



Recommendations on future work on forced marriage and so-called 'honour' crime

December 2008

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE WORK ON FORCED MARRIAGE AND SO-CALLED 'HONOUR' CRIME

1. The report on the pilots on forced marriage and so-called 'honour' crime provided useful information to:
 - Identify the number and pattern of cases
 - Identify issues facing prosecutors in accurately identifying, managing and prosecuting these cases
 - Inform the development of any national guidance and training for prosecutors which we expect will, in the longer term, reduce risk and increase support for victims.

2. This report draws on the findings outlined in the pilot report to develop proposals for future work within the Crown Prosecution Service. It focuses on recommendations for implementation from April 2009 onwards in respect of:
 - Prosecution of cases
 - Support for victims and witnesses
 - Future flagging of cases.

3. **Recommendations in relation to the prosecution of cases:**
 - 3.1 The pilot report indicated that the selection of specialist prosecutors, provision of prosecution guidance, flagging guidance and training helped the confidence of prosecutors in identifying and prosecuting cases. Trained prosecutors indicated more confidence in identifying and prosecuting cases, awareness of local agencies and advising other colleagues.

 - 3.2 The report also indicated future improvements, from which the following recommendations have been developed:
 - Prosecution guidance:**
 - (i) The prosecution guidance should be revised to address the issues raised in the pilot report
 - (ii) An aide-memoire on the prosecution of forced marriage and so-called 'honour' crimes should be developed.
 - Specialist prosecutors and leads:**
 - (iii) Consideration should be given to the selection of specialist prosecutors within Areas or groups on a priority Area basis
 - (iv) Consideration should be given to the setting up of forced marriage/so-called 'honour' crime lead advisors at a national level and networks of prosecutors to support and advise in these cases.
 - Shared good practice:**
 - (v) Consideration should be given to developing a portfolio of good practice case studies for use of prosecutors.
 - Training:**
 - (vi) Consideration should be given to the development of mandatory training for any selected prosecutors, with external speakers.

Multi-agency work:

(vii) Consideration should be given to working across the criminal justice system, especially with the police to progress improved prosecutions nationally

Expert witnesses:

(viii) Consideration should be given to the setting up a forced marriage/so-called 'honour' crimes witness familiarisation programme to develop expert witnesses on these crimes, as part of ongoing work around expert witnesses.

4. Recommendations in relation to support for victims

4.1 The pilot report indicated victim and witness difficulties were responsible for the majority of unsuccessful outcomes, indicating a need to address specific support systems for victims.

4.2 The report also indicated future improvements, from which the following recommendations have been developed:

(i) Work should be undertaken nationally and locally with community organisations to identify support services across CPS

(ii) Multi-agency work should be undertaken with other statutory agencies and community groups to ensure provision of support for victims

(iii) Work should be undertaken with the Victim and Witness Care Delivery Unit to provide information on specialist support services to Witness Care Units and address improvements in victim data quality and collection

(iv) Areas should consider further community engagement to raise awareness and build community confidence.

5. Recommendations in relation to flagging of cases

5.1 The pilot report illustrated the use of flagging to help identify cases and information on the profile of cases and identified flagging improvements needed.

5.2 It is therefore recommended that:

(i) Work should be undertaken across CPS to improve defendant profile flagging, especially in relation to religion and disability and all victim equality profile flagging of cases

(ii) Flagging of forced marriage and so-called 'honour' crimes should be rolled out across CPS for any cases prosecuted

(ii) Consideration should be given to the checking of flagging locally

(iii) Revised guidance on flagging cases should be developed to ensure more accurate monitoring of cases that fall within and outside the government-wide domestic violence definition.