



IRANIAN & KURDISH WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATION

COUNTRY REPORT – UNITED KINGDOM

21/12/2011

**IRANIAN & KURDISH WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATION – IKWRO
COUNTRY REPORT**

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1. Background

The definition of violence against women and girls by professionals in UK takes different shapes from domestic violence to 'honour' based violence, forced marriages, female genital mutilation and sexual violence. Until recently 'honour' based violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation is also seen as part of domestic violence within the government strategy. Due to IWKRO's work on 'honour' based violence and forced marriage, in collaboration with some other women's organisations, the current government strategy of violence against women and girls recognises the difference between domestic violence and 'honour' based violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation. There is a tendency to label these three types of violence under 'harmful traditional practices' but there is some argument that this definition will not reveal full reasons behind these practices.

Whatever form and shape it takes, violence against women is a devastating crime that infringes the women's rights.

Perhaps one of the unique services that exist in UK is the Forced Marriage Unit(FMU) that is a joint initiative between Home Office and Foreign Commonwealth Office. FMU was set up in 2007 to tackle with the issues of forced marriage for British Citizens. In its two year action plan, FMU describes its objectives as below:

Strengthening safeguards in order to ensure that all victims of forced marriage receive sympathetic, effective and joined-up support from all relevant UK agencies.

To work towards eliminating forced marriage in the UK by challenging the practice before it takes place, through working with communities, victims and governments to overcome the culture of acceptance or of denial.

To achieve these objectives, FMU will undertake three key campaigns: i) Practitioner Response; ii) Community Response; and iii) International Response. Each campaign will have three key themes: prevention, protection and provision. Workstreams under these campaigns may be undertaken by the FMU directly; the FMU in partnership with other organisations; or through FMU support of other organisations.

Although the establishment of FMU was seen as a positive step in tackling the issues of forced marriage, there are still some issues that need to be resolved i.e. the cost of return flight for a girl who has been forced into a marriage overseas has to be met by the survivors. In some circumstances FMU can pay the cost but the survivors will have to pay back when they are in UK.

2. Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation

IKRWO was set up in 2002 by its Director, Diana Nammi with the help of a group of women who had come to the UK as refugees from Iran, Iraq and Kurdistan. We had identified the need for a service and came together to offer help and support to Persian and Kurdish Speaking women and young girls, mainly from Middle Eastern origin and particularly those at risk from domestic violence, forced marriages and 'Honour Killings' IKWRO became a formally constituted organisation in August 2002 and became a registered charity in July 2004.

Our key objectives are: to advance the education and training of Farsi and Kurdish speaking women, and to preserve and protect the physical and mental health of our target group.

The main outcomes that we wish to achieve are safer environments for women and their families, decreased isolation and increased independence for women and help them toward integration in the host society.

Currently IKWRO employs 14 members of staff who between them provides the services mentioned below:

- Physical and emotional support for women who are under the risk of honour killings, forced marriage and domestic violence.
- Support, advice, advocacy and referral for women suffering from violence against women.
- Advice and referral on Housing, Family issues, Welfares, Forced Marriage, “Honour Killings” and Domestic Violence.
- Help to access education and training.
- Help to access training on finding employment and support with job search
- Interpreting and translating for our clients
- Help with filling forms and applications
- Free counselling service in Farsi, Kurdish and English Language
- Campaigning to influence policy and procedures in UK and to change them in favour of ethnic minority women.
- Providing training for clients, community members and professionals on the issues of ‘honour’ based violence, forced marriages, and female genital mutilation to create awareness
- Social and recreational facilities

IKWRO have participated in many awareness seminars on the issues of “Honour Killings”, including several seminars that have been organised by Scotland Yard and the Home Office. IKWRO organised its first annual conference in 2003 in commemoration of all victims of “honour killings” including Heshu Yunes, a young woman who was the victim of an ‘Honour Killing’ in 2002. Since then we have been organising annual conferences every year to raise awareness about ‘honour’ killings. Latest conference we organised was an international conference held in November 2011.

