



What we know now

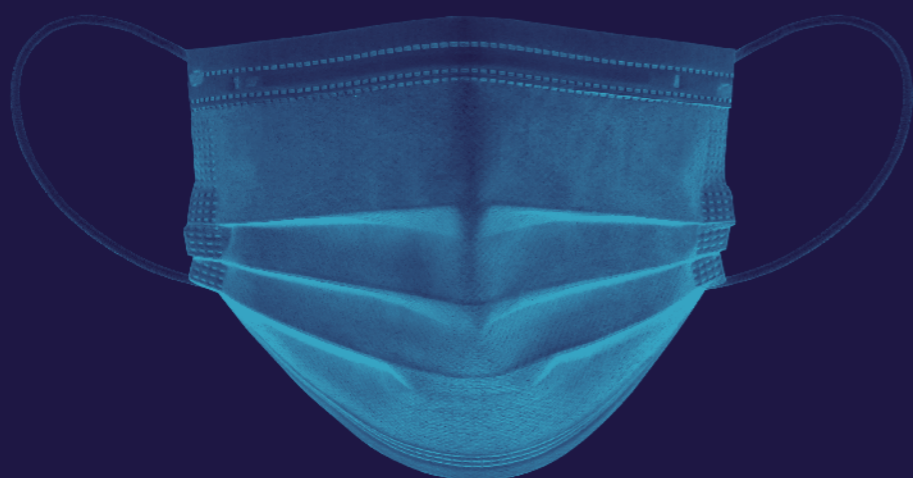
The Impact of Covid-19 and Covid-related restrictions on people vulnerable to, or already experiencing, forced marriage in the UK

April 2022



Contents

Authors	2
Summary of key findings	3
Our research	4
What we know now	4
Forced marriage in the UK	5
Identifying key events	6
Themes from interviewing key stakeholders	29
References	30



Authors

This report was authored by Dr Helen McCabe, Rights Lab Associate Professor of Political Theory with expert input from Dr Rowland Seymour (Rights Lab Senior Research Fellow in Modern Slavery Statistics), Dr Naomi Lott (Rights Lab Visiting Fellow in Law, Survivor Support and Children's Rights), Dr Rumana Hashem (Rights Lab Fellow in Forced Marriage Vulnerabilities), Hannah Coggins (School of Politics and IR Placement student), Fiona Collins-Taylor (School of Politics and IR placement student) and Rebecca Chloe Brown (PhD student and Rights Lab Research Fellow in Law and Policy).

Summary of key findings

- Calls to forced marriage (FM) helplines provided by Karma Nirvana (KN) and the UK government Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) decreased during the first lockdown. However, they decreased *further* in subsequent lockdowns.
- There is not one particular restriction (for example, “lockdown”, quarantine after travelling, school closures) that has affected rates, and the risk of, FM, but the package of restrictions taken together have.
- Staff at schools are not calling the KN or FMU helplines directly very often, but schools seem to be providing networks of support which lead to other people ringing (both victims themselves, and other concerned parties).
- The FMU plays an official “duty to notify” role, being contacted by those stakeholders with statutory safeguarding and/or reporting (for FM and FGM) duties. However, many other stakeholders do not contact the FMU, or only contact it infrequently. Indeed, we can say that KN and the FMU (and Family Courts in England and Wales) are dealing with almost entirely separate constituencies of people at risk.
- Despite travel restrictions, people were still taken abroad for the purpose of FM in 2020. Although this happened to fewer people than in pre-pandemic years, it was still a significant number of people, and the likelihood of FM does not seem to have been impacted by changes to the number of flights entering or leaving the country.
- Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs) showed very different patterns of increase/decrease during periods of lockdown between two different age groups (children and adults) in England and Wales. This further suggests that children were increasingly invisible in the pandemic.
- Remote working impacted people working in this area both positively, as it meant service providers could speak to more victims and stakeholder partners, and negatively, as there are significant issues with privacy for those working from home, and with accessing support from interpreters.
- Service providers dealt with more calls and longer calls than before. This, alongside working-from-home when that was mandated, had a knock-on impact on the well-being of service providers.
- Helplines kept going through lockdowns/restrictions, with – in general – fewer cases of FM, and more of domestic abuse to handle. Front-line police services carried on in-person, but with fewer FM cases to deal with.
- Lockdowns and similar restrictions saw increased victim isolation, which put victims at more risk.
- Victims relied more on helplines because they could not access other forms of help.
- Staff at KN’s helpline noted that they were providing on-going support for much longer than pre-pandemic.
- Covid-related restrictions brought back historic trauma for some survivors of forced marriage, particularly where they had been forced to “stay-at-home” by those forcing them to marry, or the people they were forced to marry as part of on-going control and abuse in the relationship. Helplines saw an increase in calls from distressed survivors of historical FM. This also suggests future surges in calls if similar restrictions are ever re-imposed, not just of historic FM, but of abuse experienced in the last two years of restrictions.

Our research

We are a team of researchers at the Rights Lab, a University of Nottingham Beacon of Research Excellence. Since October 2020, we have been studying the impact of Covid-19 and Covid-related decision-making in all four nations of the UK on those vulnerable to, or already experiencing, forced marriage (FM), and those working to support them.¹ This research was funded by the ESRC as the project “Assessing the Impact of Covid-19 on People Vulnerable to, or Already Experiencing, Forced Marriage” (ES/V015370/1), PI Helen McCabe (October 2020-April 2022).

We hypothesised that Covid-19 itself, and the related restrictions on, for instance, movement (including international travel), attending school, and household mixing, would have had an impact on rates of FM in the UK, and on the ability of those at risk to seek timely support. In this report, we summarise key findings two years on from the UK’s first national lockdown.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on almost every human life across the globe. In the UK, tens of thousands of families have been bereaved²; millions people have been seriously ill³; and we have all lived with a variety of more-or-less severe restrictions (including lockdowns), depending on the region in which we live. Just in terms of researching this particular area of Covid-19 and its impacts, when we first applied for funding to pursue this research project, pandemic-related restrictions had almost entirely been lifted across England: on the day we officially started, a second lockdown was announced. We have met as a whole research team (including our key project partners) just once in person: 16 months into an 18-month project.

What we know now

Two years on from the first lockdown, we have gathered together what we have learned about the impact of Covid-19 and Covid-related restrictions on people vulnerable to, or already experiencing, FM in the UK.

In the main, our findings relate to England, as this is where most data we have been able to access (from the FMU, from KN’s helpline, and from Family Courts) relates to. However, many of our findings are more broadly applicable: all “stay-at-home” and similar orders, for instance, will have put vulnerable people at more risk where they are forced to stay in the same home as those forcing them to marry wherever they are in the UK. Similarly, restrictions on household mixing will have made the logistics of FM more difficult everywhere in the UK.

Forced marriage in the UK

Forced marriage is a crime in the UK⁴, and has been a civil offence since 2007. As noted in the UK government’s statutory guidance, FM “affects people from many communities and cultures”.⁵ According to UK law:

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Force can include physical, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

FM also occurs when people who lack the capacity to consent are married.

FM is not the same as arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, though their families (or others) may play a significant role in bringing the marriage about, both parties’ consent is freely given (and necessary), and “the choice of whether to go ahead with the marriage remains the decision of the prospective spouses”.⁶ If consent is not (or cannot be) freely given, then the marriage (however orchestrated), is forced.

FM can happen to children and adults, and to people of all genders and sexualities. However, statistics show it happens, in the majority of cases, to women and girls.

Recognised drivers of FM in the UK include:

- Controlling unwanted sexuality (including perceived promiscuity, or being LGBTQIA+) – particularly the sexuality and behaviour of women (and girls).
- Controlling “unwanted” behaviour, for example alcohol or drug use, wearing make-up, or “immodest” clothing, or behaving in what is perceived to be a “Westernised” manner.
- Preventing “unsuitable” relationships, for example, outside the ethnic, cultural, religious, class or caste group.
- Protecting “family honour”.
- Responding to peer group, community or family pressure.
- Attempting to strengthen family links.
- Achieving financial gain.
- Ensuring land, property and wealth remain within the family.
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals.
- Protecting perceived religious ideals.
- Ensuring care for a child or adult with special needs when parents or existing carers are unable to fulfil that role.
- Assisting claims for UK residence and citizenship.
- Long-standing family commitments.⁷

Obviously, these “drivers” are not justifications. FM is a form of violence against women and girls, and men; domestic abuse; a serious abuse of human rights, and – where a minor is involved – child abuse. Ending FM is one of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (Target 5.3), and an avowed aim of the UK government.

Identifying key events

We have picked out some key events connected to the Covid-19 pandemic likely to have specific bearing on the issue of FM. These include: lockdowns and related restrictions on when households could mix, and when people could leave their homes; when large gatherings were permitted; when places of worship could open, and for what; when weddings were permitted; school closures; and travel restrictions.

We picked out these restrictions as having special relevance for FM for two reasons. Firstly, marriages generally involve three people from different households meeting (a bride, a groom, and a celebrant), though they may not, particularly as we have heard anecdotal evidence that people have been married over Skype during the pandemic. Similarly, most marriages (including FM) involve some travel (for example to a venue, including to the groom/bride's house), and some involve international travel. When household mixing was restricted and/or impossible, and when travel was restricted, we therefore hypothesise fewer marriages (including FM) happened, though this does not mean they were not being planned, or those at risk were not being threatened, abused, coerced or otherwise pressured into one.

Secondly, we have included restrictions which may have made it harder for third parties to have spotted signs of risk, for instance when schools were closed, or when restrictions meant there was less chance for service providers or social services to see people at risk face-to-face, and/or there was less opportunity for friends, family and colleagues to spot signs of risk.

We have also included some general background data on Covid-19's discovery, and case- and death-rates in the UK for context.

31 December 2019 – 22 March 2020

Covid-19 was first identified as a novel coronavirus in December 2019⁸, with the first patients officially identified as having contracted Covid-19 admitted to hospital in the UK on 30 January⁹, the same day the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee recommended the Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) declare a global public health emergency¹⁰. Around the same time, there was the first recorded case of person-to-person transmission of Covid-19 in the UK.¹¹

The first Covid-related death was officially recorded on 2 March.¹² By 15 March there had been over 100 deaths in the UK (105 in England – this was 1,095 by 21 March).¹³ On 17 March, the Foreign Secretary advised against “all but essential” international travel.¹⁴ However, his announcement stated:

Whether travel is essential or not is a personal decision and circumstances differ from person to person. It is for individuals themselves to make an informed decision based on the risks and FCO advice.

Schools were closed in the UK from 20 March 2020, and the country entered lockdown on 23 March 2020.¹⁵ People travelling abroad were advised to return home “if possible” on the same day.¹⁶

In the first quarter of 2020 (January–March), there were 78 applications for Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs), and 107 orders made.¹⁷ (Orders made often exceeds applications made, as more than one order can be associated with one application.) 69% of these applications were for people under the age of 17. This was slightly fewer applications than in the previous quarter (83, 75% of which were for under-17s), but on a par with the same period in 2019 (such as January–March), where there were 77 applications, 79% of which were for under-17s. The discovery of Covid-19, and rising cases (and deaths) around the world, then, does not seem to have significantly affected those cases of FM which tend to result in FMPOs (which can be applied for by individuals, both adults and children, relevant third parties, including police, lawyers, and local authorities, or anyone else who has the permission of the court).¹⁸

Between January and March (inclusive), KN received 786 calls about FM to their national helpline for honour-based abuse and FM.¹⁹ For comparison, in the same period in 2019, they received 841.²⁰ Calls in general have been increasing to KN year-on-year (there were 176 calls regarding forced marriage January–March 2018, and 158 in the same period of 2017), so this decline goes against the existing trend.

If we just consider January and February, KN received 526 calls regarding FM in 2020, and 549 in 2019. Breaking it down further, there were fewer calls in January 2020 (275) than in January 2019 (309), and slightly more in February 2020 (257) compared to February 2019 (240). KN handled 48 new FM referrals in January 2020, and 64 in February 2020.

Even acknowledging this slight increase in calls (compared to February 2019), the overall decline in calls at the start of 2020 (especially given the general steep rise year-on-year of calls) may suggest that Covid-19, even before it really reached the UK, had a depressing effect on plans for, and thus cases of, FM.

Similarly, the FMU received 164 calls in January and February 2020, and between 213 and 216²¹ in the weeks before 23 March 2020. This corresponds to 310 for the same period in 2019, and 208 for January and February 2018²². As with calls to KN, this is a decrease, suggesting there may already have been an impact on FM, even before strict Covid-related restrictions were brought in by the UK government.

