

## APPENDIX E

Notes on comments provided in evidence re.

*Where there are cultural pressures for forced marriage, are there any initiatives being undertaken to change the culture, targeting community influencers?*

**Liz Rowbotham - NHS Leicestershire County & Rutland**

No particular initiatives. Policies and procedures are in place to try and prevent Forced Marriage.

**Detective Inspector Peter Williams, Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Adults Coordinator, Leicestershire Constabulary.**

The police have met with community/religious leaders and almost invariably they say that HBV&FM is wrong and is forbidden within their religion. However there is no way of knowing if they make this clear to their constituents and whether or not they are the right people to be talking to. More often than not such “leaders” are self appointed and those that attend such meetings tend to be progressive and support Human Rights. They also tend to be the English speakers. In some HBCs the religious leaders do not speak English, so that involving them in such initiatives is very difficult. These may well be the more influential figures in the community. New ways of addressing the relevant communities need to be found.

It has to be appreciated that within HBCs there are many incentives, in both financial and prestige terms, for families to conform with “Honour System” norms.

**Noel Singh, Policy and Partnerships Team, County Hall**

Leicester Council of Faiths has shown no appetite for addressing the issue, preferring to keep to “comfortable” topics. Leicestershire Inter Faith Forum and Loughborough Council of Faiths have both been prepared to address the issue and are much more open bodies.

**Natasha Rattu, Karma Nirvana, Leeds**

HBC Communities have very strongly engrained traditional views. It is very difficult to change hearts and minds and there are no programmes in place to try and change the culture. If community and religious leaders could be persuaded to sponsor programmes, with key influencers in the communities, this might make a difference over time. However, whilst accepting that the practices of HBC communities are wrong in private (and forbidden by their religion), such leaders do not appear to have any appetite for proclaiming this within their communities.

Women are often the “gatekeepers” for the culture, and whilst suffering the most from its effects, are responsible for its maintenance. If such women could be reached and convinced of the need for change, this would make a big difference. However this may be impossible and the best chance to change the culture is through the education of children. It is essential that abusive customs are not

passed down through the generations. For this, children need positive education in choice, understanding that coercing people into doing things against their will is WRONG. Children are often living “double” lives, free at school and strictly controlled at home. We need ways of getting HBCs to mix with wider society and to promote zero toleration for HBV within these communities.

**Walter McCulloch, Assistant Director for Children's Services  
Chris Nerini, Head of Service, Extended Services and Family Support  
Leicestershire County Council**

CYPS react when the Police raise an issue and this generally only relates to individuals. This might be a role for the Leicestershire & Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board in taking forward a proactive programme to try and ensure that the whole population is aware of the possible problem and knows what to do if they identify a potential problem. The County could consider drawing the matter to the attention of the chair of the Board and suggest that it might bring this to the attention of religious leaders, community influencers, school governors, teachers and pupils.

The issue has been raised at a local seminar for lawyers who deal with the immigrant community originating from the Indian sub-continent.

*Ed. note The LSCB Annual Report for the year 2009-2010 and the Business Plan for 2010-2011 do not appear to make any reference to Honour Base Violence or Forced Marriages.*

**HREC Meeting**

To change the culture we need to change young people and get the community/religious leaders “on side”. It is an issue for the community. Many in the community don't like the “Honour” customs but don't know how to change them. Some hide behind the description of “Arranged Marriages” when emotional pressure has in fact been brought to bear.

It was suggested that getting community groups (particularly women) to discuss the issue might be a way of tackling the problem, since most would regard it as wrong, but still felt pressure to comply with community norms that go unchallenged.

Suggested that details about how to ask for help could be included in school homework diaries and on posters. However children will always be reluctant to report concerns since it could cause trouble for their family.