IKWRO has become a well-known and trusted organisation and our work has been widely publicised through various means of media. We have managed to generate a great deal of media coverage, (National and International newspaper, TVs and Radios; e.g.: The Guardian, Observer, Evening standard, Sunday Times, Daily Mail, Big Issue, Eve Magazine, Women Own, Aftonboladet - Swedish, BBC1, BBC24, ITV, CNN, Channel 4, Sky News, Fox, Asian Radio, BBC radios, and many international media.)

Section 3: Relevant legislation & statistical data including campaigns

- Violence against women and girls

In November 2010 the government released its “Call to end violence against women and girls”, a strategic document which set out the coalition government’s plans to tackle violence against women and girls and which focussed on four areas: prevention, provision of services, partnership working and risk reduction. This document was followed in March 2011 with an action plan, which contained specific commitments detailing how the government planned to deliver its strategy. The first review of this action plan has just been published.

These documents are all available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

- 'Honour' Based Violence

In 2006 IKWRO began campaigning for improvements in the national HBV response following the death of 20 year-old Banaz Mahmod. Banaz, who was murdered on the orders of her father and uncle, had told police several times that her family were planning to kill her but she was not taken seriously.

Since Banaz's death there have been improvements in how HBV is dealt with. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) launched an HBV strategy in 2008, and HBV is now included in police risk assessments. It is also recognised in national policies including the government's Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Girls which was released in March 2011, and in the violence against women strategies of some local authorities.

However there are still significant gaps in the national HBV response, particularly around awareness among frontline staff in statutory bodies (a), data on the scale of HBV in the UK (b) and policies and practices within different branches of government which can pose problems for survivors of HBV (c). Underlying all of these gaps is a lack of focussed and consistent leadership (d).

a) Awareness among frontline staff in statutory bodies

Getting the right information to frontline staff in bodies such as the police, health and education providers and safeguarding children services is essential to ensure that they are able to identify and adequately protect victims of HBV. This was recognised by the ACPO HBV strategy in 2008 and more recently by the government's Call to end violence against women and girls, and the follow up action plan, which pledged that the government would "work on the development of learning programmes for the Police."

IKWRO continues to push for police training to be rolled out and we recently inputted into a new police training module on HBV, forced marriage and FGM. We also continue to raise the need for training for other professionals. Last December we inputted into a Home Office survey to assess the provision of services to deal with HBV at local level. The results have not yet been made public, but the Home Office's action plan pledges to review the findings and to "identify models of effective practice to share with local areas, particularly those where awareness and activity to tackle forms of HBV is low". In response IKWRO has argued that as well as sharing of best practice, targeted training on HBV must be provided to bodies which are failing to enable them to improve their HBV response.

b) Improved data collection

Until recently there was no national data on prevalence of HBV in the UK. In their 2008 HBV strategy the Association of Chief Police Officers pledged to ensure that all police forces were flagging incidents of HBV in their recording system, and promised to produce regular reports on the scale of the problem locally, but this has never happened. A figure of 12 honour killings per year has been repeatedly cited, but it is unclear where that number comes from, and it does not reflect the many other forms of HBV to which individuals are subjected.

In July 2011 IKWRO wrote to every police force in the UK and asked them for their data on HBV in their local areas. 39 of the UK's 52 police forces provided this data, revealing that in 2010 some 2823 incidents of HBV were recorded across the UK. We estimated that a further 500 incidents had probably been reported to police forces which did not provide data for the study, and we emphasised that as with other forms of violence against women and girls, the reported figures are only the tip of the iceberg.

Gathering and publicising this data has been worthwhile as it demonstrates that HBV is not a minor issue but something that affects thousands of people. The launch of our research was the top story on BBC News Channels and websites on 3 December and was reported across more than 30 mainstream UK and international media channels. At the same time there is a need for a more strategic approach to data collection on the national incidence of HBV and

in future it should be up to government and the police to collate and release this data. Moreover, it is vital that local and national strategies are responding to data and particularly to any new trends.

c) Ensuring that all government bodies are responding appropriately

Policy and practice within some government departments is also impeding the response to HBV. For example, many local authorities will only re-house a woman when she can show evidence of physical violence. In HBV cases threats, psychological violence and emotional abuse are often a precursor to murder, forced suicide or forced marriage. Where these forms of violence occur the victim should be moved immediately in order to ensure her safety. It is vital that the Department for Communities and Local Government actively address local level blocks as part of the cross-government response to HBV.

d) Leadership

There are individuals within the Violence and Youth Crime Prevention Unit and the Forced Marriage Unit whose portfolio includes work on HBV. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) also has dedicated staff in this area and has made significant progress since the introduction of their HBV strategy in 2008. However, the UK's HBV response would benefit from a more clearly defined leadership. IKWRO is calling for the introduction of an HBV Coordinator who could lead efforts on this area across different government departments.