These declines in calls might be connected to international travel, as case- and death-rates in a number of countries around the world (for example, China, Japan, South Korea, and Italy) were already worryingly high, and thus less international travel might have been undertaken. Moreover, international travel became more difficult, with several countries closing their runways or otherwise limiting international travel in this period.²³ This might affect people being taken from the UK abroad for FM, but it might also impact on people coming to the UK for the purposes of FM.

“Calls in general have been increasing to KN year-on-year (there were 176 calls regarding forced marriage January–March 2018, and 158 in the same period of 2017), so this decline goes against the existing trend.”

“When household mixing was restricted and/or impossible, and when travel was restricted, we therefore hypothesise fewer marriages (including FM) happened.”

“These declines in calls might be connected to international travel, as case- and death-rates in a number of countries around the world (for example, China, Japan, South Korea, and Italy) were already worryingly high, and thus less international travel might have been undertaken.”

This said, Covid-19 cases in January–March 2020 were lower in countries most-frequently associated with cases of FM handled by the FMU (Bangladesh, Pakistan and India) than in the UK at the same time. The UK was already being reported as experiencing local transmission – and 20 cases – by the World Health Organisation in its 29 February 2020 Situation Report, whereas Pakistan had 2 “imported cases”, and no local transmission; India had 3; and Bangladesh had 0.²⁴ The highest rates of Covid-19 at the end of February were in China (79294 cumulative cases, 2,838 cumulative deaths); South Korea (3,150 cumulative cases; 17 cumulative deaths); Japan (230 cumulative cases; 5 cumulative deaths); Italy (888 cumulative cases, 21 cumulative deaths); Iran (388 cumulative cases; 143 cumulative deaths); and aboard the Diamond Princess (705 cases; 6 cumulative deaths).²⁵

Year-on-year, the FMU handles fewer than five cases per year involving China (on average), with none recorded in 2018, and fewer than five in 2020. There are no recorded cases from South Korea. It handled at least one case involving Japan in 2017, with none in any other year for which we have records. It handled at least one case from Italy in 2015, 2018 and 2019, and five cases in 2020 (and none in 2016 and 2017). It handled an average of six cases per year from Iran, all of which were before 2016 (with none in 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020).²⁶ It seems unlikely, then, that Covid-19 rates in any of these countries itself caused the decrease in total cases handled by the FMU in the first quarter of 2020, and the cause probably lies more within the UK than outside of it.

Indeed, many cases of FM in the UK each year have no international element. **Thus, general concern about the pandemic and its likely effects when it reached the UK, as well as economic effects already felt by its impact abroad, may have led to people prioritising other concerns over planning or perpetrating FM, and be what led to this decrease in calls to KN and the FMU** (supposing that these declines correspond to an actual decline in FM cases, rather than being a sign that it was harder for people to make contact with KN and the FMU at the start of 2020.)

23 March – 10 May 2020

Lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020.²⁷ Lockdown restrictions meant that people had to “stay-at-home” unless they had a “reasonable excuse” to be out of their home. These included:

- obtaining basic necessities (including for vulnerable people who were shielding)
- to take exercise either alone or with other members of their household
- to seek medical assistance
- to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person, or to provide emergency assistance
- to donate blood
- to travel for the purposes of work or to provide voluntary or charitable services, where it was not reasonably possible to work, or provide those services, from home
- to attend a funeral of a member of the same household, and/or a close family member, or that of a close friend if no members of that’s friend household or close family were attending
- to fulfil a legal obligation
- to access critical public services
- to continue (in the case of children) existing arrangements for access
- to move house where reasonably necessary
- to avoid injury or illness or escape a risk of harm.²⁸

Weddings were not permitted, and venues which might host weddings were closed. Where weddings might occur at home, this was made more difficult through the ban on household mixing.

A survey conducted by KN during the lockdown found that Black and minority-ethnic people in the UK were concerned about going outdoors, even for the limited time allowed by lockdown rules, because it appeared that these ethnic groups were at a much-higher risk of contracting, and being seriously ill with, Covid-19.²⁹ This led to concerns, from some service-providers, that:

Victims who are BAME women who would normally access support services in the community are now isolated with their perpetrators ... Young BAME victims are not able to access support through their peers and teachers, are increasingly isolated and have limited access to support.³⁰

Although not all victims of FM are BAME these findings highlight increased risks for those who are.

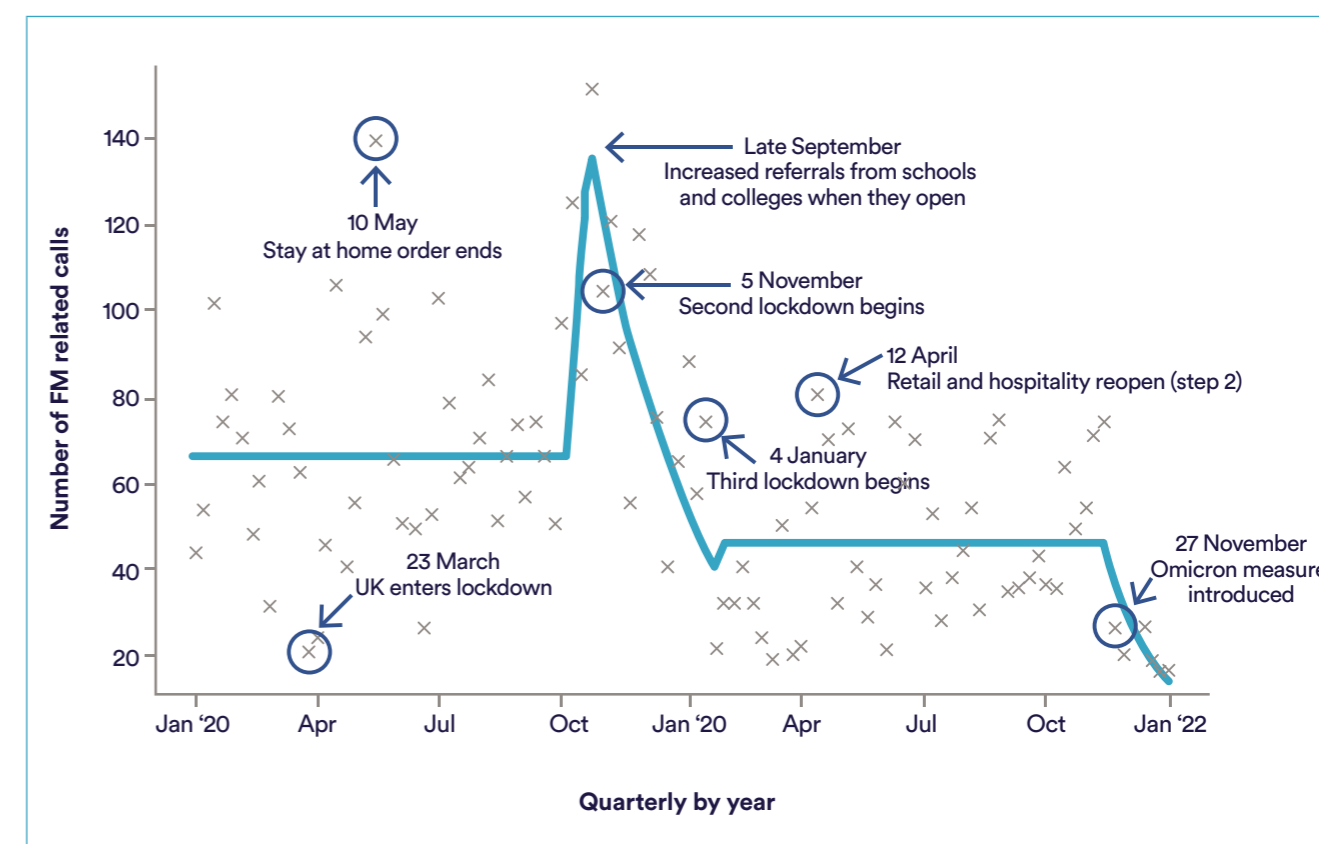
Similarly, concerns about isolation, and limited access (because, for instance, of school closures and stay-at-home orders) to peers and teachers also apply to people at risk who are not BAME.

Indeed, concerns about increased domestic abuse in all communities were highlighted by charities such as Women’s Aid as soon as the first lockdown was announced.³¹ In her address to the nation, the Scottish First Minister highlighted the availability of Scotland’s Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline on 31 March 2020.³² On the same day, the UK government added the factsheet “Coronavirus (Covid-19): support for victims of domestic abuse” to its domestic abuse guidance website.³³

In March 2020, KN received 254 calls relating to FM, a slight decrease from February (257) and January (275); 520 relating to honour-based abuse, again a slight decrease from February (585) and January (575); and 184 relating to domestic abuse, an increase from February (159), but a decrease from January (201). (Some of these calls may overlap, with calls being tagged as relating to more than one form of abuse or crime.)

Indeed, KN experienced a significant decline in calls the week lockdown commenced, as the changepoint analysis in figure 1 shows.

Figure 1: Changepoint analysis of KN’s calls January 2020 to January 2022 (Data shared by KN – graph by Dr Rowland Seymour).



KN received many more calls regarding FM in April 2020 than in the previous April (233 compared to 152). Indeed, it received many more calls regarding all forms of abuse in April 2020 compared to April 2019, apart from child sexual exploitation (CSE); revenge porn; sexual exploitation; and trafficking.

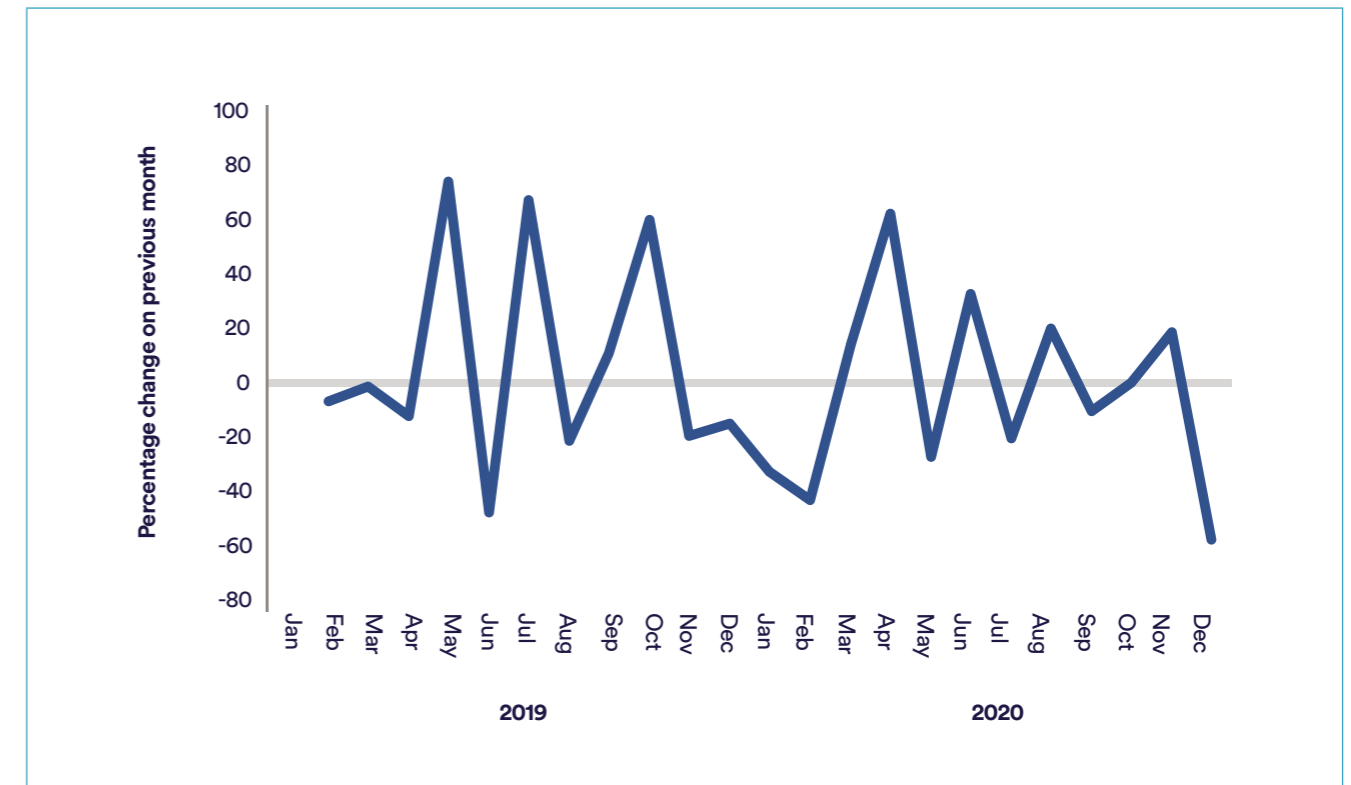
Table 1: Comparison of call types, April 2019 and 2020 (Data from KN).

