



# **TOOLKIT FOR WORKING WITH PERPETRATORS OF FAMILY ABUSE**

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# THE CONTEXT

Family abuse is currently included in the definition of domestic abuse alongside intimate partner abuse.

Little is known about family abuse perpetrators or what, if anything works in preventing and changing their abusive behaviours. As of May 2022, the criminal justice system provides the only response to this group of perpetrators: there are neither mandatory nor voluntary perpetrator group interventions in place as is the case with heterosexual, cisgender male perpetrators of intimate partner abuse.

## KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from this study identified four areas of concern that impede the development of family abuse interventions:

- Trust
- Recognition
- Questions about interventions
- Knowledge and Skills gap

These areas of concern stem from the fact that family abuse perpetrators, and to a certain extent, family abuse victim/survivors are almost invisible outside criminal justice system responses to family abuse. The four core areas of concern underpin and provide a rationale for this toolkit.

# CORE AREAS OF CONCERN

## Trust

- Between individual survivors and help providers that result in lack of reporting and/or delayed reporting
- Between families and (faith) communities and the police/other help providers

## Recognition

- Survivors, families, communities fail to recognise, and minimise and normalise abusive behaviours
- Help providers miss opportunities for early intervention and/or give a poor first responses, with consequences for survivors

## Questions about interventions

- What methods of interventions other than criminal justice could be effective?



## Knowledge & Skills gaps

Research is needed:

- Should family abuse be separated from intimate partner abuse (IPA) in practice settings?
  - Should the existing IPA sector be developed to include family abuse?
- Should perpetrator programmes be modelled on existing ones for heterosexual, cisgender male perpetrators of IPA and should interventions be group, family or individual?

# WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Action	Which sector?	By who?
Make better use of existing law	Criminal Justice System	CJS practitioners: police, Crown Prosecution Service
Training about family abuse	Statutory and the domestic abuse sectors	Capacity building needed to design and deliver training
Employment: to increase representation from minoritised groups	Statutory and the domestic abuse sectors	Each organisation in each sector
Representation more generally: to raise profile of family abuse and minoritised groups impacted	Statutory and the domestic abuse sectors	Each organisation in each sector
Improved partnership working: to share information and expertise	Statutory and the domestic abuse sectors, especially 'by and for' services for racially minoritised communities and LGBTQ and/or T+ people	Local Authority Coordinators facilitating Family Abuse Forums
Prevention, aimed at:  Children and young people	Primary, secondary, further and higher education sectors	Capacity building needed to design and deliver prevention materials
Communities	Across each local authority area to provide opportunities for community engagement, early intervention, information about the law	Capacity building needed – especially within 'by and for' services to engage with communities

# DESIGNING PERPETRATOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Perpetrator programmes for family violence should:

- ✓ Include understanding the societal, community and individual motivating factors underpinning family abuse perpetration
- ✓ Be based on the experiences and voices of victims/survivors in line with other successful perpetrator programmes

## SOCIETAL LEVEL FACTORS

● Belief systems that inform motivations to perpetrate family abuse



These belief systems are supported, underpinned and reinforced by religious/faith beliefs and loyalty to family/ community/culture/traditions.

## SOCIETAL BELIEFS

1. The interests of the family take priority over any individual family member's interests;
2. The family has ownership of family members as resources:
  - to protect the family's status
  - to provide evidence of their conformity to traditional/cultural/community/faith-based behaviour norms
  - to barter with other families (e.g. promised marriages of young children) for status and/or spousal visas
3. Family members should be obedient to parents/family/community/faith elders
4. Expectation of conformity to gender/sexuality norms prior to and during intimate relationships and marriage
5. Marriage is compulsory and permanent



## COMMUNITY-LEVEL FACTORS

● Legitimise perpetrator entitlement to abuse family members to elicit conformity to family beliefs

Perpetrators of family abuse have belief systems that reinforce and are reinforced by a sense of entitlement—moral, faith-based, generational, cultural—to behave in the way that they do. Such strongly held beliefs lead families and communities (including faith-based communities) to develop and adhere to expectations about behaviour in ways that elicit conformity from all family members to norms of gender, sexuality, intimate relationships, marriage, divorce, family and community hierarchy.