- Forced Marriage

a) The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 and protection orders

At present forcing someone into marriage is not a crime in the UK, but it is a civil wrong under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007. Under this act, individuals can apply to the courts for a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO). An FMPO can be used to prevent a forced marriage from taking place and can protect those who have been forced into marriage from further abuse. It may include restrictions or requirements to protect a victim from their spouse, family or anyone else who has been involved in forcing or attempting to force them to marry and can relate to conduct occurring inside and outside the UK. Breach of an FMPO is not currently a criminal offence but will become one early next year.

In a recent report on forced marriage the Parliamentary Select Committee on Home Affairs expressed concern in relation to the inadequacies of FMPOs in terms of reducing the incidence of forced marriage, and highlighted problems in terms of monitoring FMPOs and addressing breaches of these.

b) Statutory guidance and failings by schools

Under statutory guidance pursuant to the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act, staff members in all public bodies have a legal duty to protect children and adults from forced marriage.

However the Home Affairs Committee's report into forced marriage found that most schools were still not making information about forced marriage available to pupils and were not providing pupils at risk with appropriate support, in line with their statutory obligations. The issue of children disappearing off the school register without any follow up being done was also raised.

The Committee wrote to the Education Minister about the poor response by schools, but the Minister responded that schools were aware of their obligations and that the Department for Education would not be communicating further with them on the issue of forced

marriage. However more recently the Committee's findings have been echoed by the government's own report on the implementation of the statutory guidance, and IKWRO and other agencies will be following this up.

At the same time the government has recently reviewed the curriculum for personal, social and health education in schools, and IKWRO has argued as part of this review that issues around sexual and marital consent, including forced marriage, should be taught in schools. We are currently awaiting an announcement of the review's outcomes.

c) Criminalisation of forced marriage

Forcing someone to marry is not a crime in the UK although perpetrators of forced marriage can be prosecuted for associated crimes, including abduction, rape, assault and threats to kill. The Home Affairs Select Committee recommended that the government should make forced marriage a criminal offence. As the committee's report states "it would send out a very clear and positive message to communities within the UK and internationally if it becomes a criminal act... the lack of a criminal sanction also sends a message, and currently that is a weaker message than we believe is needed". In October the Prime Minister responded with an announcement that the government was considering criminalising forced marriage, and a consultation on this is currently ongoing.

IKWRO supports criminalisation of forced marriage as we believe that it would act as a deterrent and would help to change attitudes within practising communities. At the same time we recognise that some women's organisations have concerns that making forced marriage a crime could reduce the protection available to victims. IKWRO advocates that the protections afforded by the Forced Marriage Act should be retained alongside any new criminal offence. This will mean that victims can access the same rapid protection they can now, while also ensuring that those who have forced or participated in forcing an individual to marry will be criminally liable.

Some organisations have argued that criminalisation could put victims off coming forward. At IKWRO we do not support this view, as many of the women and girls we have worked with are themselves in favour of criminalisation. We believe that criminalisation could actually offer a valuable negotiating tool for young people at risk. Indeed, as Danish organisation LOKK told us:

"Denmark has had a law against forced marriage since 2008... It has in no way been our experience that young people have stopped seeking help because of this law. On the contrary, the number of young people and professionals seeking help from LOKK has soared since 2008."

d) A range of tools are needed

We recognise that creating a new criminal offence is not the only solution to forced marriage, and that any new law will only be effective if it is accompanied by efforts to raise awareness and promote discussion among communities who practice forced marriage. Alongside this, we are calling for improvements in the existing forced marriage protection and prevention frameworks, including better monitoring of FMPOs, an improved response by schools and other statutory bodies and greater support for forced marriage survivors.

