

APPENDIX G

Notes on comments provided in evidence re.

Do we know the number of “religious marriages” taking place? Are any of these relating to marriages where a partner could be below the age of consent? Is there a programme to get the agreement of religious leaders that religious marriages should only take place after a civil ceremony to ensure that both partners have the full protection of marriage law?

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

The police have no data on this, although where a civil marriage is involved, the registrar will look out for any indication that there may be undue pressure on a partner to agree. If they are not happy that both parties are freely consenting they will then intervene and refuse to progress the wedding. It would probably be helpful if religious leaders would only agree to take forward religious marriage ceremonies after the civil registration of a marriage.

Natasha Rattu, Karma Nirvana, Leeds

HN have no data on this. Whilst a Muslim (Nikah) and Hindu Marriage require separate civil registration in the UK, where they take place in a Commonwealth country, such as Pakistan, they are recognised by English Law. One area where progress has been made is that the person taking the religious marriage will now often speak to the couple, without the family being present, to check that they are willing participants.

HREC Meeting

No statistics. Whilst most of the well established places of worship are now insisting on proof of a civil ceremony before they will take forward a religious marriage, there are still a number of communities where no checks take place and where people born and educated in the UK enter into a religious marriage only, without realising that this has no status in law.