

## Written evidence from The Drive Partnership [HBA0038]

### The Drive Partnership

The Drive Partnership, established in 2015 by SafeLives, Respect and Social Finance, believes that domestic abuse is not inevitable or acceptable. The Drive Partnership was founded to address the gap in work with high-risk, high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse, which it does through the flagship Drive Project – a highly effective behaviour change intervention – and its work on National Systems Change. Underpinning all of this work is a mission to increase the safety and freedom of adult and child victim-survivors by challenging those who cause harm to change their behaviour and stop domestic abuse for good.

### Introduction

The Women and Equalities Committee's inquiry into so-called honour-based abuse provides a critical opportunity to learn more about this form of domestic abuse – particularly from victim-survivors themselves and specialist services – and improve responses to it to increase the safety of victim-survivors and stop so-called honour-based abuse for good. To achieve this goal, there must be an increased focus on responses to those who cause harm through honour-based abuse. While this is true of all forms of domestic abuse, the complexity of honour-based abuse and the wide network of those who can collectively perpetrate, reinforce or condone it further underlines the importance of focusing on effective, culturally competent responses that challenge all those who cause harm through honour-based abuse to change their behaviour.

The Drive Partnership is not a specialist honour-based abuse organisation, and we recognise and wish to amplify the expertise and recommendations of specialist services such as Karma Nirvana, which are committed to ending honour-based abuse, throughout our response to this inquiry. The Drive Partnership does specialise in improving responses to all perpetrators of domestic abuse with the aim of improving the safety and freedom of all victim-survivors. Our work on National Systems Change<sup>1</sup> currently focuses on four key systemic gaps in effective perpetrator responses; including children's social care, housing, LGBT+

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<sup>1</sup> <http://driveproject.org.uk/national-systems-change/>

communities, and racialised communities – alongside an overarching focus on workforce development. Through these latter strands, we have developed key insights on cultural competency in domestic abuse interventions, which refers to the behaviours, attitudes, and policies that enable effective work with service users from different cultures. In response to the following questions laid out by the Women and Equalities Committee’s inquiry into so-called honour-based abuse, The Drive Partnership recommends:

- Increased engagement with and sustainable funding for specialist by-and-for organisations who can lead culturally specific services across both victim-survivor and perpetrator services;
- Increased focus on cultural competency in domestic abuse interventions across both perpetrator and victim-survivor services;
- Increased focus on improving responses to those who cause harm using so-called honour-based abuse.

These recommendations are essential to increasing recognition of so-called honour-based abuse, effectively challenging those who perpetrate it to change their behaviour for good, and ultimately increasing the safety and freedom of victim-survivors.

So-called honour-based abuse is a form of domestic abuse. While there is no statutory definition of honour-based abuse, it is characterized in legal guidance by the Crown Prosecution Service as “an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/ or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community’s code of behaviour”<sup>2</sup>.

As outlined by Karma Nirvana, for some communities, “to compromise a family’s ‘honour’ is to bring dishonour and shame – which can have severe consequences”<sup>3</sup>. Honour-based abuse can include, but is not limited to, “child marriage, virginity

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/so-called-honour-based-abuse-and-forced-marriage-guidance-identifying-and-flagging>

<sup>3</sup> <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

testing, enforced abortion, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, as well as physical, sexual and economic abuse and coercive control”<sup>4</sup>. Honour-based abuse also includes honour-based killings, which is estimated to take place nearly once every month in the UK – however, it is believed that this figure does not reflect the true reality of honour-based killing in the UK<sup>5</sup>.

According to Karma Nirvana, “honour-based abuse is more prevalent within communities from South Asia, the Middle East, and North and East Africa. Reports come from Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Orthodox Jewish and occasionally traveller communities. However, cultural tradition does not mean honour-based abuse is acceptable.”<sup>6</sup> To this point, although much of this document discusses responses to perpetrators in racialised communities, the Drive Partnership is clear that so-called honour-based abuse is not limited to these communities. In turn, it should not be assumed that domestic abuse within racialised communities is honour-based abuse.