- FGM

a) Criminal sanction but no prosecutions

FGM has been illegal in the UK since the 1980s and the Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2003 made it a criminal offence to practice FGM here or to take any girl or woman who is living here abroad for FGM. Those who do this can face up to 14 years in prison. To date there have been no prosecutions for FGM in the UK, with significant challenges posed by the

fact that FGM is most commonly carried out on small children, who do not make reliable witnesses and who are often unwilling to testify against their parents. At the same time there is evidence that the FGM Act has had an important deterrent effect. A recent study showed a reduction in the more severe forms of FGM and growing opposition to it within practising communities

b) A need for improved responses by professionals and government

As with forced marriage and ‘honour’ based violence, lack of awareness of FGM and concerns about cultural sensitivity have meant that some professionals are failing to protect children at risk of FGM. In February 2011, the government launched new guidelines to help police officers, school teachers, social workers and other professionals to understand the issues and what they should do if they encounter a child at risk. IKWRO and other organisations are working to raise awareness of these guidelines, but printed copies of them are not available, and they do not even have a straightforward web address, so directing professionals to them can be difficult.

Moreover IKWRO is concerned that there is no proper strategy for making sure that the guidelines are taken up at local level. At the end of March the FGM Coordinator – the only post across all of government which is dedicated to tackling FGM – was scrapped. We are working with other organisations through the National FGM Forum to increase government commitment to tackling FGM and to push for more effective enforcement of the existing laws.

- **NRPF**

a) New rules for women on spousal visas

Until recently women who came to the UK on a spousal visa could not access housing or other benefits. For those who experienced domestic violence, this could mean that they would be destitute if they tried to escape. As a member of the NRPF campaign IKWRO lobbied civil servants and Ministers to find a solution to the challenges faced by these women. In early 2010 the government introduced a pilot scheme (the Sojourner project) and in March they announced that from April 2012 women on spousal visas can get benefits for 10 weeks after they leave an abusive husband, during which time they can apply to remain in the UK under what is known as the domestic violence rule. Many of IKWRO’s clients are on spousal visas, and these changes mean that now they are able to escape abuse immediately, whereas previously they had to wait until a funded refuge space could be found. The fact that there is now a clear way out for women has also made the work of our advisors much more straightforward.

b) Access to legal aid for women applying under the domestic violence rule

At the beginning of 2011 the government proposed to cut legal aid for immigration applications, including applications made by women under the domestic violence rule (see above). At present a woman has to fill in a very complex application form and produce several pieces of evidence within 30 days of leaving her husband, at a time when her life is already in a state of flux. To remove legal aid from women at this time would be disastrous. IKWRO and other women’s organisations made submissions to this effect to the government consultation on legal aid. We also persuaded MPs to ask parliamentary questions on the issue, and we questioned civil servants and ministers about it wherever possible. Despite these efforts the government did not remove these proposals before releasing the new Legal Aid and Sentencing Bill into parliament. We were given just a few days notice that the bill was to have its second reading and many NGOs were not in a position to respond, but IKWRO was able to play a leading role. We had just compiled a list of MPs who we believed

would support campaigns on domestic violence. We quickly produced a briefing for these MPs and spent an afternoon calling their offices, explaining the issue and emailing them the briefing. We asked these MPs to raise questions about the implications for women making applications under the domestic violence rule. This pressure in the early stage of the bill forced the government to rethink its position. During the second reading the Legal Aid Minister Jonathan Djanogly announced that legal aid would be maintained for women making applications under the domestic violence rule. We are currently working with the women's legal organisation Rights of Women to ensure that an amendment to this effect is now made to the wording of the bill.

c) Extension of the probationary period

Despite our victory on legal aid, new challenges are constantly presenting because of the recent change of government in the UK and the resulting legislative overhaul. Over the summer the Home Office consulted on changes to the immigration rules, and as part of this it proposed to increase the probation period for those on spousal visa from two to five years. During the probation period the women we work with are entirely dependent on their husbands for money, shelter, food and even their right to be in the UK. Some husbands use this to force the woman into submission and to normalise abuse, and an increase in this period will put women who are on spousal visas at increased risk of violence and abuse.

