

HPSP: Harmful Practices Strategic Partnership

February Conference : Invisible Victims: Children and Harmful Practices

#InvisibleVictims #ChildrenAndHarmfulPractices #InvisibleNoMore

Coordinated by Coaction Hub Project



Making of HPSP

It initially came
out of
discussions

Ensuring work
was not
happening in
silos

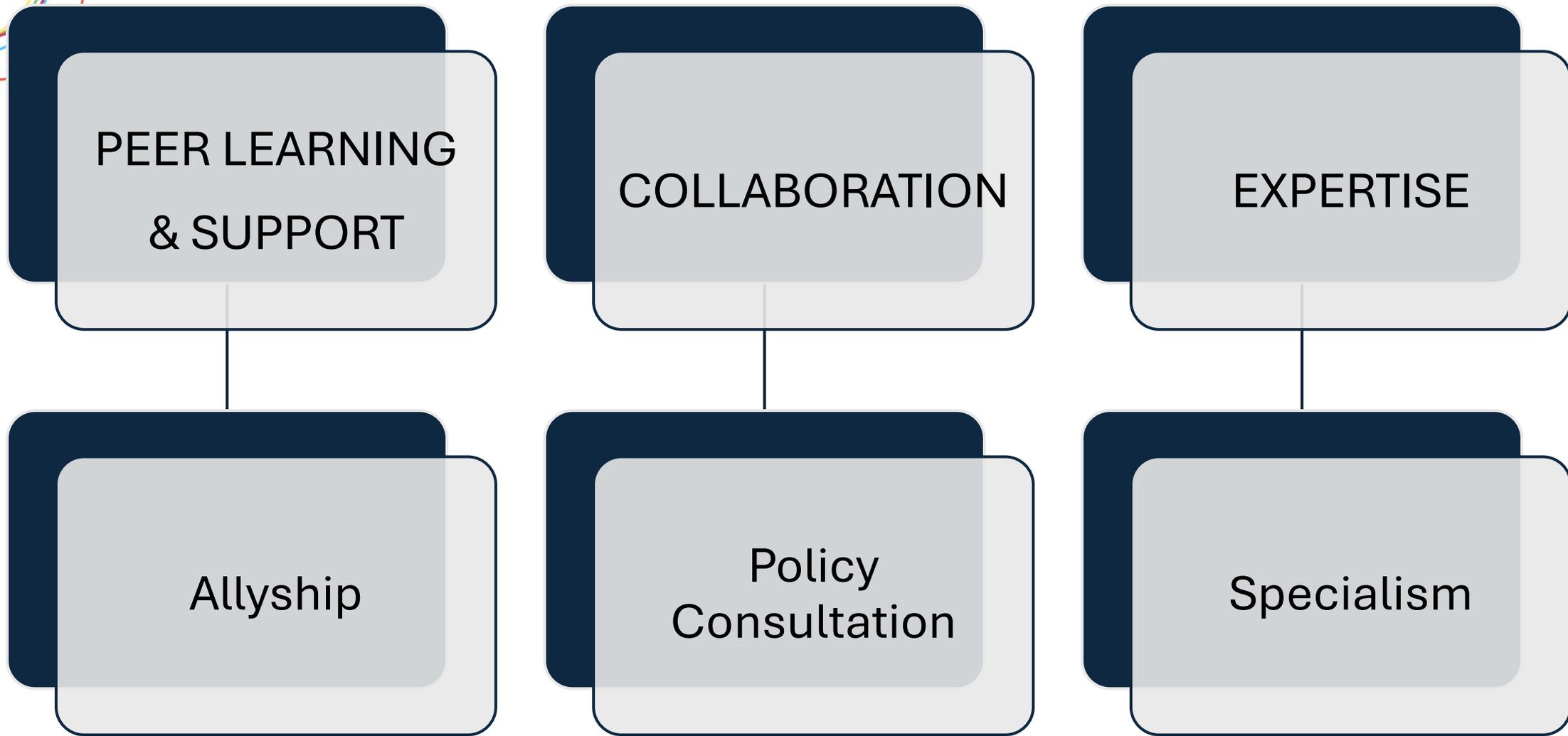
Acknowledge our
Co-founders



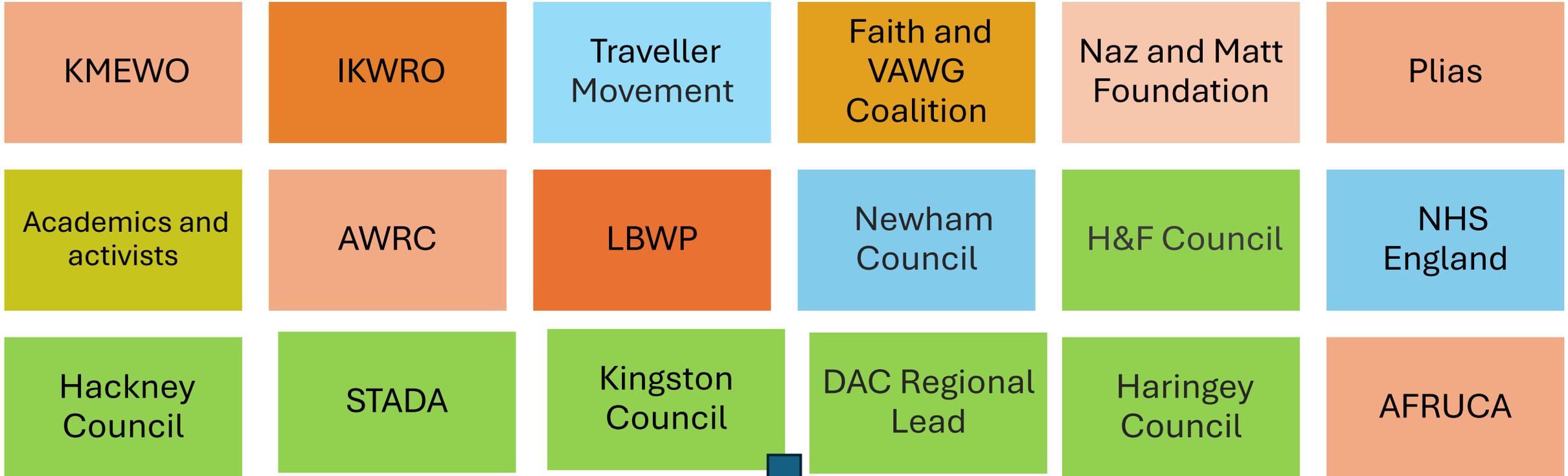


HPSP

Harmful Practice Strategic Partnership



HPSP Partners



Coordinated by Coaction Hub:
AWRC in partnership with **STADA**



Invisible Victims: Children and Harmful Practices

- Keynote Speaker- Dame Nicole Jacobs- Domestic Abuse Commissioner: Babies , Children and Young Persons Policy to be launched in April
- Presentations and Panel discussions – Gaps, Responses & Good Practice – participation of activists, specialist organisations, academics and VAWG sector



Key Themes:

- Safeguarding : Ensuring Every Child is seen and heard
- Child Centered Intervention & Child Specific Support
- Working Together
- Policy Implementation
- Survivors Centred - in policies and practices
- Children –LGBTQ+
- Education, Training and cultural competency
- Investing in VAWG and specialist organisations
- Work within faith institutions



Invisible Victims: Children and Harmful Practices- What has changed?



