

HARM network, at University of Central Lancashire, is urging organisations across the UK to take action to protect remote workers and service-users at risk of domestic abuse during the COVID-19 lockdown.

HARM, together with a panel of leading experts, have developed evidence-based recommendations to help employers safeguard their staff in an inclusive way that recognises and respects the cultural and ethnic diversity of their workforce.

During the lockdown, this could be lifesaving. Calls to mainstream domestic violence charity Refuge increased by 700% in a single day during the current crisis. Hidden in this statistic are victims of 'honour' violence and other forms of domestic abuse known as 'harmful traditional practices' that predominantly affect BAME women and children. We know that 33% of new calls to a leading 'honour' abuse charity were due to COVID-19 lockdown.

To support your organisation in addressing this urgent issue during lockdown, we have provided free access to newly released workplace guidance to inform your safeguarding policy:

- [Harmful Traditional Practices in the Workplace: Guidance for Best Practice](#)
- [Harmful Traditional Practices in the Workplace: Urgent Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Harmful Traditional Practices: Workplace Awareness](#) (VIDEO)

Employers must recognise that domestic abuse does not have to occur on an organisation's premises to affect the workplace and that the COVID-19 lockdown has created conditions for the perfect storm: that many employees are being forced to live and work in a worst-case scenario. Organisations must adopt this guidance as they have a moral, ethical, and legal obligation to safeguard their employees and service-users.