IKWRO and other women's organisations have taken part in a government consultation on this and have raised the issue with the media. We await the results of the consultation but will continue to lobby to ensure that this proposal does not go ahead.

d) Women on other types of visa

While the recent changes highlighted in part a) have benefited some women on spousal visas, there are many women on other types of visa who still do not have access to protection. These include women on student visas, women with limited leave to remain in the UK and women who are failed asylum seekers or visa over stayers. A snapshot study by Women's Aid conducted between 24 October and 18 November found that 65% of women who presented to support services during that period were ineligible for help under the current government scheme, and were either dependant on limited support elsewhere or destitute. IKWRO will continue to raise the challenges faced by these women, and to push for access to protection from violence for all women in the UK.

- Rape

a) Low rape reporting and conviction rates

An estimated 47,000 adult women are raped each year in the UK, although the majority of these rapes go unreported. Of the rapes that are reported to the police, in only 26 per cent of cases is a suspect charged and in only 12 per cent of cases is there a conviction for rape or a related offence. This is extremely worrying and has led to calls for improvements in the way that the police and the criminal justice system conduct investigations into allegations of rape and deal with victims.

b) Rape within marriage

In the UK as in most countries, most victims of rape are attacked not by a stranger but by someone who is known to them, in many cases their spouse. Rape within marriage has been a crime in the UK since 1991 (following the landmark case of R V R) but remains a taboo among many sections of society, particularly within the communities that IKWRO works with. Women who come to us disclose that they have often been repeatedly raped by their

husbands, but unfortunately, despite finding these rapes highly traumatic many women simply accept them as part of married life. These attitudes are not helped by statements made by religious leaders. Last year the President of the Islamic Sharia Council, Sheikh Maulana Abu Sayeed, said that men who rape their wives should not be prosecuted, claiming:

"There cannot be any rape within the marriage... Because when they got married, the understanding was that sexual intercourse was part of the marriage, so there cannot be anything against sex in marriage."

He later told the Independent newspaper that "in Islamic Sharia, rape is adultery by force. So long as the woman is his wife, it cannot be termed as rape. It is reprehensible, but we do not call it rape." Sheikh Sayeed also suggested that women who claim to have been raped by their husbands should not immediately go to the police, on the basis that "in most of the cases, wives... have been advised by their solicitors that one of the four reasons for which a wife can get a divorce is rape, so they are encouraged to say things like this."

c) Retraction of rape allegations and government responses

Last year a woman was convicted after she retracted rape allegations against her husband under severe pressure from his family. She was sentenced to eight months in prison. Her husband- who had allegedly raped her five times - took custody of their children.

In response to the outcry surrounding that case, the Crown Prosecution Service produced guidance for prosecutors on what to do if a woman retracts an allegation of domestic violence or rape. The CPS claims that the new guidance will "protect individuals who retract a truthful allegation as a result of pressure or fear of violence". Yet IKWRO has concerns that the guidance leaves too much to the discretion of individual prosecutors. The guidance is also silent on the issue of how or when a woman should be informed that she could be charged, and we are concerned that the threat of charges will put significant stress onto women who have already experienced rape or domestic violence.

Section 5: The status of women's organisations and demands for change

A coalition government came to power in the UK following general elections last May. The coalition is formed of the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats, and has brought significant change after 13 years of Labour rule. Almost immediately after coming to power, the government began making significant public spending cuts, and has been able to justify these by reference to the economic crisis. The cuts have posed severe challenges for women and for the organisations that work with women.

- Funding challenges due to the political and financial climate

From the perspective of women's organisations, one of the main difficulties is that local councils, through which many violence against women services are funded, have to reduce their spending by one quarter. In many cases the voluntary sector services which councils fund have been the first casualty of these cuts, and in some parts of the UK violence against women services have been wiped out overnight.

Alongside the local spending cuts are the broader challenges of the localist agenda, whereby the government is trying to move away from centralised decision making and to give more power to local councils to set their own priorities. In areas where the council is more right wing or is not interested in tackling social problems, this can be very challenging for women's organisations, particularly for those working with women from ethnic minority communities.