Call types	April 2019	April 2020
Abuse towards children	16	47
Child Sexual Exploitation	3	2
Domestic abuse	154	157
FGM	0	1
Forced marriage	152	223
Honour-based abuse	371	632
Modern slavery	13	39
Revenge porn	2	2
Sexual exploitation	11	1
Stalking	35	39
Threats to kill	28	85
Trafficking	1	1

Probably, not all of this is due to the lockdown, because calls to KN have, in general, been increasing year-on-year. However, a percentage-change analysis of their 2019 and 2020 calls shows that April 2020 experienced a sharp increase compared to 2019.



Figure 2: Percentage change of calls to KN, 2020 compared to 2019. (Data from KN – graph by Hannah Coggins and Dr Rowland Seymour.)



KN ran a survey of other BAME specialist domestic abuse and honour-based abuse service providers in the lockdown, who reported that:

- Many services moved online or to the phone where possible (KN themselves moved their helpline staff to working from home)
- Refuge services “initially struggled with managing the logistics of Covid-19 lockdown, social distancing and the health and safety of both staff and residents” though “accessing refuge has remained consistent in the main”
- BAME services were, in general, providing more support for domestic abuse than for honour-based abuse, FM and/or FGM and third-party statutory safeguarding professionals (for example, police, social services and teachers) were reporting fewer cases of honour-based abuse, FM and FGM than pre-pandemic
- BAME victims of honour-based abuse, FM and/or FGM “are reporting increased levels of abuse whilst in lockdown with their perpetrators, with many service users making plans to ‘leave in the future’ rather than during the lockdown period”
- “Emotional abuse and coercive control ... increased during the lockdown”.³⁴

There was a 162% average increase in caseload by 12 services surveyed; 67% of services reported being unable to reach potential service users due to lockdown; 50% of services surveyed felt they were “unable to effectively provide support to their service users” during the lockdown; and 20% of services surveyed felt they did not have adequate staffing levels.³⁵

Although KN received 223 calls relating to FM in April 2020, only 33 of these were about new cases, compared to 39 in March and 64 in February. In April 2019, they received 152 calls about FM, 48 of which were new referrals. This shows that new cases were declining, but KN were receiving more calls per case than they had done pre-pandemic. Interviews with KN also show that they have provided on-going support for much longer than before the pandemic, as these numbers show.

Given KN were receiving higher-than-usual numbers of calls across all forms of abuse during the lockdown (as were other service-providers), it does not seem that our initial fear – that lockdown

would prevent those at risk from reaching out for help – was founded. Although many people were trapped with perpetrators and experiencing more, and more-violent, abuse, it seems that cases of FM decreased in the lockdown – or at least, cases affecting the community of people (across the UK) who turn to KN (and other specialist service providers) for help decreased.

This said, those from BAME communities who were at risk faced more, and more-violent, abuse and had less access to help and support than pre-pandemic. This may also have applied to those at risk who are not BAME.

Relatedly, in April 2020, the Home Affairs Select Committee published a report on ‘Home Office Preparedness for Covid-19 (Coronavirus): domestic abuse and risks of harm within the home’.³⁶ This report rightly noted that:

The ‘stay at home’ guidance issued by the government ... was necessary to protect the NHS and save lives ... But for some people home is not a safe place to be.

The Committee welcomed the public information campaign announced by the Government on 11 April “encouraging people to seek help and making clear help is available”, and the £2 million made available to “immediately bolster” domestic abuse helplines and online support.³⁷ (In Wales, the First Minister emphasises launched a “Home Shouldn’t be a Place of Fear Campaign” only on 10 May, emphasising that survivors of domestic abuse could leave their homes to seek refuge and/or escape harm.³⁸)

The Committee’s focus was evidently not on honour-based abuse (HBA) and FM, even though these regularly happen within the home: none of the helplines listed in their report for those at risk relate to FM, and KN’s national helpline (supported financially by the Home Office) is not mentioned.³⁹ This said, the Committee did call for a ‘plan’ which “should include access to information and support, outreach and prevention, funding for support services including specialist and BME services”.⁴⁰ KN were included in the government’s new Victim and Witness Silver Command Group, set up as a crisis management group to identify and respond to developing risks and issues likely to impact on victims and witness strategy, policy or operational effectiveness, which met on a fortnightly basis.⁴¹

“Stay-at-home” meant people were not supposed to travel domestically or internationally, and other countries had previously also imposed bans on travellers from the UK.⁴² (Bangladesh, for instance, imposed a 10-day ‘shutdown’ of airports from 26 March 2022, and continued to extend a suspension of flights until 16 June.⁴³)

This said, the FMU (which deals with more FM cases with an international element – and particularly where victims have already been taken abroad – than KN), received 82 calls in March 2020, and 45 in April 2020 (compared with 120 and 102 respectively in 2019, and 125 and 121 respectively in 2018).⁴⁴ There is no available data to say where these calls were coming from (within the UK, or from outside the UK), or any demographic data.

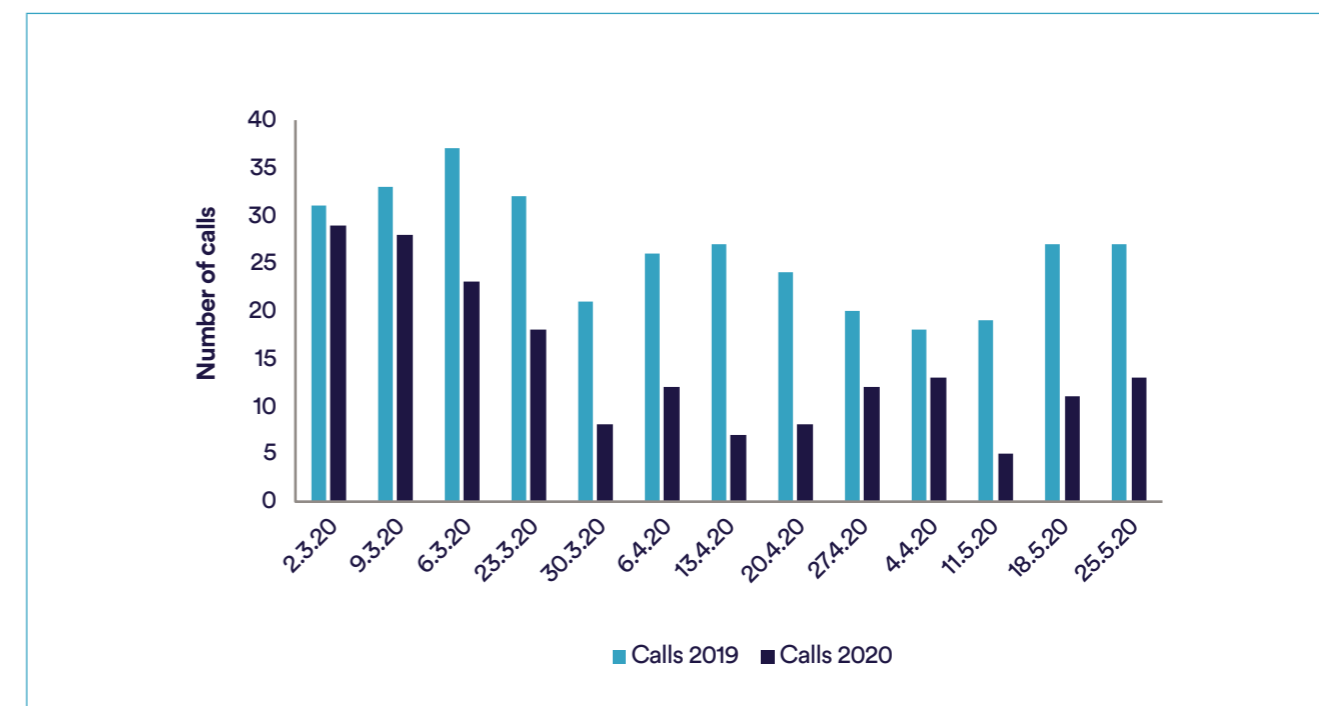
They received only 18 calls in the week commencing 23 March – the week, that is, that lockdown began – only 8 the week after and, in all, 78 in the whole lockdown.⁴⁵ This compares to 32 in the same week of 2019, and 168 in the same period of 2019. This said, none of these weeks were when they received their lowest number of calls: they received fewer than 5⁴⁶ in the first full week of 2020, and in week 22 (first week of June), week 25 (late-June), and week 35 (late-August).

“**KN were included in the government’s new Victim and Witness Silver Command Group, set up as a “crisis management group to identify and respond to developing risks and issues likely to impact on victims and witness strategy, policy or operational effectiveness.”**

Evidently, the first lockdown led to a decrease in calls to the FMU, but not – interestingly – to a complete end to calls. The FMU received 759 calls in total in 2020, so 8.5% occurred in the first lockdown. 11% of their calls came in the same period of 2019.

This said, 17% of their calls in 2020 came in March and April, and this is the same percentage of total calls as they received in March and April in 2019 and slightly more than in 2018 (16%). Thus, although there was a decline in real numbers of calls, and a definite decline in calls in the first lockdown, the FMU received pretty much the same proportion of calls in these months as in other years.

Figure 3: Weekly calls to the FMU, week commencing 2 March to week commencing 25 May 2020, compared with same weeks in 2019. (Data from FMU.)



7% of cases handled by the FMU in 2020 only involved people in the UK: thus, even during the stay-at-home period, the FMU must have been handling cases where either someone had already been taken abroad for FM, where there was a plan to take them abroad to forcibly marry a foreign national, or there was a plan for a foreign national to come to the UK for the purpose of FM.

This planned travel by one or more parties to FM may have been planned for after the lockdown, but there is still a suggestion that some people were being either taken abroad during the lockdown (when this should not have been possible), or travel to the UK for the purpose of FM was being planned, even though marrying was not at the time permitted under UK Covid-related restrictions.

Indeed, an analysis comparing flights in and out of the country, and calls to the FMU’s helpline, showed no correlation: that is, as flights became less frequent, calls did not (and vice versa), showing that even in the depths of lockdown FM (even with an international element) was still being planned and, in at least some cases, probably acted upon.

Some drivers for FM might have been less prevalent in lockdown: for instance, it might have been harder to form “unsuitable” relationships (though these could be formed online); to be “promiscuous” (though, again, this could have involved behaviour online); to access alcohol or drugs; or to wear

“**7% of cases handled by the FMU in 2020 only involved people in the UK: thus, even during the “stay-at-home” period, the FMU must have been handling cases where either someone had already been taken abroad for FM.”**

(outside the house) “unsuitable” clothes or makeup. This might account for the decline in calls relating to FM reported by service providers and the FMU. However, evidently there was a great deal of coercive and controlling behaviour being exercised by perpetrators in the lockdown, and some of this was clearly aimed at FM, including FM with an international element.

Again, a great many people experienced severe economic hardship and uncertainty during lockdown (because they had to shut their self-owned businesses, or because they were furloughed, etc.). This might have acted both to increase FM (as financial gain can be a motive), and to decrease it (as FM can be costly, especially, but not only, where dowry or bride-price are involved).

Overall, then, the first lockdown, and related restrictions, had an impact on FM, but we cannot say with precision which restrictions had what impact, or what scale of impact. Further qualitative research might help us to understand this better, though it will always be hard to interview perpetrators and those at risk, or who were forced into FM during this period.

10 May 2020 – 1 June 2020

On 10 May, the UK Prime Minister set out a “roadmap” for the next stage of the English lockdown, which would come into force from 13 May 2020.⁴⁷ Those who were unable to work from home (and had, for instance, been furloughed since lockdown started) were encouraged to return to work, with guidance to be published on “Covid-secure” workplaces. Plans were announced to increase fines for breaches of regulations which remained in place (Fixed Penalty Notices, or FPNs) in England.⁴⁸

In England, people were encouraged “to take more and even unlimited amounts of outdoor exercise”. In Scotland, the “once a day” exercise rule was lifted for those who did not have to shield.⁴⁹ In Wales, people were also allowed to exercise more than once a day, but advised to “stay local”.⁵⁰

The message in England was changed from “stay home” to “stay alert”.⁵¹ The devolved administrations decided to stay with the original stay at home messaging, even when increasing the reasons for which people could be outside their homes.⁵² Household “mixing” was still strictly limited however.