### **What are the challenges or barriers faced by victims of honour-based abuse in seeking support or protection? / What are the challenges for services supporting victims of honour-based abuse?**

#### **Challenges faced by victim-survivors**

Through the Drive Partnership’s work on National Systems Change, we have identified that women from racially minoritised communities are disproportionately impacted by domestic abuse; with exposure to poverty, racism, xenophobia, and support barriers putting them at greater risk of gender-based abuse<sup>7</sup>. Racialised people, including those who are perpetrating abuse, also face systemic inequalities at every stage of their involvement with statutory services – particularly with respect to the criminal justice system. As highlighted earlier, the Drive Partnership is clear that so-called honour-based abuse is not limited to those from racialised communities and should not be conflated with domestic abuse within racialised communities. However, with Karma Nirvana recognising that “honour-based abuse is more prevalent within communities from South Asia, the Middle East, and North and

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<sup>4</sup> <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://civitas.org.uk/pdf/CrimesOfTheCommunity.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

<sup>7</sup> [http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Culturally-responsive-interventions-summary-of-findings\\_FINAL-.pdf](http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Culturally-responsive-interventions-summary-of-findings_FINAL-.pdf)

East Africa<sup>8</sup>”, it is important to also recognise the systemic barriers that these communities already face in accessing support for domestic abuse, alongside the additional barriers presented by so-called honour-based abuse.

As a unique form of domestic abuse, so-called honour-based abuse presents a range of additional systemic barriers for victim-survivors to seek support or protection. To help overcome these barriers, victim-survivors require specialist by-and-for services and cultural competency among generic services for both themselves and the perpetrator. As outlined in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s recent mapping report, “specialist services are effective in enabling victims and survivors to feel safer and more in control of their lives following abuse<sup>9</sup>” and “most victims and survivors from minoritised communities want to receive support delivered ‘by and for’ their own community<sup>10</sup>”.

Despite this, evidence from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s mapping report also found a “patchwork of provision” across England and Wales, with minoritised victims and survivors finding it particularly difficult to access the specialist support they wanted<sup>11</sup>. Overall, not only are there a range of systemic barriers in accessing safe and effective support from generic services, the specialist by-and-for services that seek to overcome these barriers are limited – compounding issues for victim-survivors from racialised communities seeking to access support, with additional barriers on top of this for those seeking support for honour-based abuse. Many of these barriers can also be applied to those seeking support to change their behaviour from perpetrator services, which in turn impacts victim-survivors. As outlined in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Patchwork of Provision Policy Report, “only 7% of victims and survivors who wanted their perpetrator to receive support to change their behaviour were able to get it”<sup>12</sup>.

## **Challenges faced by services**

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<sup>8</sup> <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC\\_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors\\_Summary-Report\\_Nov-2022\\_FA.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors_Summary-Report_Nov-2022_FA.pdf) Page 3

<sup>10</sup> [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC\\_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors\\_Summary-Report\\_Nov-2022\\_FA.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors_Summary-Report_Nov-2022_FA.pdf) Page 5

<sup>11</sup> [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC\\_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors\\_Summary-Report\\_Nov-2022\\_FA.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors_Summary-Report_Nov-2022_FA.pdf) Page 9

<sup>12</sup> [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC\\_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors\\_Long-Policy-Report\\_Nov2022\\_FA.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC_Mapping-Abuse-Suivivors_Long-Policy-Report_Nov2022_FA.pdf) Page 2

Similar to the challenges that face victim-survivors in accessing support, lack of cultural competency training across generic services and lack of by-and-for specialist service provision creates a barrier to delivering effective behaviour change interventions for those who cause harm and effective support for victim-survivors. As outlined in the findings of a review conducted by the Drive Partnership's National Systems Change team, cultural competency is crucial to maximising engagement of perpetrator intervention service users, and thus increasing the effectiveness of domestic abuse interventions and the safety of victim-survivors. For example, it is important to be aware of the negative connotations associated with the word 'perpetrator' and its link to the over criminalisation of racialised people – it is essential to be “mindful and purposeful about impact of terminology and whether it creates additional barriers for racialised communities”<sup>13</sup>.

Responses to those causing harm must also be culturally competent to ensure that victim-survivors, their family and/or wider community are not at increased risk of harm from both the perpetrator and/or services due to systematic racism<sup>14</sup>. While there is a growing evidence base around perpetrator interventions, there is a gap with regard to culturally appropriate responses for people from racialised communities. This, in turn, impacts the effectiveness of both victim-survivor and perpetrator services to improve the safety of victim-survivors – including those who have experienced or continue to experience honour-based abuse.

### **How could those challenges be mitigated or overcome?**

#### **Increased engagement with and sustainable funding for specialist by-and-for organisations**

To begin overcoming many of the barriers faced by victim-survivors in accessing support and both victim-survivor and perpetrator services in giving support, there must be increased engagement with and sustainable funding for specialist by-and-for organisations. To both aid and progress this aim, there must also be authentic partnerships across the sector between larger, well-funded organisations that can utilise their position to advance and amplify the work of smaller by-and-for services.