Another impact of the cuts is around commissioning. Councils and the national government have sought to make the cost of certain services cheaper by commissioning one big

organisation to provide a generic service rather than funding small, specialist organisations which cater to women from particular communities or who have experienced particular forms of violence. For example, until recently government funded support services for women who have been trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation were provided by the Poppy Project, a holistic service which specialised in working with survivors of forced prostitution and provided therapeutic, medical, legal and security services for the women as well as housing. Women in this position are now being accommodated through a generic housing service provided by the Salvation Army. Cuts like this are leading to a lower quality of service and mean that specialised organisations are cutting back, disappearing or merging with larger providers, while many more are uncertain of their future.

Women's organisations have worked together to defend funding for services and to raise the issue with politicians and in the national media. At the end of last year IKWRO successfully campaigned with other organisations to protect funding for violence against women in services in London, provided by the London Councils, an umbrella body which commissions voluntary sector services across London. However this work took up a significant amount of time over three or four months, which most women's organisations do not have, and in some parts of the country it has been much more difficult to change politicians' minds.

- Extra strain on services because of the cuts

As well as the impact of cuts directly on women's services, the financial cutbacks being implemented by the government are posing much broader challenges for women in society, and this is of course having an impact on organisations that work with women.

For example, cuts to benefits including housing benefit, child benefit, child tax credits, health in pregnancy grants and many others are having a disproportionate impact on women and particularly on women who are already poor and marginalised. As these cuts take effect women's organisations are dealing with an increase in requests for information and advice for women who are now unsure of their rights and entitlements.

At the same time, a number of vital services which are used by women have faced major cutbacks in the last year, including legal aid provision, advice bureaux, English classes, policing and social services, and as described above, a large number of voluntary organisations have also shut down. The knock on effect of these cuts and closures is an increase in demand for the services that remain. At IKWRO and across the women's sector, we are all receiving increased referrals from women who previously may have got the help they needed elsewhere. Workers in government bodies, particularly social services, are increasingly asking us to find emergency housing or to do risk assessments for clients even though this is their job, because they cannot cope with the sheer number of cases they are handling since staff cuts were implemented.

Furthermore, not only do the cuts mean an increase in requests for information, but they can also mean that cases take longer to resolve, during which time they can become more complicated and require more intense, long term case work. For example, staff cuts in housing authorities or benefits offices can mean that it takes longer for a woman to get emergency housing. During this period she may be homeless or financially destitute, or she may have to remain at home where the violence can escalate. These difficulties pose real challenges for individual women and for women's organisations, many of which are already struggling to survive.

In response to the cuts a group of women from diverse backgrounds – some who are active in organisations, unions, local groups or political parties, others who are non-aligned - have joined together to form Women Against the Cuts. WAC works to highlight the impact of the cuts on all women and to women's opposition to the cuts as being discriminatory, unfair and unnecessary.

- **Impact of policy changes**

Alongside the financial cutbacks, there has been significant upheaval in terms of policy and legislative change over the last year and a half. Many of these changes have related to the rolling back of services provided by the state, and as women's organisations we are constantly having to fight back in order to defend women's rights.

The most significant of the government's current proposals is around ending the provision of legal aid in relation to a number of areas of law, most notably private family law and immigration law. Loss of legal aid in these areas could be disastrous for our clients, and IKWRO and other organisations will end up picking up the pieces.

We have campaigned against the legal aid cuts since they were first announced and we have had some wins. Through our campaigning we have managed to protect legal aid for migrant women applying for leave to remain in the UK on the grounds of domestic violence, and legal aid will also be protected for family law cases where domestic violence has occurred.

The government has also introduced new laws and policies which respond to an anti-immigration agenda which is being promoted by parts of the UK media. The Prime Minister has recently proposed a wave of immigration reforms including extending the spousal visa probation period from two to five years, which if implemented, will make it more difficult for women and girls who are experiencing domestic violence to escape, and will increase our caseload further. We have done our best to challenge these proposals, by taking part in government consultations, lobbying MPs or Ministers, and trying to get coverage of these issues in the media. However many women's organisations are concerned that the government already has its agenda in relation to immigration and is not interested in listening to what women's organisations have to say.

As well as the immigration changes, the government recently introduced rules which would make women who make an allegation of rape or domestic violence and then later retract it guilty of a criminal offence. This is another example of responding to a right wing media agenda, and IKWRO finds this development very concerning, particularly given a lack of data on how many women actually make false allegations of rape.