In England, people could meet one person from another household only outdoors, and when keeping a two-metre distance.⁵³ In Northern Ireland, from 19 May, groups of six people not from the same household were permitted to meet outdoors. In Scotland, from 29 May, up to two households (eight people maximum) were permitted to meet, but only outdoors (including private gardens) and only close to home.⁵⁴ On the same day in Wales members of two households could meet, but only outdoors (including in private gardens).⁵⁵ Stay at home was changed in Wales to stay local, and people had to remain in their local area. Although weddings were officially not yet permitted, and most places of worship (and other wedding venues) remained closed, there was a possibility for FM in some private gardens in Wales and Scotland at this time.

Of course, throughout all pandemic restrictions, there remained a risk of FM, if people were willing to break the law regarding household mixing or other Covid-related restrictions: and they may have been, given they were willing to break the law on forcing someone to marry. Wedding parties both large and small have been broken up by police during the pandemic when such events were not permitted, though cases seem to be more from 2021 than 2020.⁵⁶ (There is no reason to think these were cases of FM, but if consensual weddings were happening in violation of restrictions, FM may have been too.)

The week commencing 10 May 2020 saw a sharp spike in calls to KN’s helpline (see figure 1). Indeed, in May 2020 KN received 389 calls relating to FM, corresponding to 36 new referrals. (In April, they received 33 new referrals for FM, and in March 39.) This compares to 119 calls in May 2019, with 47 new referrals. Overall, then, although an increase from the preceding month, this was fewer new cases than the same period in 2019. (Again, we see that more calls were relating to cases than pre-pandemic.)

Table 2: Comparison of nature of abuse, May 2019 and May 2020 (Data from KN).

Nature of abuse	May 2019	May 2020
Abuse towards children	28	65
Child Sexual Exploitation	0	0
Domestic abuse	109	467
FGM	0	2
Forced marriage	119	389
Honour-based abuse	270	980
Modern slavery	15	182
Revenge porn	2	21
Sexual exploitation	8	1
Stalking	8	9
Threats to kill	23	240
Trafficking	2	0

Again, we see that calls about abuse towards children; domestic abuse; FM; Honour-Based Abuse; Modern Slavery; revenge porn; and threats to kill were significantly higher in May 2020 than in May 2019. There were also slightly more calls about FGM and stalking (though these numbers are, in general, lower than other types of abuse reported). There was no change regarding child sexual exploitation; and a decrease in calls about sexual exploitation and trafficking.

This data from KN may suggest more people were at risk of FM once lockdown eased, than pre-pandemic, whereas in the lockdown risk of FM may have decreased (though the violence of forms of coercion used to force someone to marry may have intensified for those who were at risk).

It may have been that lockdown made people delay planning FM, as well as making it harder to conduct those marriages, but the risk of FM greatly increased as soon as restrictions lifted (even though weddings, and household mixing indoors, was still banned, making weddings difficult⁵⁷).

This said, this spike in calls may reflect, not increased risk, but increased ability by those at risk to reach out for help, and that peers and third parties had more access to people at risk, and were more able to spot signs of risk. This spike may also reflect that people had been making plans to leave dangerous situations, and reached out for help in actualising these plans as soon as restrictions began to lift.

The FMU handled between 25 and 28 calls in this period.⁵⁸ (We can’t be more precise, because in week commencing 25.5.20 they record receiving “<5” calls, which means between 1 and 4.) This is a significant decrease on the same period of 2019, when they received 72 calls, and 2017 when they received 69. (We don’t have weekly data for 2018, but in the whole of May 2018 they received 126 calls.) Indeed, overall, May 2020 was the month with the least calls to the FMU, with only 35 calls in total.⁵⁹

This is a very different experience to that of KN (showing they deal with different constituencies of people), and is hard to explain, though it may be related to travel restrictions: travel from the UK to some countries which are frequently associated with FM cases handled by the FMU still barred UK travel in May 2020, for instance Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

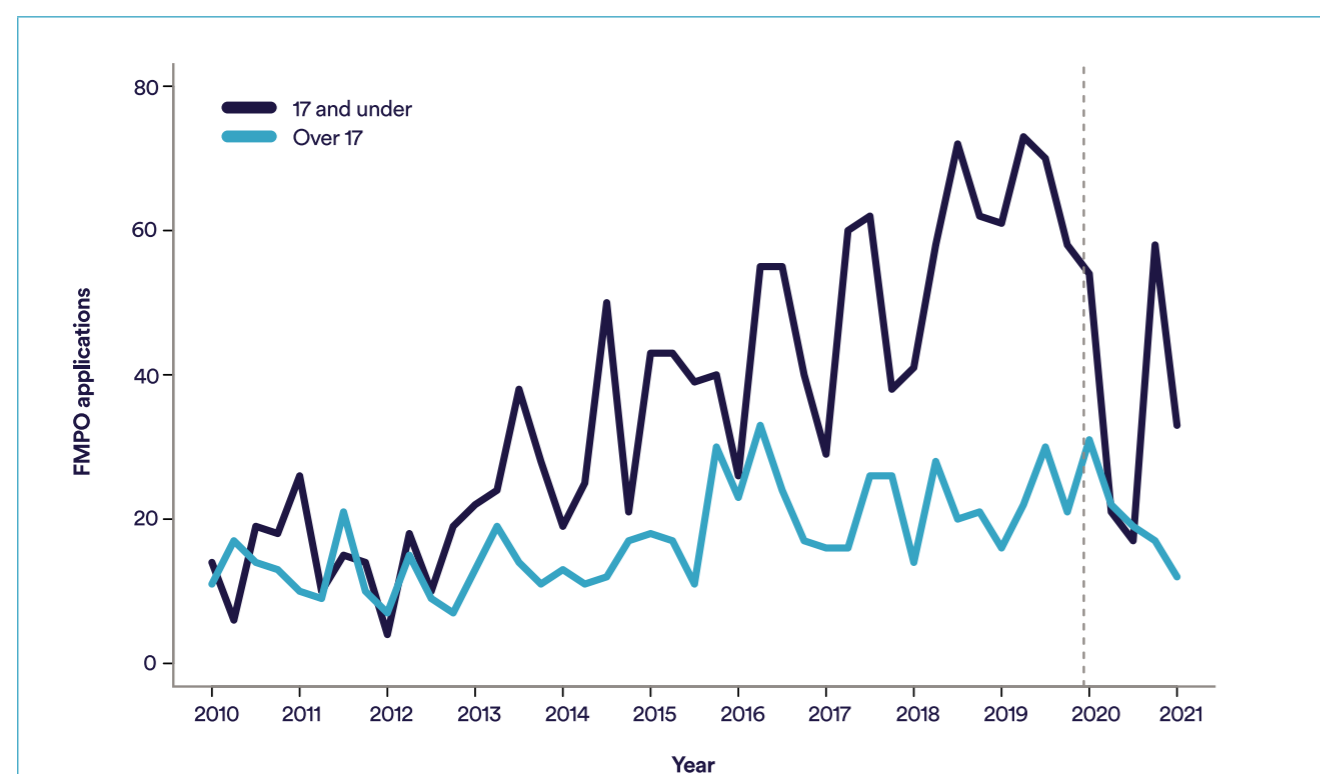
“ This data from KN may suggest more people were at risk of FM once lockdown eased, than pre-pandemic, whereas in the lockdown risk of FM may have decreased.”

Looking at FMPOs, there were 41 applications between April and June 2020, 49% of which were for under-18s. This is a contrast to the same quarter in 2019, when 95 applications were made, 75% of which were for under-18s (and 2018, when 87 applications were made, 67% for under-18s). That is, in the second quarter of 2020, there were 20 FMPOs made for under-18s compared to 71 in 2019 (and 58 in 2018). Indeed, in the second quarter of 2020, for the first time since 2012, there were more FMPOs applied for for people aged 18 and over than 17-and-under.

Evidently, *all* FMPO applications declined in the quarter of 2020 which covers the first lockdown. This might reflect the data from service-providers (that they were dealing with fewer cases of FM).

However, it may reflect difficulties faced in accessing courts during Covid-19, and/or of people at risk being spotted by third parties who could take out FMPOs on their behalf. There is real concern raised by the significant impact on FMPOs made for under-18s (seen clearly in figure 4), and a question as to whether young people have been made “invisible” by the pandemic and Covid-related restrictions.

Figure 4: FMPOs applied for, 2010-2021 (Data from Family Courts, graph by Hannah Coggins.)



HM Courts and Tribunal Service published an account, in July 2020, of their reaction to the pandemic and their plan for the months ahead as lockdown restrictions were eased.⁶⁰ Only 157 priority court and tribunal buildings were selected to be kept open for face-to-face hearings, with the other 124 buildings only open for judges, staff and representatives of agencies needed to support video and telephone hearings. The Service “rapidly expanded audio and video technology capability, enabling judges to conduct remote hearings to a far greater degree”. All frontline Service staff and contractors were deemed “essential workers”.

They recorded that:

“We supported judicial decisions about prioritisation of cases and case-types to make sure the most urgent and important cases could be heard ... **In the civil, family and tribunals jurisdictions, urgent work included ... injunctions and orders dealing with issues of care, abduction, emergency protection and debt.**”

Nowhere in the document are FM or FMPOs mentioned, but *some* applications for FMPOs might have come under the “urgent” heading of “abductions” or “orders dealing with issues of care” and/or “emergency protection”. This said, evidently fewer applications for FMPOs were made, and FMPOs do not seem to have been, in themselves, a priority. (In contrast, Social Security and Child Support, the Immigration and Asylum Chamber, and the Probate, Divorce and Online Civil Money Claims Service were all ensured continuance online, and offered additional support.) This, as much as the impact of restrictions themselves on attempts at FM, may have caused the steep decline in FMPOS (and particularly of those applied for for under-18s) seen in figure 4.

The differing impacts of the lifting of restrictions clearly shows that KN, the FMU, and Family Courts are dealing with different constituencies of people at risk. The data suggests that the easing of lockdown meant some people at risk were more-able to access help, but not all. It may also suggest that the general decrease in cases of FM during lockdown continued even as restrictions started to ease.

1 June – 31 October 2020

Remaining lockdown restrictions in England gradually lifted from 1 June 2020. From this date, nurseries, early years settings, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in primary schools reopened in England⁶¹.

People still needed a reasonable excuse to stay somewhere other than their own home overnight. Such reasonable excuses included:

- staying overnight to attend a funeral as a member of the deceased person’s household, as a close family member, or as a friend if no members of the household or close family members can attend
- elite athletes or their coaches, or (for under-16s) their parents needing to stay away overnight for the purposes of training or competition
- moving house
- work purposes, or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services
- providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person
- providing emergency assistance
- avoiding injury or illness, or to escape a risk of harm; to obtain medical assistance
- fulfilling a legal obligation
- fulfilling child access arrangements; or if someone was unable to return to the place where they live because it is not safe to live there, or it is not legally permissible to travel there.⁶²

(This suggests, of course, that it was not actually legally permissible to stay overnight in a refuge until this date, even when it was legally permissible to leave a home to escape harm...)

Gathering restrictions also changed in England: two people were allowed to meet indoors or six outdoors from different households. Although weddings were still not formally permitted, this might have allowed for religious ceremonies in people’s private gardens, and thus for some cases of FM.

From 8 June, passengers arriving into the UK were asked to isolate⁶³ – this was reduced to “countries where the virus is not yet under control” from 3 July⁶⁴. From 15 June, secondary schools in England provided some in-person teaching for Years 10-12.⁶⁵ This provided a first opportunity for teachers to assess risk in-person, and for any young people at risk to reach out to relevant third parties in an educational setting without having to do that from home (where they might be subject to surveillance).

From 1 July, Leicester was put into a local lockdown⁶⁶ – it remained in some form of additional restriction to most of the rest of the UK until the Tier system was introduced in October 2020. For the rest of England, from 4 July, there was a further easing of lockdown: the two-meter rule was amended to “one-meter plus”, and two households of any size were permitted to meet indoors, including for

overnight stays.⁶⁷ Weddings with a maximum of 30 attendees were now permitted, and places of worship could re-open (alongside other venues for weddings) if they were Covid-secure. This change would have made it more possible to conduct FM (though illegal itself, the mixing of households, and/or the associated celebration would not have been controverting Covid-19 regulations).

In addition, the FCDO announced exemptions for a number of destinations from its global advisory against “all but essential” international travel which had been in place since 17 March. “Travel corridors” were introduced on 10 July, undergoing several changes until finally being entirely suspended in December 2020.⁶⁸ One impact was the quarantine or self-isolation requirements were lifted for people from “low-risk” countries. This may have allowed more scope for taking people abroad for the purpose of FM, and/or for bringing people to the UK from abroad for that purpose. (This said, people may have already felt travelling to/from the UK for this reason was “essential”.)

