

## How our understanding of child abuse linked to faith or belief may become distorted by current data

The BME-Migrant Advisory Group (B-MAG) for the safeguarding of children and young people continues its call for further exploration of data in relation to child abuse cases linked to faith or belief.



B-MAG welcomes the inclusion of the category of ‘abuse linked to faith or belief’ in the Children In Need census as, historically, such cases were recorded as child abuse only – and thus missing the underlying issues, particularly identified in the tragic deaths of Victoria Climbié (2000), Khyra Ishaq (2008) and Kristy Bamu (2010).

The increase in recorded cases of witchcraft and spirit possession since 2016 has prompted concern within the children’s sector, albeit a small

percentage of cases on the spectrum of child abuse. Yet, we still lack understanding of these figures and indeed what is being recorded during assessments.

Mor Dioum, VCF Director echoed these concerns in a recent Guardian article, and also highlights the lack of community engagement or consultation around this topic:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/nov/14/witchcraft-and-black-magic-contribute-to-increase-in-child-abuse>

The factors and occurrences of child abuse linked to faith or belief are currently being considered within our policy development work and we welcome additional contributions to this debate. Our most recent [seminar](#) (April 2019) sought to determine where we go from here when the information being presented remains unclear.

We wish to consult widely on this topic, due to the inadequacies of reporting on such forms of abuse over a 20-year timeline, and invite interested parties to talk to us directly or online.

Website: [www.bmagsafeguardingcyp.com](http://www.bmagsafeguardingcyp.com)

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See also:

[B-MAG calls for further examination of the census data for children in need](#)