

What is a Forced Marriage?

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure, or abuse is used. Those assessed to lack capacity, cannot consent. An Arranged Marriage is where both participants give their full consent and enter the marriage willingly. This includes people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and religion. Forced marriage is **different** to arranged marriage where families are involved in selecting a partner, but **it is up to the individuals to decide whether or not to enter the marriage**. Some structures that are used in an arranged marriage may also be used in a forced marriage and this can often become confusing in distinguishing between them. The key distinction is that a forced marriage involves **a lack of consent by one or both parties and where coercion or pressure may be a factor**.

Facts and Motivation for Forced Marriage

- ▶ Controlling unwanted behaviours.
- ▶ Stopping unsuitable relationship from forming
- ▶ Listening and being pressured by peer groups, extended families, communities.
- ▶ Protecting family honour (izzat)
- ▶ Attempting to strengthen family links, alliances and bonds, UK & Abroad
- ▶ Assisting claims for country residence.
- ▶ Financial gain
- ▶ Ensuring land, property and wealth remains within the family.
- ▶ Protecting tradition, religion and culture, values and morals
- ▶ History of BME communities' importance on marriage and preparation through life and childhood to obtain honour.

Key Contacts and Further Information (click for more info)

- [Coventry Safeguarding Adult Board](#)
- [Victim Support](#)
- [Women's Aid](#)
- [Galop](#)
- [Coventry Haven](#)
- [Panahghar Coventry](#)

What Can I do?

If you know someone that is being forced into marriage either in the UK or abroad, you can contact the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU). The FMU will provide support both before and after you report the issue to the police or if you decide not to.

If the person is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

Where information suggests that an adult is at risk of being forced to marry, you should also contact Adult Social Care Direct on 024 7683 3003.

One Chance Rule

Do:

Take them seriously, see them immediately and alone
Establish their wishes and reassure them
Establish means of safe contact
Contact the FMU for advice

Do not:

Approach family or community
Send them away
Share information without consent
Attempt to mediate

One Minute Guide

Forced Marriage

June 2024



The Law

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a **criminal offence** in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry. It can result in up to 7 years imprisonment. It is a form of domestic abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

FMPO's are civil law measures and can be applied for in the family court. Failure to comply with the requirements or terms set out in a FMPO granted by the Family Court, is a criminal offence and can result in a sentence of up to 5 years in prison.

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

In 2017 the government introduced lifelong anonymity for victims of forced marriage to encourage more victims of this hidden crime to come forward.

Useful Videos

- [Right to choose: Spotting the signs of forced marriage - Nayana – YouTube](#)
- [Banaz Mahmod – YouTube](#) – police interview (short clip)
- [A survivor's plea to end child marriage | Payzee Mahmod | TEDxLondonWomen - YouTube](#)
- [Shamsa's story](#)

Links to Statutory Guidance on How to Handle Cases of Forced Marriage:

- [HM Government Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [HM Government - The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Other resources

- [Consular Assistance for British Nationals Abroad Who May Have Care and Support Needs](#)
- <https://www.adass.org.uk/consular-assistance-for-british-nationals-abroad-who-may-have-care-and-support-needs>
- [Forced marriage; a survivor's handbook](#)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survivors-handbook>
- [Forced marriage resource pack](#)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack/forced-marriage-resource-pack>
- [Free e-learning course for professionals](#)
<https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses/awareness-of-forced-marriage>
- [Recording of Forced Marriage Unit presentation Adult Safeguarding Practice Forum 7 July 2022 - YouTube](#)

LOCAL

Safe to Talk: 0800 111 4998

www.safetotalk.org.uuk

Panahghar: 0800 055 6519

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

besafe@safehouse.org.uk

www.safehouse.org.uk

West Midlands Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse 24 Hour Helpline and Outreach Support 0800 953 9777

NATIONAL

Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) Contact:

+44 (0) 20 7008 0151

fmu@fcdo.gov.uk

- *Taken abroad*

Contact the FMU if you think the victim is about to be taken abroad to get married against their will.

Contact the nearest British embassy if they're already abroad.

Karma Nirvana

0800 5999 247 –helpline support for victims and professionals

support@karmanirvana.org.uk

support@karmanirvana.org.uk

If working with the Police, a request can be made to speak to an officer specialising in FM/HBA issues however, this may not be available on demand.