From 25 July, further restrictions were brought in for an increasing number of towns in the North of England⁶⁹. These meant that people could not participate in any “gathering ... which consists of two or more persons and takes place in a private dwelling” unless they were in the same household, or support bubble (or fell into one of a handful of other exemptions, as with other similar legislation mentioned above, for example, to facilitate child-access arrangements, to be with someone who was dying or giving birth, or for reasonable work purposes). “Private dwellings” included gardens, and any other outdoor space attached to a house (such as, fire-escapes, steps, alleys, yards). This applied both within the “protected area”, and outside of it, meaning travel outside the North was severely restricted for people living there.

These restrictions were very similar to lockdown (though schools remained open), and the same dangers regarding increased vulnerability to abuse pertain, alongside the same potential reduction in risk of FM (which may have been because of practical concerns, such as the impermissibility of household mixing, or because the increased risk of, and rates of, Covid-19 which prompted the tighter restrictions, with attendant mental health, physical health, and economic impacts, made people less likely to plan, or try to enact, FM).

Despite rising case-rates in parts of England necessitating further, localised, restrictions, the advice to “work from home” was lifted on 1 August 2020 (in England)⁷⁰. Schools in the UK fully re-opened between 18 August 2020⁷¹ and 1 September (in England and Wales).⁷²

Shortly after, on 14 September, a new “rule of six” was introduced in England: no gatherings of more than 6 people (from any number of households) was permitted, unless in a “support bubble” or a single household of more than 6 people.⁷³ Covid-secure weddings and funerals of up to 30 were still permitted, despite the general ban on gathering of 6+. Only a day later, further local restrictions were brought in for areas of the West Midlands⁷⁴, shortly followed by the North East of England.⁷⁵ Between 24 and 28 September, weddings were reduced to 15 permitted guests, and office workers were advised to “work from home”.⁷⁶

On 12 October, the Prime Minister announced a new “Tier” system of restrictions in England, with different parts of the UK entering different ‘Tiers’ of restriction, and devolved administrations bringing in their own restrictions.⁷⁷ The three tiers, initially, were “Medium”, “High” and “Very High”.⁷⁸

Areas in the “medium” tier would remain in the current national restrictions, including the “rule of six” and the closure of hospitality venues at 10pm. Areas put in the “high” tier would continue to have “rule of six” outdoors (including in private gardens), but no mixing of households indoors. People in areas classed “very high” would not be able to mix households (even within the “rule of six”) indoors

“One impact was the quarantine or self-isolation requirements were lifted for people from “low-risk” countries. This may have allowed more scope for taking people abroad for the purpose of FM, and/or for bringing people to the UK from abroad for that purpose.”

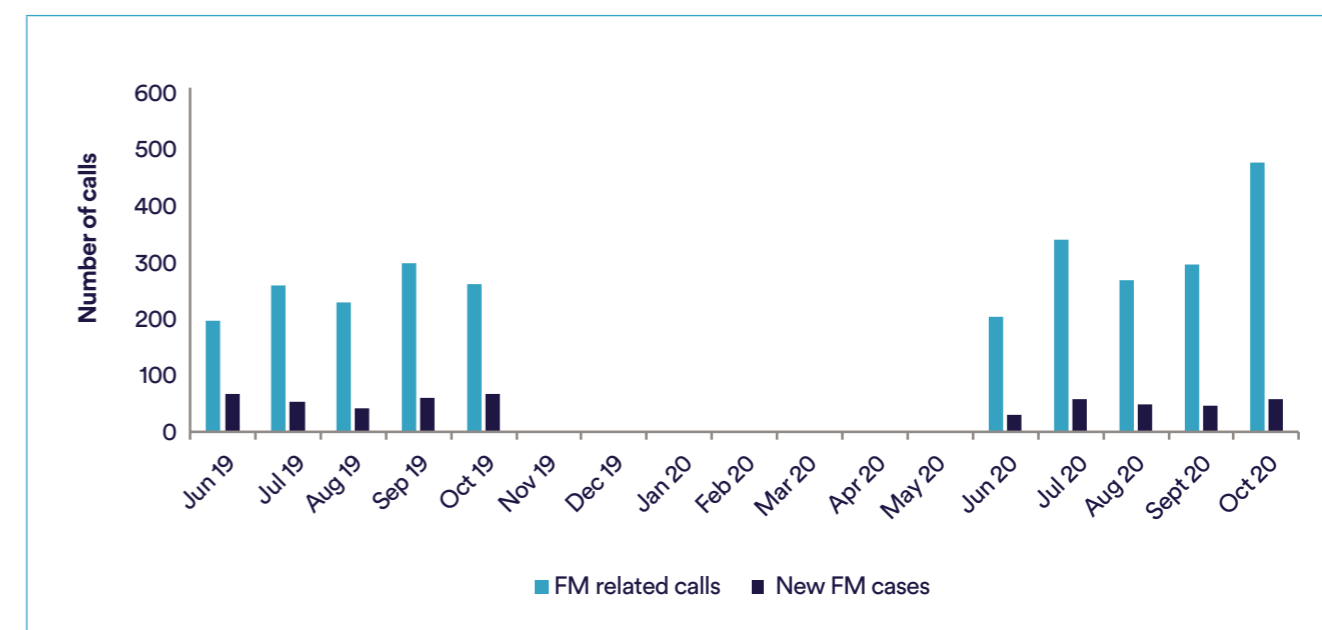
or in private gardens, and all pubs and bars would be closed. Retail, schools and universities remained open, no matter the tier. People were asked not to enter or exit a “very high” tier.

All areas currently under more-localised restrictions were immediately put into “high”, alongside Nottinghamshire, East and West Cheshire, and a small area of the High Peak. The Liverpool City Region was put into “very high”. By 17 October, London, Elmbridge, Essex, Barrow-in-Furness, York, the North East, Derbyshire, Erewash, Chesterfield and Lancashire (the parts which had not already been under tighter restrictions) were added to the “High” tier⁷⁹, rapidly followed by Slough, Stoke-on-Trent and Coventry⁸⁰ and, later, by Oxford⁸¹, Dudley, Staffordshire and Telford⁸². At the same time, Greater Manchester moved to “Very High”, as did South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Warrington.⁸³

Many of these areas account for a significant number of calls to KN in pre-pandemic years. In 2020, the police force areas accounting for the highest percentage of new FM referrals were London Metropolitan (15.9%); West Yorkshire (15%); Greater Manchester (9.6%) and the West Midlands (6.3%). Thames Valley, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Hampshire, Bedfordshire, Derbyshire and Avon and Somerset also each accounted for 10 or more new referrals (and South Yorkshire 9).

KN received a total of 1,252 calls regarding FM between June and October (inclusive) 2020, with 243 new cases. Again, in comparison to 2019, they received many more calls per new case in 2020.

Figure 5: FM-related calls and new cases, June-October 2019 and 2020. (Data from KN.)



We see a significant increase in weekly calls as schools re-opened from September (see figure 1), though interestingly relatively few referrals come to KN directly from schools: only 12 (2.1%) in 2020, with an additional 9 (1.6%) from Further Education (FE) colleges, with similar figures from 2019 (15 (2.8%) referrals from schools, and a further 15 (2.8%) from FE Colleges). This suggests that something about educational providers being open encourages calls to KN, though it may not be the actions of anyone working at those providers. One possibility is that KN’s number is displayed in some schools, and people at risk are thereby made aware of the existence of the helpline: it may also be that schools being open allows those at risk a “reasonable excuse” to be outside the house, and therefore to access other modes of help and support (including via friends).

KN received fewer calls, per month, through the summer compared to May (389 calls) up until October when there

“We see a significant increase in weekly calls as schools re-opened from September (see Figure 1), though interestingly relatively few referrals come to KN directly from schools.”

were 479 calls (and 58 new cases). This said, there were more new cases in July (58), August (49) and September (47) than there were in May (36). This suggests a return, as restrictions lifted, to something more like the ratio between calls and number of new cases experienced pre-pandemic, though as figure 5 shows, it was still higher than before Covid-19.

There were also more new cases in July and August 2020 than there were in the same months in 2019 (and fewer, in comparison, in June, September and October).

It is generally thought that young people are at more risk of FM in the longer school holidays, (with their parents taking advantage of the summer holidays to take them away without coming to the attention of educational authorities). However, data on calls does not show an annual rise in either calls to KN or to the FMU around the summer holidays – indeed, there is no real discernible year-on-year pattern for calls to either helpline).

In 2020, we can see a rise in new cases of FM which corresponds to a period when schools were closed, and an increase in the traditional “holiday” months on 2019. However, given continuing difficulties in travelling abroad, even when the UK had lifted (or mostly lifted) travel restrictions, this is probably as much to do with the easing of restrictions in general than a sign that more people were being taken abroad for FM.

This said, data from the FMU shows that people were taken abroad for the purposes of FM in 2020: 18% of cases they handed in 2020 were of people already abroad when they made contact with the FMU. (Though, this said, it is true that these people might have travelled abroad *before* 2020: it seems unlikely, however, that *all* did.)

The FMU had 306 calls June-October (inclusive), 41% of the total calls that year. The lowest month of calls was August (43), the highest July (76). Again, it is hard to see a pattern: there were fewer calls in August (when restrictions were, in many places, easing) than in April (when we were in lockdown). We can see that the months before any restrictions were introduced (if we include March, as most of that month was spent without restrictions) were the months when the FMU handled most calls (85, 79, 82).

Year-on-year, most calls to the FMU come from London (average of 23% pre-pandemic); the West Midlands (14%); the North West (11%); the South East (9%); and Yorkshire and Humberside (9%). All these regions (save London) experienced tightening restrictions between July and October 2020 (with London experiencing increased restrictions from 17 October).

“

In 2020, we can see a rise in new cases of FM which corresponds to a period when schools were closed, and an increase in the traditional “holiday” months on 2019.”



This said, in 2020, 24% of calls came from London; 13% from the West Midlands; 11% from the North West; 9% from the South East; and 9% from Yorkshire and Humberside. These are very similar percentages to pre-pandemic, and no one region has an evidently different percentage of calls in 2020 to the average of pre-pandemic calls, or the pre-pandemic trends. Restrictions, then, seem to have depressed figures across the board, and at least for calls to the FMU, that some regions had tighter restrictions, and were put under them for longer, does not seem to have caused an increase in calls either in total, or as a percentage of all calls to the FMU in 2020.

This suggests that the general package of Covid-19 restrictions, and the experience of the pandemic, generally decreased calls to the FMU (overall, calls pretty much halved in 2020⁸⁴). But we cannot point to any one specific restriction which caused this decrease. We can say the same about calls to KN.

In the third quarter of 2020 (July-September) there were only 36 applications made for FMPOs, 47% of which were for under-18s. (56 orders were made.) This is the lowest number of applications since the first quarter of 2017 (29), and the lowest number for this quarter since 2012 (10).⁸⁵

As in the previous quarter, there were more FMPOs applied for for over-18s (19, compared to 17). Again, this may be a sign that fewer children and young adults were at risk, but is more likely a sign that people who would usually have been applying for FMPOs for under-17s were not doing so because of a lack of access to those at risk (and thus a lack of knowledge that FMPOs were needed). It may also have had something to do with the on-going closure of many Family Courts with proceedings moving online. 36 applications is the lowest number of total applications for any quarter since 2014.⁸⁶

1 November 2020 – 2 December 2020

A further lockdown was announced (with some differences to the first) for England on 31 October 2020 (effective from 5 November 2020).⁸⁷

In the second lockdown, people had to “stay-at-home” unless they had a “reasonable excuse”. Permitted reasons to leave the home included:

- work (where working from home was not possible)
- exercise or recreation outdoors with members of one’s own household/support bubble, or one other person; for medical reasons
- to escape harm
- to shop for essentials or to provide care and/or voluntary services.

Hospitality venues were limited to takeaways/delivery. Non-essential shops closed. Weddings were not permitted to take place unless one of the people getting married was seriously ill and not expected to recover. (In such cases, weddings were limited to six people.) The main difference to the first lockdown (apart from the inclusion of “support bubbles”) was that schools and other educational establishments remained open.⁸⁸

As with the first lockdown, these restrictions would have made organising and perpetrating FM harder, in the sense that household mixing was banned and relevant venues were closed (and weddings were illegal), though, of course, as noted, Covid-19 laws might not have deterred people who were already breaking the law on FM. The issues experienced in the first lockdown regarding people being trapped at home with perpetrators, and front-line services struggling to reach those at risk will also have returned, even with schools being open, though this will mean some young people at risk should have been better-able to access help, or be identified.