Harmful Practices

- 'Honour' Based Abuse
- Spiritual Abuse
- Forced Marriage
- Caste Based Abuse
- Dowry Related Abuse
- Reproductive Coercion
- Child Marriage
- Witchcraft
- FGM
- Virginty Testing & Hymenoplasty
- 'Corrective' Rape

Multiple Perpetrators

Requires holistic Response





AWRC- Who We Are

- **AWRC is a specialist organisation providing linguistically and culturally sensitive services to Black, Minority, Ethnic (BME) women and their children across London.**
- **AWRC has been supporting women and their children since 1980. We practice an open-door policy and support all women in need**
- **It is our aim to prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) including domestic abuse and harmful practices.**
- **We assist in helping women and children to receive essential, practical and emotional support so that they can re-build their lives.**

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

- ❖ **Specialised domestic abuse support – 1:1 intensive casework and advocacy support**
- ❖ **Advice and information support for housing, welfare, benefits and employment**
- ❖ **Support groups**
- ❖ **Activities for the local community – Brent, Barnet, Ealing, Harrow and online services covering all boroughs**
- ❖ **Signposting and referrals to counselling, immigration family law solicitor and other identified suitable services**
- ❖ **Workshops on rights and entitlements, health and employment.**
- ❖ **Training to frontline professionals on harmful practices, including so called 'Honour' Based Abuse and forced marriage**

HPIDVA Course – Applications Open!!

- ❖ The Harmful Practice Advocate (HPA) Programme is a pioneering initiative developed by the AWRC to equip practitioners with specialised knowledge and skills around harmful practices.
- ❖ For more info email us on: training@awrc.org.uk

Harmful Practices : ‘Honour’ Based Abuse

- **Coercive Control**
- **Honour-Based Abuse (HBA) is used to control a person’s behaviour, choices, and autonomy to protect this perceived honour.**
- **Victim living within an honour system is bound by strict, often unwritten rules aimed at preserving family honour within the community.**

Harmful Practices : 'Honour' Based Abuse

- Victim made to feel personally responsible for upholding family honour and are blamed if they are seen to have brought 'shame'.
- Research suggests at least one 'honour' killing occurs in the UK every month- however, this is just the tip of an iceberg.
- *HBA does not discriminate on race, religion, or culture. These hidden crimes can affect people from all communities*

Harmful Practices : 'Honour' Based Abuse

- HPSP with permission from Karma Nirvana Charity would like you to watch this link to a powerful animation
- Link to the video :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pXI5FBL564>
- The animation demonstrates how harmful practices can impact children from a young age and sheds light on the barriers survivors encounter, Honour-Based Abuse is not a cultural tradition or religious practice - it is abuse. With the right support, survivors can rebuild their lives and find hope free from deep-rooted beliefs.

Terminology Within Different Communities

Shame

Gunah
(Kurdish)

Scandal

Kavod(Hebrew)

Honour

Sharam (Hindi,
Urdu–South
Asian)

Namus
(Arabic)

Sharaf (Arabic)

Izaat/ Izaah
(Urdu,Hindi,
Punjabi)



Children and Harmful Practices



'Honour' Based Abuse Definition

An incident or pattern of violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion, control or abuse (including but not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, economic, spiritual, faith-related or emotional abuse) motivated by the perpetrator's perception that an individual has shamed, or may shame, the perpetrator, the family, or community or has otherwise broken, or may break, the perceived norms of the community's accepted behaviours, including by speaking out about the abuse and where the perception of shame may also prevent a victim from accessing support or help.

(Karma Nirvana Definition)



What is 'Honour' Based Abuse?

Banaz Mazmood

HBV Policing policy
integrated by
Metropolitan Police



Individuals trying to break away from constraining 'norms' of behaviour that their family or community are imposing.

Individuals and communities may not explicitly use the term 'honour' and other words used may include 'shame', 'respect', 'reputation', 'izzat', 'disgrace', 'sharaf' and 'sharam'.

misguided notion about honour and dishonourable

Women and girls make up the majority of victims, but men and boys can also be at risk

Karma Nirvana & HPSP campaigning for statutory definition

Motives behind Honour Based

- Pregnancy
- Relationship outside marriage or community
- Westernized
- Loss of Virginity
- Inappropriate make-up or dress
- Leaving abusive marriage
- Divorce
- Homosexuality
- Dresses/ make up
- Weaponisation of culture and faith