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<sup>13</sup> [CTA-briefing-responding-effectively-for-racialised-communities.pdf \(driveproject.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [CTA-briefing-responding-effectively-for-racialised-communities.pdf \(driveproject.org.uk\)](#)

From the Drive Partnership's initial conversations with by-and-for organisations on what an equitable and reciprocal partnership would look like, key themes included:

- Recognising the power dynamics prevalent in existing partnerships – many organisations have to partner to survive, which can be taken advantage of.
- Recognising the limited back-office capacity that many by-and-for organisations have as a result of disproportionate underfunding – this may mean stepping into provide that support when appropriate or ensuring there is flexibility on timelines.
- Building on the above, it is essential that by-and-for organisations receive unrestricted funding to ensure that they can finance what they need and what will be most effective for the organisation, rather than limiting funding to specific roles or workstreams.
- Supporting by-and-for organisations to have 'a seat at the table'. Many by-and-for organisations will have limited reach into funders and commissioners – it should be the duty of larger, generic organisations partnering with by-and-for organisations to amplify and highlight work led and delivered by them, and to support the shifting of power in commissioning spaces.

### **Increased focus on cultural competency across services**

There must also be increased cultural competency in domestic abuse interventions across both victim-survivor and perpetrator services. This will not only enable service users of both victim-survivor and perpetrator services to engage effectively but will also equip professionals with the skills and confidence to recognise honour-based abuse and challenge it. As outlined in Karma Nirvana's response to the Women and Equalities Committee's inquiry into so-called honour-based abuse, "Honour Based Abuse is frequently misunderstood, misidentified and placed in a 'cultural cul-de-sac', whereby victims affected are conditioned to normalise abuse in the name of 'culture,' and professionals responding tread carefully with excessive 'cultural sensitivity'<sup>15</sup>." To recognise and effectively challenge domestic abuse, perpetrator services must work *with* the cultural and faith backgrounds of their service users *and*

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<sup>15</sup> Karma Nirvana Written Evidence Summary - Call for Evidence on Honour Based Abuse 2022

still hold them accountable for their actions. This means exploring patriarchal community values which restrict not only women's but men's freedoms, and exploring service users' experiences as a racialised minority, their religious and spiritual beliefs, and if relevant, their immigration experiences and the trauma and responsibilities attached to this.

From the Drive Partnership's focus groups on what cultural competency in perpetrator interventions looks like in practice, key themes included:

- Knowledge: being knowledgeable of your local client group, their cultural background, power dynamics and local community organisations associated with them.
- Diversity: having a targeted approach to recruitment and diversity.
- Outcomes: recognising and respecting differences in desired outcomes – some victim-survivors may have a strong desire to stay with their partner long-term – and balancing this with risk-management.
- Reflection: being reflective and accountable – including through strong data collection and practice discussion.
- Power dynamics: challenging power dynamics, discrimination and bias internally, from partners and through referral routes.
- Rights: recognising that holding communities at a lower standard with regards to women's and children's rights is in itself a form of racism.
- Confidence: being confident – feeling you can genuinely support the service user you're working with.
- Equity: working in equitable and reciprocal partnerships with communities and by-and-for organisations, taking into account the unique challenges that by-and-for organisations face, such as disproportionate underfunding, and actively seeking to challenge discriminatory power structures.

Importantly, cultural competency should be seen as a journey rather than an end-point, and honour-based abuse should be encapsulated within it, rather than being

the extent of it; to avoid conflating the vast and varied experiences of domestic abuse across different groups.

### **Increased focus on improving responses to those who cause harm**

Alongside an increased focus on cultural competency in existing services and increased engagement with and funding for specialist by-and-for organisations, there must also be a broader expansion of focus to include those who cause harm through honour-based abuse. The responsibility of domestic abuse is often placed on the victim-survivor rather than the person causing harm – this sense of responsibility is further entrenched within honour-based abuse, in which the abuse itself is tied to the expectations of an individual's responsibility to uphold 'honour'. Working with those who cause harm and challenging them to change their behaviour is effective, and it is the only way to stop domestic abuse for good. As outlined in a three-year independent study by the University of Bristol, the Drive Project – the Drive Partnership's behaviour change intervention for high-risk, high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse – was found to reduce the use of physical abuse, sexual abuse, harassment, stalking and jealous and controlling behaviour in over 70% of 500 cases<sup>16</sup>

To increase the safety of victim-survivors of honour-based abuse and stop honour-based abuse for good, there must be an increased focus on challenging those who cause harm to change their behaviour through culturally competent interventions and culturally specific services led by by-and-for organisations.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/DriveYear3\\_UoBEvaluationReport\\_Final.pdf](http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/DriveYear3_UoBEvaluationReport_Final.pdf)