Indeed, KN saw another spike in calls relating to domestic abuse in November 2020 – 445 calls compared to 332 in October and 304 in September. This is a lot higher than in the first lockdown (184 in March, 157 in April), though not to how many they received in May (467), though – as noted –

these might have incorporated people who had made plans to leave in the lockdown after suffering abuse, but could only reach out for help once lockdown restrictions lifted. In contrast, calls related to domestic abuse went down in December 2020, when restrictions were, at least briefly, lifted.

In November 2020, KN received 386 calls relating to FM, handling 58 new FM cases. This was the same number of new cases as October, though almost 100 fewer calls. It was also the same number of new cases as July 2020. This seems to have been a different experience to the first lockdown, when new cases of FM dropped, though calls increased. Indeed, as figure 1 shows, calls to KN dropped throughout the second lockdown, the restrictions in December 2020 and the third lockdown in winter/spring 2021, though there was not quite the sudden plummet in call-numbers the first week of the second lockdown as there was in the week commencing 23 March 2020.

A key difference here may be that schools remained open, and schools seem to be associated with identification of more cases, even though schools themselves are not responsible for these referrals. It is worth noting that, even in the first lockdown, schools remained open for children who had been deemed vulnerable, and for the children of key-workers. Some children may have been deemed “vulnerable” for reasons to do with their risk of FM, but this means children’s social-services and the local authority (and perhaps police) would already be involved. This is not the case in many instances of FM, so the fact that vulnerable children could attend school even in the first lockdown does not mean many children at risk will have been able to access in-person support in school. Schools remaining open to all children in the second lockdown, then, is a significant difference.

New cases referred to KN may also have remained relatively high in the second lockdown (with calls in general falling) because lockdown was less of a shock to people. There had, after all, been over seven months of restrictions by this point, and for many areas of the country, the second lockdown was not so much more restrictive than the regulations they had already been living under.

Similarly, the FMU received 68 calls in November, which is almost the same as in October (69 calls) and September (66 calls). Overall, the FMU received 56% of the total number of calls in 2020 that it had in 2019. In November, it received 61% of the number of calls it received in the previous November, suggesting that the second lockdown had less of an impact on calls to the FMU than the total impact on all calls in 2020.

The FMU received 19 calls in the week the second lockdown began, which is higher than the weeks before (12) and after (14). As with KN, the second lockdown does not seem to have had as significant an impact on calls to the FMU as the first. They received more calls each week than in the first lockdown (apart from week commencing 16 November, where they received 12 calls, which is the same number of calls as they received in week commencing 6 April 2020). Weekly calls of between 12 and 19 calls (as experienced in the second lockdown) were common throughout 2020.



Despite the second lockdown, in the final quarter of 2020, FMPOs returned to something like their pre-pandemic levels. There were 75 applications in October-December 2020, 77% of which were for under-18s. This compares with the 83 applications for the same period in 2019 (75% for under-18s) and also in 2018 (75% for under-18s), and the 77 applications in January-March 2019, and 78 made in January-March 2020.

The reason for this may be that courts continued to operate in-person throughout the second lockdown.⁸⁹ Leaving home to attend court was a ‘reasonable excuse’. This said, judges and magistrates were encouraged to make “full use” of provisions for remote hearings in order to prevent an even-greater backlog building up than had done in the preceding six months where public-health requirements would mean a hearing could not take place in-person.

The second lockdown seems to have had a different impact on FM than the first, perhaps because schools and courts remained open.

2 December 2020 – 8 March 2021

Lockdown was lifted on 2 December 2020, with England entering into a new, stricter, Tier system.⁹⁰ Everyone was advised to work from home where possible, but people could leave their homes for any purpose, and could meet others in outdoor public spaces, subject to the rule of six. Collective worship was permitted, as were weddings with up to 15 people attending. In Tier 3, indoor entertainment, hotels and other accommodation and all forms of hospitality were closed. Domestic and international travel was permitted. Most of England entered the top two Tiers (2 and 3): only Cornwall, the Isle of Scilly and the Isle of Wight were in Tier 1. Much of the North of England, the West Midlands and the East Midlands were immediately put into Tier 3, along with Slough, Kent and Medway, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset.⁹¹

On 14 December a new variant (Alpha) was identified as the potential cause of rising cases in the South East of England.⁹² Other areas were rapidly moved to Tier 3, and on 20 December Tier 4 was introduced.⁹³ This was basically a localised lockdown on the same lines as the second lockdown in November. The initial Christmas bubbles⁹⁴, which would allow three households to mix from 23-27 December were shortened to only mixing on 25 December, and not in Tier 4.

On 4 January 2021, a third lockdown was announced.⁹⁵ It lasted until 8 March 2021. People were required to stay at home unless they needed to: shop for essentials; exercise (locally, once per day, and with a max of one person from another household); seek medical assistance; escape domestic abuse’ or “to work if you absolutely cannot work from home”. Shielding was re-introduced for the vulnerable. All schools, colleges and universities were closed for face-to-face teaching, apart from for vulnerable children or the children of key workers. Nurseries and other early years settings remained open, and some small weddings (maximum of six people) were permitted in “exceptional circumstances”, that is, if one of the parties was seriously ill and not expected to recover.

The lockdown came into effect on 6 January.⁹⁶ On 15 January all “travel corridors” were suspended, and pre-departure testing was required for all inbound passengers to England.⁹⁷ On 27 January a “travel ban” was imposed, with all travel out of the UK no longer permitted unless for a “valid reason”.⁹⁸ From 15 February, all arrivals from the UK’s “travel ban list” had to quarantine in “government-sponsored” accommodation for 10 days.⁹⁹

Of course, travelling for the purpose of FM is always illegal (under the 2014 legislation), so people would not be providing that reason, if asked, anyway. However, sometimes people are taken abroad for the purposes of a “family wedding” which turns out not to be happening (or to be their, forced, marriage), and/or to attend a family funeral. Both of these were “valid reasons” to travel in this period, so, even if closely monitored, would not have made it harder to travel abroad for the purpose of FM.

There was a short window, then, at the end of 2020 when it would have been easier – while abiding by Covid-19 regulations – to organise FM (including FM with an international element), after which it

would have become much more difficult. And there were a long stretch of lockdown restrictions (from 20 December in areas put into Tier 4) where all the same concerns about increased surveillance and coercion by perpetrators that were raised by relevant third-sector organisations about risks in the first lockdown were again pertinent.

In this respect, it is worth noting that KN received 704 calls relating to domestic abuse in January-March (inclusive) 2021. No month's calls were as high, though, as in November 2020, and were a slow drop-off from the 293 calls in December 2020. (The month with most calls relating to domestic abuse in 2021 for KN was June, with 433.) The third lockdown, then, may have been less dangerous for people vulnerable to domestic abuse.

As educational settings were closed for most face-to-face teaching, there is also an added concern, given the role their being open seems to have played in allowing those at risk of FM to access help and support in 2020 (including in the second lockdown) that people were more at risk of FM, or at least that those at risk had less ability to reach out for help. Although, as in the first lockdown, schools remained open to those children deemed "vulnerable", and the children of key workers, as noted above, this would not cover very many children at risk of FM (or anyone over the age of 18).

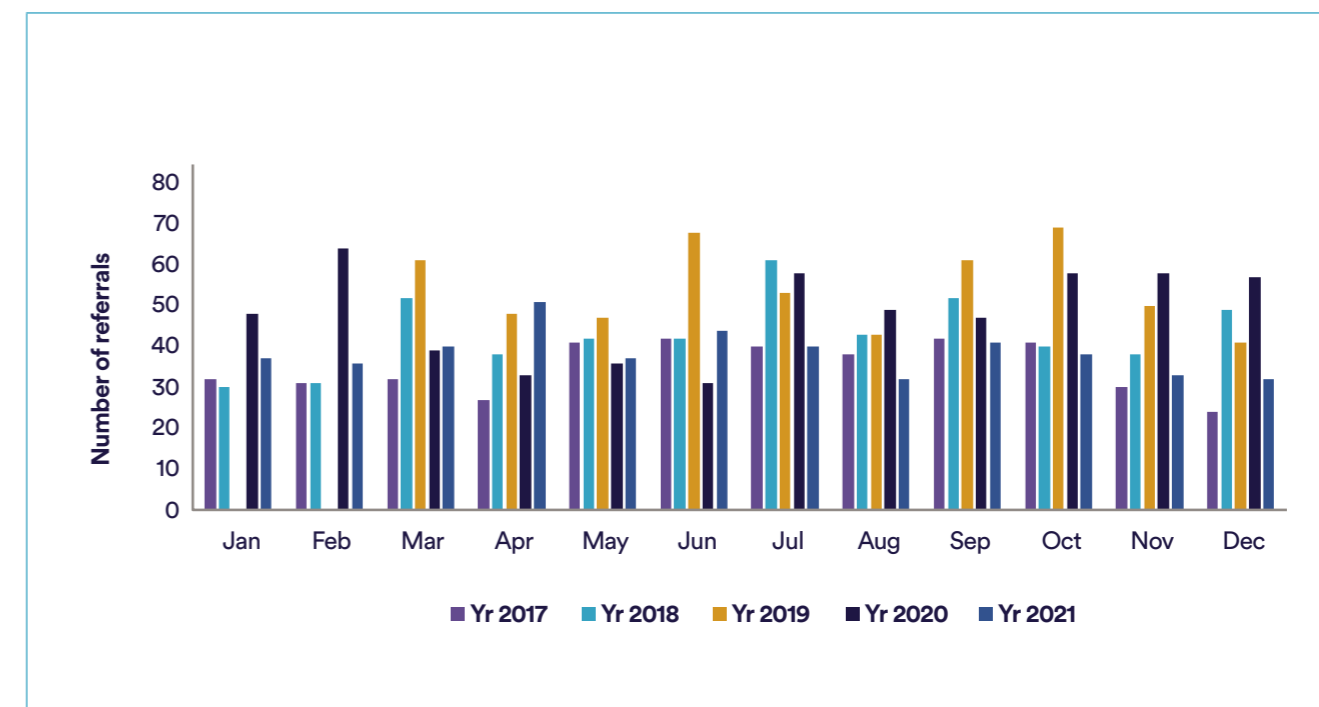
KN received 328 calls regarding FM in December 2020, handling 57 new cases. This is a very similar number to November (58) and October (58), and July (58). It is, though, substantially fewer calls than in November (386), October (479), and even July (342). As Figure 1 shows, calls continued in a downwards trajectory through the third "lockdown" and were, on average, much lower in 2021 than in 2020. In the first three months of 2021 KN received 221 calls regarding FM in January, 219 in February, and 217 in March, and were alerted to 37 new cases of FM in January, 36 in February, and 40 in March.

As figure 6 shows, this number of new referrals in 2021 is lower than the same period in 2020 (apart from being a slight increase on March 2020). New referrals were generally higher in 2021 than in 2017-2019, which reflects a pre-pandemic trend of increased cases (which may mean FM was increasing in the UK, or may mean people were more-aware of KN's helpline, and thus made us of it to seek help). **Again, lockdown seems to have depressed the number of FM-related calls received by KN.**

“However, sometimes people are taken abroad for the purposes of a “family wedding” which turns out not to be happening (or to be their, forced, marriage), and/or to attend a family funeral. Both of these were “valid reasons” to travel in this period, so, even if closely monitored, would not have made it harder to travel abroad for the purpose of FM.”



Figure 6: Number of new FM referrals by month to KN, 2017-2021 (no data for January and February 2019 – Data from KN).



The FMU have not yet published their data for 2021, so we cannot see what the impact of the 2021 restrictions was on calls to them.

Family Courts, however, have published relevant data for this period of 2021.¹⁰⁰ In January to March 2021, they received 45 applications (in England and Wales), 73% of which were for under-18s. This is a significantly smaller number than the same period in 2020 (78 applications), and also in the preceding quarter (75 applications), though in line with the quarter of the first lockdown (41 applications).

As in the second lockdown, courts stayed open in January 2021, and people working in courts were deemed "essential workers".¹⁰¹ However, the Bar Council and regional circuits said "it is our clear expectation that judges ... will move to remote hearings of cases wherever possible and as soon as possible ... save for trials".

Given this, the decline in FMPO applications is unexpected. It is not likely to reflect a decline in the need for applications. The government notes the "revers[al]" in 2020 of the "general upward trend" in FMPO applications from 2008-2019, but offers no explanation.¹⁰²

Something about the third lockdown appears to have made it harder for individuals, and relevant third parties, to make applications for FMPOs which was not the case in November 2020. Further qualitative research with members of the legal profession and other relevant third parties may cast some light on this, and our team are pursuing this research at the moment.