WARNING SIGNS & INDICATORS

- Self-harm, depression, attempted suicide, eating disorders
- Restriction in movement, e.g., not allowed to see friends or have a job
- Truancing from school. Running away from home. Individuals always being chaperoned by family members/ spouse
- Isolation including lack of friends, access to phones or internet
Lack of access to documents such as passport
- Substance misuse
- Having siblings who were forced to marry
- Arrangements to be taken out of the country at short notice, sometimes due to reported family illness



HPSP Factsheet on HBA -Dos

- Follow the ONE Chance rule – this may be the only opportunity you have to speak to the victim. Ensure that you see the client alone.
- Use interpreting services to communicate with client if needed.
- Be trauma informed in approach and be led by survivors as they are experts by experience.
- Take them seriously and be patient in understanding the dynamics of power and risks. Consider that there may be multiple perpetrators.
- Listen to what the victim wants to happen and be honest if you will need to break their confidentiality (e.g., if a child is at risk). Establish safe means of contact. Offer specialist support



HPSP Factsheet on HBA

- Be extremely careful how information is recorded and shielded within your organisation.
- If under 18, follow child safeguarding procedures.
- If over 18, follow adult safeguarding procedures. If over 16 consider a MARAC referral.
- ALWAYS REMEMBER – IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999.

DON'T:

- Attempt to mediate.
- Send them away. Let the family, community or social network know about the disclosure.
- Meet in a place where you could be seen by a member of the family/ community. Use members of the family or community to interpret.
- Underestimate the perpetrator/s of harmful practices Underestimate the risk even if there are no previous reports

Child Marriage

Understanding the law

Nazira Mehmari

**Operational
Manager**



IKWRO - Women's Rights Organisation

- Registered charity established in 2002
- Provides holistic advice & intensive case work for women and girls at risk of all forms of “honour” based abuse, forced & child marriage, female genital mutilation and domestic abuse
- Provides counselling in Farsi, Dari, Kurdish, Arabic and English
- Provides training for professionals, women-only groups and communities, to raise awareness of the above issues
- Established First Middle Eastern refuge
- Campaigns to improve laws and policies and for women’s rights & equality

IKWRO's holistic work to tackle child marriage

1.Raise awareness about the dangers of child marriage, which include abuse, limited education, and health risks.

2.Campaign for legal reforms and the enforcement of laws against child marriage.

3.Provide support services and guidance to survivors and those at risk of child marriage.

4.Promote education and community outreach to change cultural norms and practices that perpetuate child marriage.

Through these initiatives, IKWRO supports girls into a safer and more independent future.



IKWRO led a decade-long campaign to introduce new law to help end child marriage, driven by our experience of supporting children at risk.

Why new child marriage law was needed

- The evidence is clear that child marriage is often associated with leaving education early, limited career and vocational opportunities, serious physical and mental health problems, developmental difficulties for the children born to young mothers, and an increased risk of domestic abuse.
- IKWRO had helped introduce **the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007** which has had a major impact.
- However, we saw that it did not go far enough to protect children from being coerced into marriage as we recognise how difficult it is for children to speak out against their own family and community.
- We were able to show that our domestic law was not in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals require all countries to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations by 2030
- We needed new law protecting all children and adolescents under the age of 18 from child marriage. This would help prevention and safeguarding



Watch Payzee Mahmood's TEDx Talk:
A Survivor's Plea to End Child Marriage

https://youtu.be/GkH0jZPLB5M?si=VJ7A1CsCx6_VISO2

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act

- Came into force 27 February 2023
- Under the legislation - a child is a person who is aged under 18 years
- A criminal offence to exploit vulnerable children by arranging for them to marry, under any circumstances, whether or not force is used
- Applies to ALL types of marriage, whether legally recognised or not . It includes religious/ customary marriage
- Applies to civil partnerships
- Children aged 16 or 17 can no longer marry with parental consent
- Applies to England and Wales and does not change the age of marriage in Scotland or Northern Ireland as marriage is a devolved matter. We hope to see changes to the law in these parts of the UK
- However includes marriages / civil partnerships overseas/ Scotland or Northern Ireland, where one of the parties is domiciled in England and Wales
- Carries sentence of up to 7 years in prison

Consider all relevant legislation

Including:

Children Act 1989: This Act ensures the welfare of children is a primary consideration in all decisions made by public authorities, including those concerning marriage. It allows for intervention in cases where a child's best interests are at risk.

