‘Honour Crime': 11,000 UK Cases Recorded in Five Years

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More than 11,000 cases of so-called honour crime were recorded by UK police forces from 2010-14, new figures show.

The Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, which obtained the data, called for a national strategy for police, courts and schools to follow.

The crimes are usually aimed at women, and can include abductions, beatings and even murders.

Commander Mak Chishty, head of police policy on the issue, said there was now a better understanding of the problem.

So-called honour crimes are acts which have been committed to protect or defend the supposed honour or reputation of a family and community.

## 'Crimes unreported'

The figures revealed 11,744 incidences of these crimes between 2010 and 2014, consisting of data from 39 out of 52 police forces in the UK. They included forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

The Metropolitan Police recorded the highest number of incidents at 2,188, followed by West Midlands Police with 1,269 and Bedfordshire Police with 1,106 examples recorded.

South Yorkshire had 1,009 unconfirmed incidents in 2014 alone while Lancashire Police had 1,049.

Diana Nammi, director of the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation - a charity that provides support to Middle Eastern women living in the UK who are facing "honour" violence - said the figures suggested incidence of the crime remained "consistently high" in the UK and that the issue was "not going away".

She said: "Unfortunately they [the figures] do not show the real extent of the problem. So many crimes are unreported because the perpetrators are often the victim's own family.

"We need a national strategy for all agencies - including police forces, courts, and schools - to be trained and to work together to end this problem."

## Anisa's story

Anisa - not her real name - is a British Asian woman in her early 20s.

She has been staying in one of only a handful of safe houses in the UK just for Asian women, run by the charity Hestia, to protect her from her parents.

She says they believe she has shamed and dishonoured her family by leaving her abusive husband.

"My husband would beat me at least twice a week. If he wasn't strangling me, he was punching me and slapping me. My parents knew what was going on and they let it happen," Anisa said.

"When I ran away from my husband, my parents threatened to kill me if I didn't go back. They see it as a big dishonour, like I've slated the family name.

"I'm really scared they are going to find me and force me to go back, and if I refuse, they will kill me," she added.

## 'Better understanding'

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is carrying out its first review into police handling of these crimes this summer, saying the issue remains "largely under the radar of most agencies, including the police".

Commander Chishty said: "There have been huge failings and we are sorry about those cases."

"I think we're in a better place because of our training given to all officers - our understanding is better. Honour-based violence is no longer a fringe issue.

"I think if we work hard enough at it together, we can start to eradicate this," he added.