8 March 2021 – 19 July 2021

8 March marked the first stage in a "road-map" out of lockdown.¹⁰³ Among other changes, face-to-face teaching returned to all schools and colleges in England. Outdoor recreation with one person from another household, or linked household/support bubble, was permitted. Weddings were also permitted, with a limit of 6 people.

A declaration was required for persons leaving the UK including "the reason P is leaving or outside the place where P is living". Not providing this information (or providing false information) was a criminal offence, with a potential £200 FPN.¹⁰⁴ This might have made travelling abroad for the purpose of FM possible.

From 29 March 2021, the “rule of six” was brought back in – people could meet outdoors in groups of six or two households (where one household exceed six people), including in private gardens. The “stay-at-home” order was lifted, but people were still advised to work from home if they could. Travel outside of the UK was banned ‘without a reasonable excuse’, with a potential FPN of £5,000.¹⁰⁵ The wedding of a close family member was included as an excuse, as were:

- work
- providing voluntary charitable services
- studying abroad
- elite sports activities
- to fulfil legal obligations or participate in legal proceedings
- to facilitate the purchase, sale, letting or rental of a residential property
- because it is reasonably necessary to leave the UK to seek medical assistance
- to attend a clinical appointment
- to avoid illness, injury or to escape a risk of harm
- to attend an expectant mother giving birth, at her request
- to visit someone receiving treatment in a hospital or staying in a hospice or care-home
- to provide care and assistance to a vulnerable person
- to provide emergency assistance to any person
- to visit a person who is dying
- to attend a funeral
- to vote
- for arrangements concerning access to children.¹⁰⁶

As already noted, leaving the UK for the purpose of FM is never justified. However, people are often taken abroad ostensibly for other reasons, for instance weddings and funerals. Thus, these restrictions would not necessarily have made it more difficult to take people abroad for the purpose of FM. From 8 March, 2021, then, FM was increasingly possible within Covid-related restrictions.

International travel was also subject to different restrictions depending on what “list” countries were put on, with travel to “red list” countries banned. Pakistan and Bangladesh were added on 9 April 2021¹⁰⁷, with India being added on 23 April¹⁰⁸. (When the FMU data for 2021 is published, it will be interesting to see if this impacted calls, as 40% of their cases, year-on-year, involve Pakistan in some way, and Bangladesh and India are the two next-most frequent focus countries.)

On 12 April, “step two” was announced: two key changes were that two people from different households were permitted to meet indoors, and weddings with up to 15 people were permitted.¹⁰⁹ (As noted, however, just two people meeting indoors would probably not be enough for a marriage ceremony, though this might depend on who was deemed necessary to be present.)

From 17 May, the rule of six (or two households, if one exceeded six people) was applied indoors as well as outdoors, and gatherings of up to 30 people were permitted outdoors.¹¹⁰ Weddings with up to 30 attendees were permitted, and travel abroad was no longer limited by a “reasonable excuse”.

On 20 June, this was amended with the rule of six applying to weddings occurring indoors at a private dwelling. Unlimited numbers of people were allowed outdoors or in “Covid-secure” spaces. 30 people were allowed to attend weddings in private homes if one party to the weddings was seriously ill and not expected to recover.

This change aside, the roadmap to leaving lockdown rolled out up to so-called “freedom day” on 19 July, when almost all legal restrictions in England ended. There were now no limits to the number of people who could attend events; no requirement to wear face-masks or stick to social-distancing guidelines; and people were advised to cease working from home.¹¹¹

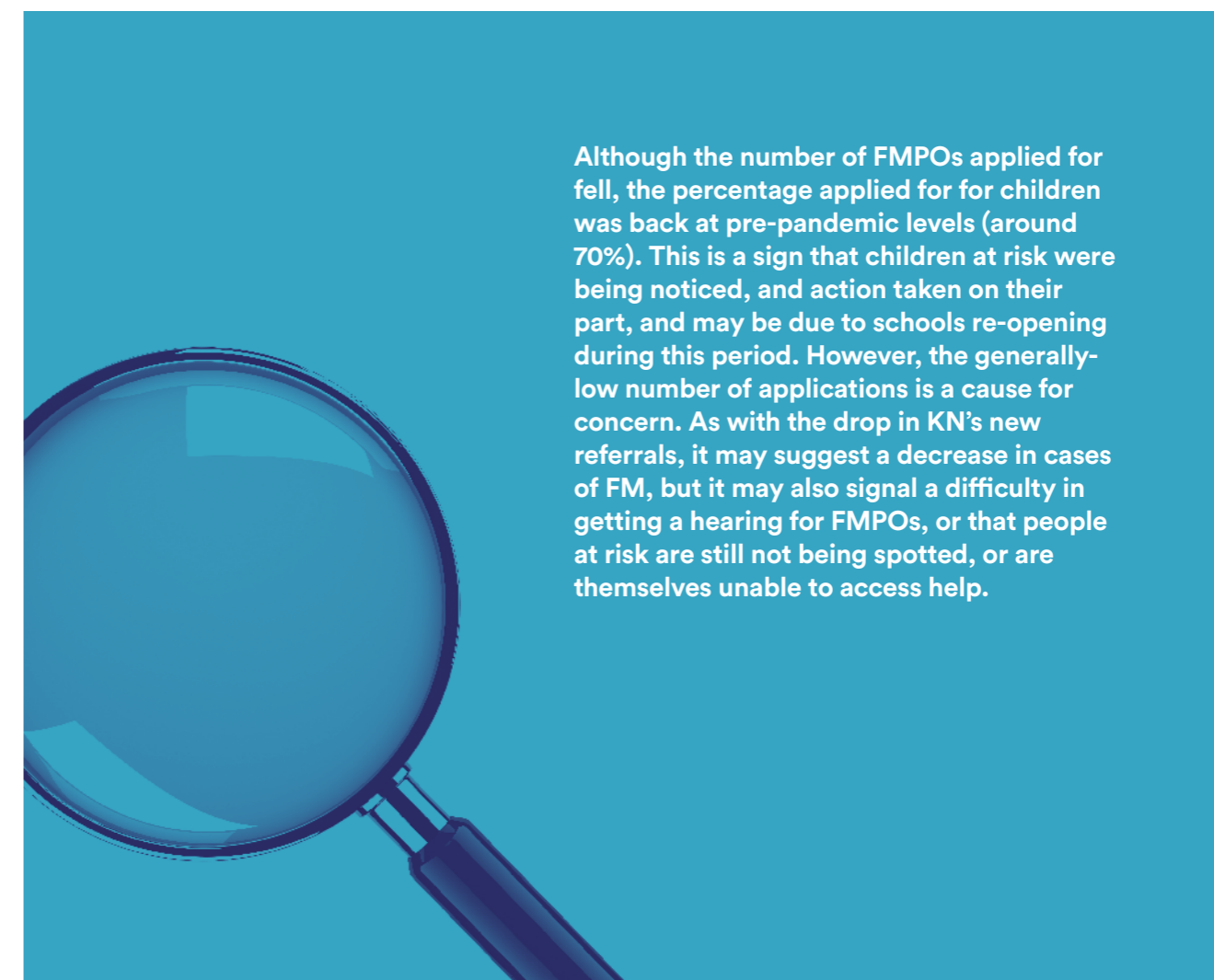
The easing of restrictions in 2021 did not correspond to a decline (or increase) in calls to KN regarding FM. They received 144 calls in March, 234 in April, 170 in May, 226 in June, and 180 in July. They handled 40 new cases in March, 51 in April, 37 in May, 44 in June and 40 in July.

As figure 6 shows, this was more new cases than in the same months in 2020 (apart from July), but fewer than, in general, in other years (apart from April). As figure 1 shows, they had something of a peak in calls week commencing 12 April – but nothing like as significant a peak as when restrictions started to ease in May 2020. April was also the month KN handled most new referrals (521) – the next highest number was 44, in June.

Overall, calls to KN throughout 2021 were around 20% lower than 2020, and KN handled fewer new cases of FM overall in 2021 (461) than 2020 (578). Indeed, this was fewer new cases than any year since 2017 (420 cases).

Despite significant restrictions in 2021, then, KN handled fewer calls relating to FM than in 2020, and fewer new referrals for FM. This suggests there were fewer cases of FM, at least among that constituency of people who would be likely to turn to KN for help, in 2021 than in 2020. As people could call, and new cases were referred to KN, despite restrictions in 2020, the decline in calls and new referrals in 2021 seems to be less likely due to continuing restrictions, and more a sign that there were fewer cases.

In the second quarter of 2021 (April-June), there were 50 applications for FMPOs, 74% of which were made for people aged under-18. Again, this is a lot fewer than we would expect from pre-pandemic data. There were, for instance, 95 applications in the same quarter of 2019, and 87 in the same quarter of 2018. There were a more-similar number in the same quarter of 2020 (41).



Although the number of FMPOs applied for fell, the percentage applied for for children was back at pre-pandemic levels (around 70%). This is a sign that children at risk were being noticed, and action taken on their part, and may be due to schools re-opening during this period. However, the generally-low number of applications is a cause for concern. As with the drop in KN’s new referrals, it may suggest a decrease in cases of FM, but it may also signal a difficulty in getting a hearing for FMPOs, or that people at risk are still not being spotted, or are themselves unable to access help.

Shortly after “freedom day”, local restrictions were brought in in Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth, Torbay and the Isles of Scilly.¹¹² People were urged to limit social contact, meet others outside, continue wearing face-coverings indoors in public spaces, and to self-isolate if told to do so. These measures lasted until 1 October 2021.¹¹³

The UK’s “red”, “amber” and “green” travel-lists were updated regularly through 2021, until the spread of the Omicron variant in the UK made the government decide to do away with the “red list” as it was “less effective”.¹¹⁴ Instead, the government introduced new rules on self-isolation for anyone coming to the UK.

Similarly, in response to Omicron, the government re-introduced a requirement to wear face-covering in more indoor settings from 30 November. From 13 December, it advised people to work from home where possible. These “Plan B” measures were lifted on 27 January 2022.¹¹⁵

As figure 1 shows, calls to KN’s helpline dramatically decreased at the end of 2021, corresponding to concerns around Omicron. Figure 2 shows how many fewer calls they received in November and December 2021 compared to 2019.

KN handled 40 new referrals for FM in July 2021, 32 in August, 41 in September, 38 in October, 33 in November and 32 in December. They received 180 FM-related calls in July, 216 in August, 194 in September, 194 in October, 230 in November, and only 97 in December 2021, by far the lowest all year. This may reflect the impact of concern over Omicron (even when the government did not impose many new restrictions, for example on households mixing).

In late 2021, the ratio of calls to new referrals returned to pre-pandemic levels. Relatedly, so did the amount of on-going support KN have offered to new cases. This suggests that cases of FM, at least among those people likely to reach out to KN for help and support, have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

There is currently no information for the last quarter of 2021 from the Family Courts. However, in July to September 2021 there were 38 applications for FMPOs, 66% of which were for people aged under 18.

As with the low number of applications made in the preceding quarter, this is very worrying. Even if cases have returned to pre-pandemic levels, we would expect more FMPOs than this.



Themes from interviewing key stakeholders

As well as processing quantitative data, and carefully mapping it against key events, we have been interviewing key stakeholders identified through stakeholder mapping. We have spoken to people from NGOs and key-service providers (including KN), law-enforcement, the legal profession, and local authorities.

We are still in the process of interviewing more stakeholders, and of transcribing and coding all their responses. However, some key themes emerge. These include:

Remote working. This impacted many people working in this area, in both positive and negative ways. One interviewee said “I’d prefer more remote working because it means we can speak to more partners/victims etc.”. However, others noted issues with privacy when working remotely, with accessing interpreters, and with having difficulty separating work and home-life.

Call volumes. As also evidenced by the quantitative data, service providers were receiving more calls. Qualitative data also suggests these were generally longer than before the pandemic, and that out-going support was being offered for longer through much of the pandemic.

Well-being. Long calls, more calls, and difficulties in separating work from home had knock-on effects on the well-being of service providers.

Provision. Helplines kept going through lockdowns and restrictions, pivoting their working practices and adopting new technologies where necessary. Front-line police services carried on in-person, but they had fewer cases to deal with.

Isolation. Particularly in lockdowns, victims have been increasingly isolated. Victims have been more at risk because of this isolation, and are relying more on helplines because they cannot access other forms of help. Key service-providers and other stakeholders have also been very isolated by Covid-related restrictions.