Consider Forced Marriage Protection Orders, which can be applied for by:

- The person who is to be protected (including under 18-year-olds)
- A Relevant Third Party (RTP) who is a person or organisation appointed by the Lord Chancellor. Currently, only local authorities have been classified as RTPs
- Any other person with permission of the court for example, police, a teacher, a friend, a family member or healthcare professional.

Warning signs

- **Education:** absence, extended leave of absence, fear about forthcoming holidays, surveillance, decline in behaviour, sudden announcement engagement, prevented from going into further education.
- **Employment:** poor performance, not allowed to work, financial control, leaving work accompanied, no flexibility in working arrangements.
- **Family history:** Siblings forced to get married, self-harm/suicide of siblings, family disputes, running away from home, unreasonable restrictions

Warning signs - continued

- **Health:** Being accompanied to doctors, depression/isolation, self harm, attempted suicide, substance misuse, early/unwanted pregnancy, FGM.
- **Police:** victim or siblings reported missing, DV, harassment, threats, rape, kidnap, victim reported for offences, acid attacks.

Barriers to seeking protection

- Fear of dishonouring family, being ostracised by friends and the community, being disowned
- Fear of losing children, family and friends
- Feelings of guilt, shame and self-blame
- Constant control by the family (one chance rule)
- Fear of lack of confidentiality /sharing information with family
- Poor perception of police and other agencies able to help
- Lack of resources including safe accommodation
- Language barriers
- Lack of recourse to public funds
- Immigration status
- Fear of being found after leaving

Do NOT

- Attempt to mediate
- Allow yourself to be affected by your perceptions of cultural difference – remain professional
- Be judgmental
- Dismiss their fears, and NEVER send them back into harmful environments
- Use family members as interpreters
- Approach family or community leaders
- Underestimate the perpetrator/s of HBV

THERE MAY ONLY BE ONE CHANCE TO HELP

IKWRO - Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

0207 920 6460 (9.30am - 5.00pm)

07846 275 246 (Arabic/Kurdish)

07846 310 157 (Farsi/Dari)

www.ikwro.org.uk

Nazira.mehmari@ikwro.org.uk



@IKWRO

Useful Local Agencies

- **Al-Hasaniya**: support women and girls experiencing domestic or sexual violence and harmful practices across Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea, contact no: **0203 048 4488**
- **Midaye**: H&F, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster Email: contact@midaye.org.uk, contact no : **07593440944**
- **Asian Women's Resource Centre** - Brent, Barnet, Kensington & Chelsea, Richmond & Harrow Email: info@awrc.org.uk contact no: **020 8961 6549**
- **Phoenix (P&ACT) Project at PLIAS Resettlement** - Barnet, Brent, H&F, Harrow & Ealing, contact No : **07494 091586 or 0208 838 6800**
- **ADVANCE DA Service** : 0800 059 0108, email: angelou@advancecharity.org.uk
- **Childline**: **0800 11 11**
- **Women's and Girls Network**: contact no: **0208 583 2336**



Useful Agencies

- **Men Advice Line:** 0808 8010327
- **Childline:** 0800 11 11
- **Women's and Girls Network:** 0208 583 2336
- **Karma Nirvana:** 0800 5999 247
- **Sikh Women's Aid:** 0333 090 1220
- **Muslim Women's Network Helpline:** 0800 999 5786
- **Jewish Women's Aid Helpline:** 0808 801 0500
- **The Traveller Movement:** 0754 1637 795
- **Latin American Women's Aid:** 02072750321



Useful Agencies

- **National Galop**: 0800 999 5428
- **FMU**: 020 7008 0151 email: fmu@fco.gov.uk



Thank You

➤ **Any Questions?**