## THESE ENTITLEMENTS ARE UNDERSTOOD TO BE INHERENT IN:

1. Parents/extended family, in-laws and community/faith elders in terms of making decisions about family member(s)' intimate lives, marriage partner, married life



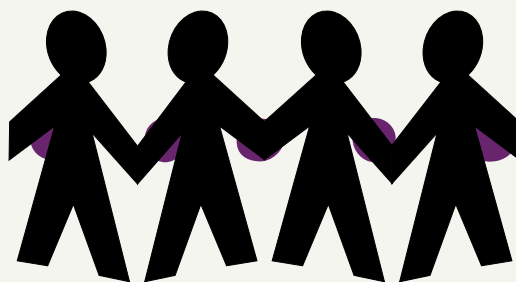
2. Parents/in-laws' expectations of family member(s)' obedience in matters of social norms/gender roles/sexuality/intimate relationships/marriage

3. Parents/in-laws expecting support from other children/family members in attempting to/actually controlling family member(s) and/or punishing them if they do not conform



4. Faith/community leaders and wider community leaders/elders putting individual families under surveillance and those families accepting such surveillance as 'right'

5. Families having a 'natural' right to protect family member(s) from sin/non-conformity/possession and controlling/coercing/punishing them in order to secure conformity. This sense of entitlement held by perpetrators of family abuse has led many to resist the idea that their behaviours are illegal, abusive and wrong

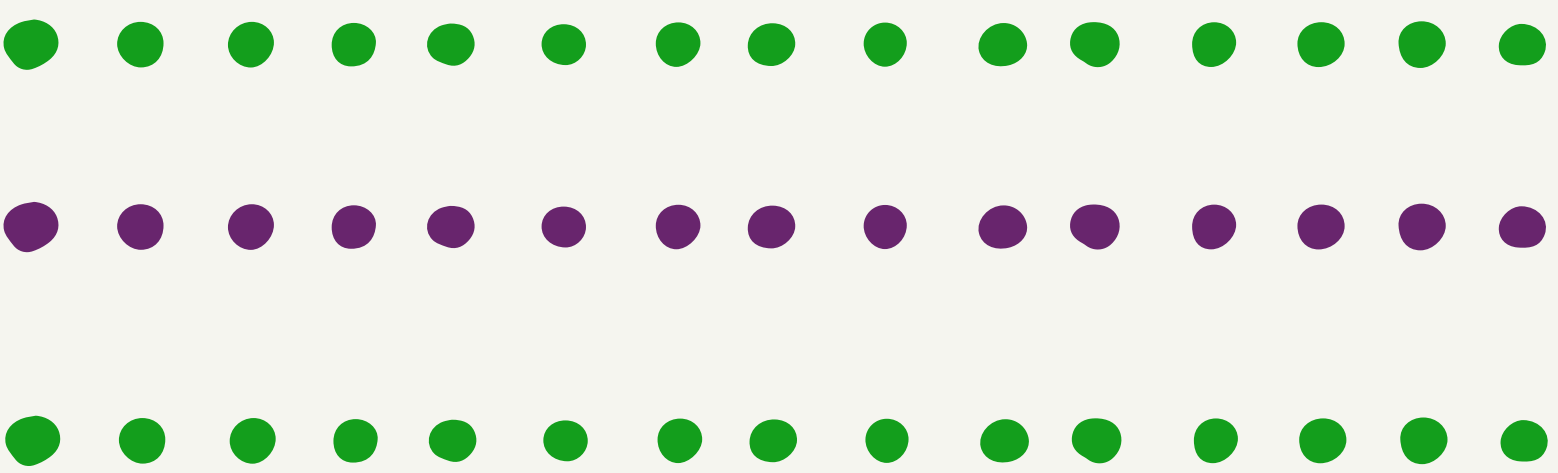
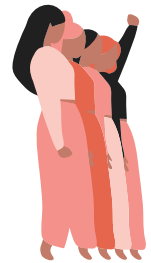