Historic Trauma. Covid-related restrictions brought back historic trauma for some survivors of FM, particularly where they had been forced to “stay-at-home” by those forcing them to marry, or the people they were forced to marry as part of on-going control and abuse in the relationship. Helplines saw an increase in calls from distressed survivors of historical FM. This also suggests future surges in calls if similar restrictions are ever re-imposed, not just of historic FM, but of abuse experienced in the last two years of restrictions.

References

- ¹ This is an update from ESRC-funded Covid-19 Rapid Response grant ES/V015370/1. For more information, see <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FV015370%2F1>.
- ² <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths>.
- ³ <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases>.
- ⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/section/121>.
- ⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-for-dealing-with-forced-marriage-and-multi-agency-practice-guidelines-handling-cases-of-forced-marriage-accessible>.
- ⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-for-dealing-with-forced-marriage-and-multi-agency-practice-guidelines-handling-cases-of-forced-marriage-accessible>.
- ⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-for-dealing-with-forced-marriage-and-multi-agency-practice-guidelines-handling-cases-of-forced-marriage-accessible>.
- ⁸ See Zaheer Allam, 'The First 50 days of Covid-19: A Detailed Chronological Timeline and Extensive Review of Literature Documenting the Pandemic', *Surveying the Covid-19 Pandemic and its Implications 2020: 1-7* (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7378494/>).
- ⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51325192>.
- ¹⁰ [https://www.who.int/news/item/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news/item/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)).
- ¹¹ <https://bfp.gov.uk/2020/04/covid-19-timeline/>.
- ¹² <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths>.
- ¹³ <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths>.
- ¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/travel-advice-foreign-secretary-statement-17-march-2020>.
- ¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51952314>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-colleges-and-early-years-settings-to-close>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52012432>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020>; House of Commons Library, (2021) *Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068)*, p.6; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-ministers-update-covid-19/>; <https://gov.wales/first-minister-of-wales-statement-on-new-coronavirus-measures>; <https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/6266#A700000181>.
- ¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/mar/24/coronavirus-travel-updates-which-countries-have-restrictions-and-fco-warnings-in-place>.
- ¹⁷ See data available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2020>.
- ¹⁸ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-protection-orders-fl701/forced-marriage-protection-orders> (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52612449>).
- ¹⁹ From data provided by KN.
- ²⁰ From data provided by KN.
- ²¹ From FOI data from the FMU – in the first week of 2020 they had “<5” calls, hence the potential range of calls for this period.
- ²² The FMU did not give a weekly breakdown for 2018 in response to our FOI, though they did give the weekly data for other years.
- ²³ For instance, Afghanistan suspended international travel from 1 March 2020: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/afghanistan-resumes-international-flights-amid-covid-19/1888176>.
- ²⁴ https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200229-sitrep-40-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=849d0665_2.
- ²⁵ https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200229-sitrep-40-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=849d0665_2.
- ²⁶ See data available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>.
- ²⁷ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9068/#:~:text=England%20was%20in%20national%20lockdown,the%20laws%20were%20slowly%20relaxed>.

- ²⁸ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/350/pdfs/uksi_20200350_en.pdf.
- ²⁹ https://s36833.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/Impact-on-BAME-Services_COVID19.pdf, 3; <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3965/documents/39887/default/>, 5.
- ³⁰ Service providers quoted in https://s36833.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/Impact-on-BAME-Services_COVID19.pdf, 11.
- ³¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19-a-year-into-the-pandemic/>.
- ³² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-minister-covid-19-update-15/>.
- ³³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help#full-publication-update-history> – the guidance itself seems to have no been taken down from the internet.
- ³⁴ https://s36833.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/Impact-on-BAME-Services_COVID19.pdf, 3-4.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/785/documents/5040/default/>.
- ³⁷ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/150917>; <https://www.lcv.org.uk/home-office-launches-youarenotalone-covid-19-domestic-abuse-campaign/>.
- ³⁸ <https://gov.wales/minister-launches-home-shouldnt-be-a-place-of-fear-campaign>.
- ³⁹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/785/documents/5040/default/>, p.3.
- ⁴⁰ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/785/documents/5040/default/>, p.4.
- ⁴¹ See <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-03-18.171754.h> for details of the Silver Command Group. KN have told us they are a part of this group.
- ⁴² <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/mar/24/coronavirus-travel-updates-which-countries-have-restrictions-and-fco-warnings-in-place>.
- ⁴³ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2020/03/23/govt-offices-to-remain-closed-till-april-4>; <https://travelbans.org/asia/bangladesh/>.
- ⁴⁴ See data available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>.
- ⁴⁵ Data received from an FOI to the FMU.
- ⁴⁶ The FMU never give more granular detail than “<5” for relevant data for reasons of protecting anonymity.
- ⁴⁷ House of Commons Library, (2021) *Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068)*, p.6-7; Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, PM address to the nation on coronavirus, 10 May 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-10-may-2020>).
- ⁴⁸ House of Commons Library, (2021) *Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068)*, p.6-7; Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, PM address to the nation on coronavirus, 10 May 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-10-may-2020>); r2(3)(a)(iii), The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; r2(3)(a)(iii), The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; r2(4), The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/500/pdfs/uksi_20200500_en.pdf).
- ⁴⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-10-2020/>.
- ⁵⁰ <https://gov.wales/wales-extends-coronavirus-lockdown>.
- ⁵¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9068/>, 6.
- ⁵² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52605819>.
- ⁵³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52612449>.
- ⁵⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-21-2020/>; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-22-2020/>; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-28-2020/>; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-29-2020/>; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-1-update/pages/3/>.
- ⁵⁵ <https://gov.wales/written-statement-review-lockdown-measures-and-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-wales>.
- ⁵⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/22/uk-police-break-up-lockdown-flouting-wedding-with-400-guests>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-56562767>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-55764673>.
- ⁵⁷ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9068/>.
- ⁵⁸ Data retrieved from FMU via an FOI.
- ⁵⁹ See data available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>.

⁶⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896779/HMCTS368_recovery_-_COVID-19_Overview_of_HMCTS_response_A4L_v3.pdf.

⁶¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-six-people-can-meet-outside-under-new-measures-to-ease-lockdown>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-press-conference-statement-on-the-five-tests-28-may-2020>; House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068); The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020.

⁶² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/558/regulation/2/made>.

⁶³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-new-public-health-measures-for-all-uk-arrivals>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-at-the-coronavirus-press-conference-3-june-2020>.

⁶⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-3-july-2020>.

⁶⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/transport-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-4-june-2020>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/health-and-social-care-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-5-june-2020>.

⁶⁶ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-06-29/debates/0F09C0AB-4A72-4E67-832A-1F8FC07F-2D2E/Covid-19Update>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-3-july-2020>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (No.2) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford, Leicester, and North of England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (No. 2) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.

⁶⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-23-june-2020>; <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-06-23/debates/7E464B41-46ED-4FA9-BAFD-28EC7B3DA230/Covid-19Update>; House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068), p.9; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/self-isolation-lifted-for-lower-risk-countries-in-time-for-holidays-this-summer>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53217342>.

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-uk-travel-corridors-temporarily-suspended-to-protect-against-new-international-variants>.

⁶⁹ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions on Gatherings) (North of England) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions on Gatherings) (North of England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions on Gatherings) (North of England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions on Gatherings) (North of England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North of England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford, Leicester, and North of England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North of England, North East and North West of England and Obligations of Undertakings (England) etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North of England and North East and North West of England etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

⁷⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/health-and-social-care-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-22-june-2020>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-coronavirus-17-july-2020>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 2020 No. 822); The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford, Leicester, and North of England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068).

⁷¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-10-august-2020/>.

⁷² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-possible-measures-to-be-taken-before-schools-and-colleges-close>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-visits-to-schools-and-colleges-to-begin-this-month>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-to-visit-nurseries-and-childminders-this-autumn>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-53847500>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-58413690>.

⁷³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/update-on-new-social-distancing-rules>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-press-conference-statement-9-september-2020>.

⁷⁴ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull) Regulations 2020.

⁷⁵ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North East of England) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North East of England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North of England, North East and North West of England and Obligations of Undertakings (England) etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North of England and North East and North West of England etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

⁷⁶ House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068); <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-22-september-2020>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 2020.

⁷⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/785/documents/5040/default/>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-press-conference-statement-on-the-five-tests-28-may-2020>.

⁷⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-commons-statement-on-coronavirus-12-october-2020>.

⁷⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-covid-19-alert-level-update-15-october-2020>.

⁸⁰ http://allcatsrgrey.org.uk/wp/download/infection_control/Full-list-of-local-COVID-alert-levels-by-area-GOV.UK__4.pdf.

⁸¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-54736797>.

⁸² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-54748653>.

⁸³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-england-manchester-54600988>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-54630541>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-54554377>; http://allcatsrgrey.org.uk/wp/download/infection_control/Full-list-of-local-COVID-alert-levels-by-area-GOV.UK__4.pdf.

⁸⁴ See data available here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>, and <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/resources/reports-and-briefings/2021/july/impact-of-covid-19-on-calls-to-the-forced-marriage-unit.pdf>.

⁸⁵ See data available here: <https://www.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/family-justice-system>.

⁸⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-july-2014-to-september-2014>.

⁸⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-31-october-2020>.

⁸⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-31-october-2020>.

⁸⁹ <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/courts-will-be-exempt-from-second-lockdown/5106234.article>.

⁹⁰ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-11-23/debates/81549EE3-DAFC-43CB-B8E6-C4F-2C32393C8/Covid-19WinterPlan>; <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1374/contents/made>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-26-november-2020>; House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068); House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068).

⁹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/55085702>.

⁹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/sharp-rise-in-coronavirus-numbers-and-a-new-variant>.

⁹³ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2020; <https://twitter.com/AdamWagner1/status/1340568872655708161?s=20>.

⁹⁴ First announced 25 November 2020, but plans changed in the wake of a new variant of Covid-19 - House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068); Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020; <https://twitter.com/AdamWagner1/status/1333435777464881155?s=20>.

⁹⁵ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 3) and (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-address-to-the-nation-4-january-2021>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-national-lockdown>; <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9068/>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 3) and (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-national-lockdown>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-national-lockdown>.

- ⁹⁶ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 3) and (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021; House of Commons Library, (2021) Coronavirus: A History of English Lockdown Laws (9068).
- ⁹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/international-travel-update-11-january-2021>.
- ⁹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tougher-border-controls-to-protect-public-health>.
- ⁹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-confirms-mandatory-hotel-quarantine-to-be-introduced-from-15-february>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) (Amendment) (No. 7) Regulations 2021.
- ¹⁰⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/family-justice-system>.
- ¹⁰¹ <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/courts-stay-open-as-england-plunged-back-into-lockdown/5106888.article>.
- ¹⁰² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021/family-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021#forced-marriage-protection-orders-and-female-genital-mutilation-protection-orders>.
- ¹⁰³ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-22/debates/7F26D493-AF6A-46A4-A1C3-61A39D-D527CE/Covid-19RoadMap/>
- ¹⁰⁴ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-22/debates/7F26D493-AF6A-46A4-A1C3-61A39D-D527CE/Covid-19RoadMap>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place and Restrictions: All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
- ¹⁰⁵ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-22/debates/7F26D493-AF6A-46A4-A1C3-61A39D-D527CE/Covid-19RoadMap>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021.
- ¹⁰⁶ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/364/pdfs/uksi_20210364_en.pdf, Section 5.
- ¹⁰⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56614950>.
- ¹⁰⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/india-added-to-red-list-as-cases-of-new-variant-rise>.
- ¹⁰⁹ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps and Local Authority Enforcement Powers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021; <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-22/debates/7F26D493-AF6A-46A4-A1C3-61A39DD527CE/Covid-19RoadMap>.
- ¹¹⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/364/regulation/8/2021-05-17>; <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-22/debates/7F26D493-AF6A-46A4-A1C3-61A39DD527CE/Covid-19RoadMap>; The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps and Other Provisions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
- ¹¹¹ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/848/pdfs/uksi_20210848_en.pdf.
- ¹¹² https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/enhanced-response-area/?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo.
- ¹¹³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-58761695#:~:text=Special%20measures%20to%20tackle%20a,weeks%20and%20ended%20on%20Friday>.
- ¹¹⁴ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9400/#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20concerns%20about,required%20to%20self%20isolate%20for>.
- ¹¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/england-returns-to-plan-a-as-regulations-on-face-coverings-and-covid-passes-change-today>.



University of
Nottingham
Rights Lab

**Discover more about our
world-class research**

nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab

 rightslab@nottingham.ac.uk

 [@rightsbeacon](https://twitter.com/rightsbeacon)

**This publication is available
in alternative formats.
+44 (0)115 951 5559**