The government has also recently reviewed the curriculum for sex and relationships education (SRE) and has proposed to give parents greater control over what young people learn in relation to SRE at school. SRE classes are often the only opportunity that young people have to learn about issues such as sexual consent, forced marriage and domestic abuse, and we are extremely concerned at the government's proposal to give parents more power to cut their children off from this vital information. IKWRO has worked with the End Violence Against Women Coalition to raise these issues with politicians and the media.

Appendix 1 – List of services available

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS- Links & useful numbers

Emergency services: 999

IKWRO: 020 79206460 (9:30-5), 07846 275246 (Arabic/ Kurdish/ Turkish), 07846310157 (Farsi/Dari),
info@ikwro.org.uk

Metropolitan Police: Under 18s – Child Abuse Investigation Team, 020 74210291
over 18s – Islington Police Station 020 77041212

Crime reduction Government initiative: www.crimereduction.gov.uk

ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers): www.acpo.police.uk

Metropolitan Police Force: www.met.police.uk

Domestic violence national numbers

National ‘Honour’ Network Helpline: 08005999247

Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 9247 (run in partnership
between Women’s Aid and Refuge)

Forced Marriage Unit: , 02070080151, www.fco.gov.uk

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Refuge

Switchboard (administrative calls only): 020 7395 7700 / info@refuge.org.uk

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General support

Samaritans: 0845 7909 090 / www.samaritans.org.uk

Rape Crisis: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Shelter: 0808 800 4444 / www.shelter.org.uk

Victim support: 0845 3030 900 / www.victimsupport.org.uk

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111 / www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Karma Nirvana: 01332 604098, www.karmanirvana.org.uk

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Legal support

Community Legal Service Direct: 0845 345 4 345 / www.clsdirect.org.uk

Rights of Women: 020 7251 6577 / www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

National Centre for Domestic Violence: 0844 8044 999 / www.ncdv.org.uk

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Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual people

Broken Rainbow: 0300 999 5428 / 08452 60 44 60 / www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

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Support for children and young people

Childline: 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000 / www.nspcc.org.uk

Get Connected (16-25 year olds): 0808 808 4994 / www.getconnected.org.uk

Support for men

Men's Advice Line (for men experiencing domestic violence): 0808 801 0327 / www.mensadvice.org.uk

Respect (for perpetrators of domestic violence): www.respect.org.uk

Support for women and children from minority ethnic communities

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit: 020 7008 0151 / <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/human-rights/forced-marriage-unit/>

Refugee council: 020 7346 6777 / www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Immigration Advice Service: 020 7357 6917 / www.iasuk.org
Asylum Aid: 020 7247 8741

Southall Black Sisters: 020 8571 9595

Muslim Community Helpline: 020 8904 8193 / 020 8908 6715 / <http://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk/>

Jewish Women's Aid Helpline: 0800 59 12 03 / www.jwa.org.uk

Somalian Women's Centre: 020 8752 1787

Newham Asian Women's Project: 020 8552 5524 / www.nawp.org

Kiran: Asian Women's Aid: 020 8558 1986 / www.rdlogo.com/cwp/kawa/

Chinese Information and Advice Centre: 020 7692 3697 / www.ciac.co.uk

Black Association of Women Step Out: 029 2043 7390

Local support

Women's Aid Federation of England: 0117 944 4411 / www.womensaid.org.uk

Welsh Women's Aid: 02920 390 874 / www.welshwomensaid.org

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 80 10 800

Scottish Women's Aid: 0131 475 2372 / www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk

Northern Ireland Women's Aid: 02890 331 818 / www.niwaf.org

Edinburgh – Shakti Women's Aid: www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk

East London – ELBWO: www.elbwo.org.uk

The Haven Project (Wolverhampton): 01902 572140 / www.havenrefuge.org.uk

Other support

Network for Surviving Stalking : www.nss.org.uk

National Stalking Helpline: 0300 636 0300 / www.stalkinghelpline.org

One Parent Families www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk

Women and Girls' Network www.wgn.org.uk

National Association for People Abused in Childhood www.napac.org.uk

Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Violence (for bereaved friends and family): www.aafda.org.uk