the module.

Source (26) <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Debt-Bondage-in-a-CCE-and-CL-context.pdf>

## How do children become involved in CCE? continued



3. Vulnerability - The child could be particularly vulnerable due to “sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources” (27). A child may not recognise that they are being exploited and may believe that they genuinely need to repay a debt or that the relationship they are involved in is not abusive.

4. Children of all ages, backgrounds, and communities are possible victims of CCE. Exploitation may be enacted by individuals or groups, males or females, adults or other child victims, may be face-to-face or online. CCE can also overlap with other forms of abuse, the signs of abuse may be more easy to detect than the underlying CCE.

## Signs of CCE possibly exhibited in school or college



- Poor or decline in school attendance
- Decreasing performance at school, homework not completed
- Associating with other children known to be involved in CCE
- Possession of unexplained gifts
- Extreme tiredness
- Showing physical and non-physical signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Showing signs of physical pain associated with being forced to carry drugs internally
- Showing signs of drug and alcohol abuse
- Talking of travelling outside their usual area
- Possessing more than one mobile phone and excessive mobile phone use

## Signs of CCE possibly exhibited in school or college continued

- Withdrawing from usual friendship groups and being secretive
- Younger pupils in relationships with older pupils
- Dishevelled appearance, no chance to change or wash clothes or themselves
- Carrying or talking of carrying a weapon
- Changes in emotional well-being including self-harm
- An increase in violent and/or disruptive behaviour
- Using unexpected language related to drug use, violence, gangs, or sexual activity
- Contact from concerned parents/carers
- Being met by unfamiliar people after school
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations.
- Police concern of criminal involvement

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)



The DfE's non-statutory guidance, Child Sexual Exploitation, defines CSE:

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology” **(28)**

Examples of CSE can be found in the DfE's 2017 publication Child sexual exploitation **(29)**

### Sources (28)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591903/CSE\\_Guidance\\_Core\\_Document\\_13.02.2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591903/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf) p. 5

### (29)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591903/CSE\\_Guidance\\_Core\\_Document\\_13.02.2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591903/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf) p. 9



## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) continued

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) may be a part of CCE or may take place in isolation. It follows the same pattern of CCE in that children are groomed with the hope of a gain, or forced into a perceived debt which they are forced to repay through sexual abuse and exploitation, again, vulnerabilities can increase their likelihood of exploitation. The child may be deceived into thinking that they are in a consensual relationship with their abuser(s). As with CCE, violence, coercion, and a distortion of relationships can perpetuate the exploitation.

CSE can also occur entirely online. The NSPCC reports that, once a child is groomed or threatened into CSE they then can be persuaded or forced to:

- “send or post sexually explicit images of themselves
- film or stream sexual activities
- have sexual conversations” (30)

Source (30) <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/>

## Additional signs for CSE



As children involved in CSE may also be involved in CCE, many of the signs are similar.

In addition to the CCE signs, other signs may include:

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Use of unexpected sexual language
- Physical injuries due to sexual abuse – bruising or bleeding in genital or anal areas
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Frequenting locations known for sex work

Even if none of these signs are present, CSE may still be occurring or may have occurred, so any disclosure should be recorded and reported.



County Lines is a particular form of CCE.

The National Police Chiefs' Council defines County Lines as “a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons **(31)**.”

Source (31) <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

## Signs that children are involved in County Lines



Signs of a child being involved in County Lines are the same as CCE involvement, but can have the additional signs of:

- frequently going missing from school, home or care
- travelling to locations, or being found in areas they have no obvious connections with, including seaside or market towns
- unwillingness to explain their whereabouts **(32)**

As with CCE and CSE, children caught up in county lines can wrongly be identified as criminals rather than victims who need help.

Source (32) <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>