

Time to “challenge ideologies” behind forced marriage and honour based violence

Every July, a National Remembrance Day is held to commemorate the victims of forced marriage and honour based violence across the world.

To commemorate the day in Wales, Bawso organised a Dialogue Day, held at the Butetown Community Centre in Cardiff yesterday, to raise awareness of forced marriage and honour based violence and to highlight services available to support victims and reduce isolation.

Yasmin, who alongside Nasir Afzal, was appointed as National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) earlier this year, was invited to deliver the key note speech at the event and update on the work of the Welsh Government.

She said,

“We must start to challenge the ideologies which frame forced marriages and honour based violence. These are crimes, and we cannot ignore them.

“If we are to meet our ambition through the VAWDASV Act 2015, we require a societal culture shift. We must ensure we prevent this abuse of human rights where possible, protect those at risk, and support those who present themselves to services.

“We recently published Our National Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Framework which outlines some of the actions we will take to tackle forced marriage and honour-based violence. This will provide solid foundation and signal the Welsh Government’s commitment to making the aspiration of Wales being the safest place for women in Europe a reality.”

Mutale Merrill OBE, Chief Executive of Bawso said,

“Bawso has been working with victims of forced marriage and honour based violence for over 20 years and since 2011, we have supported 585 people affected by forced marriage and honour based violence.

We are pleased to hold a Dialogue Day which brings together professionals, members of the local community and survivors of forced marriage and honour based violence to share their experience and to discuss services and support available to people affected by honour based violence and forced marriage.”

Kim Ann Williamson MBE, who is the Inclusion and Community Engagement Officer for CPS Cymru-Wales, and co-chairs the Wales HBV/FGM Strategic Leadership Group said:

“Some of these crimes are among the most complex referred to the CPS. Being part of the Strategic Leadership Group allows us to share good practice and support those who report such serious crimes from an early stage.

“We are working with the police, Welsh Government and third sector bodies to ensure cases are recognised, robustly investigated and referred to the CPS.”