# INDIVIDUAL - LEVEL FACTORS

Individual motivating factors for perpetrating family abuse

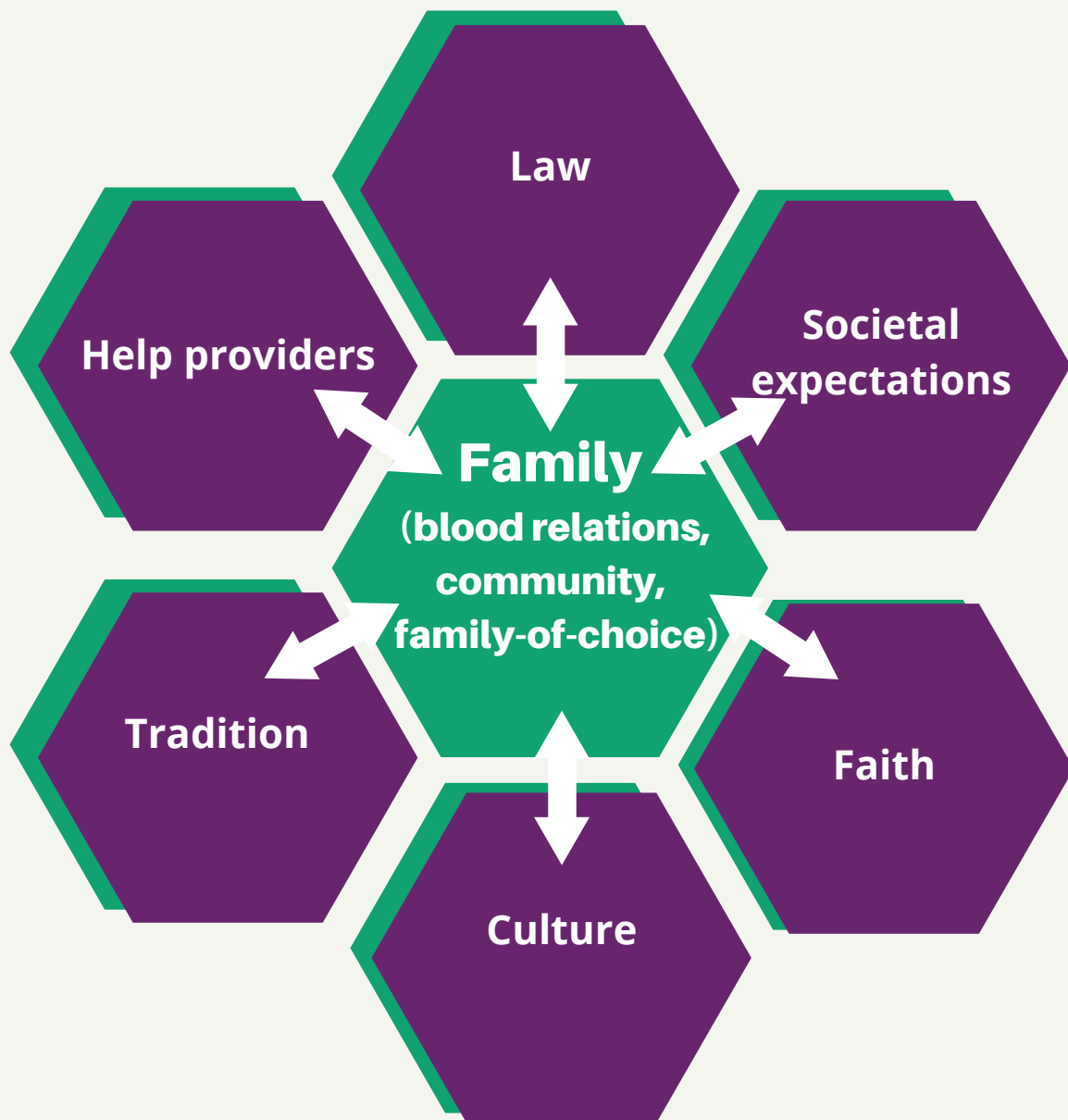
## REASONS WHY INDIVIDUALS PERPETRATE FAMILY ABUSE:

1. To secure conformity to norms of gender and sexuality, intimate relationships and marriage
2. To secure conformity to interpretations of faith/religious texts in relation to norms of gender, sexuality, intimate relationships and marriage
3. To 'save' family member(s) from 'sin', shame and isolation from wider family/community faith
4. To protect the family from shame/dishonour/loss of status in their own community, the faith where they currently live and their countries of origin because of the behaviours of the victimised family member(s)





# PUSH-PULL FACTORS ASSESSMENT CHART FOR WORK WITH INDIVIDUAL PERPETRATORS



**Use the Push-Pull Factors Assessment Chart with individual perpetrators to assess their priorities and the strongest influences that promote or undermine non-abusive behaviours**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This toolkit has been produced by Durham University and University of Roehampton for the Home Office England and Wales. Thank you to all of the partners who contributed to this toolkit by giving up your time to participate in interviews and a workshop.

PLEASE NOTE: The toolkit is to be read in conjunction with the 'Family Abuse Perpetration' report. This guidance is based on our current understanding of family abuse perpetration and is subject to change upon the emergence of new knowledge.

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