



26th August 2025

MEDIA STATEMENT

MWNUK calls for inclusive consultation on any legal definition of honour-based abuse

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) welcomes the government's announcement to introduce a new legal definition of honour-based abuse and its commitment to strengthen measures to tackle this issue. However, we strongly urge the government to hold an inclusive consultation process before finalising the definition.

MWNUK CEO, Baroness Shaista Gohir, said: *"Honour-based abuse is complex, deeply rooted in cultural and social dynamics, and affects diverse communities in different ways. Survivors, grassroots / specialist organisations and frontline professionals, must have the opportunity to shape this definition and the accompanying guidance. Without their voices, we risk creating a framework that fails to reflect the lived realities of those most affected. I urge the government to launch a formal consultation to ensure this critical policy change is informed, inclusive, and effective."*

We also wish to highlight a recurring concern: Ministers in successive governments have often prioritised issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so-called 'honour' crimes when addressing violence against minority ethnic women. While these are serious concerns and must be tackled, they are not the primary forms of abuse experienced by Black, Asian, and minority ethnic women and girls.

The primary reason for women contacting the Muslim Women's Network Helpline (as well as other helplines across the country) is because of types of domestic abuse such as psychological abuse, physical abuse (including (non-fatal strangulation), sexual violence, coercive control, and financial abuse. Tragically, the overwhelming majority of women from these communities who are killed lose their lives as a result of domestic violence. Despite clear evidence showing higher rates of domestic homicide among minority ethnic women, these issues continue to receive far less public acknowledgement and political attention from successive governments. This lack of prioritisation is deeply disappointing, particularly given that we have repeatedly raised these concerns.

The latest Home Office report (Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme – Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides 2020–2024, Year 4 Report, March 2025) reveals a deeply concerning trend: minoritised women—particularly Black women—remain overrepresented in domestic homicide cases, and the rates are rising. Although these communities make up only 18% of the population, they now account for 24% of domestic homicides, up from 22% previously.

These persistently high and increasing rates are not coincidental—they reflect a systemic failure. Government action and resources have not adequately addressed the underlying causes or implemented targeted interventions. Continuing to overlook this reality is a form of discrimination. Any new government VAWG strategy must confront these disparities head-on, focusing on understanding the root causes and delivering effective, evidence-based solutions to prevent further harm which must include funding specialist by and for organisations.

Victims of an form of abuse can contact Muslim Women's Network Helpline on 0800 999 5786 / info@mwnhelpline.co.uk or via the Amal Safety Mobile iPhone App

Additional Information

- Media enquiries can be directed to: contact@mwnuk.co.uk or 0121 2369000
- Muslim Women's Network UK is a national charity: <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>
- Muslim Women's Network Helpline: <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>