

FORCED MARRIAGE

What is forced marriage?

Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not consent to the marriage, or, are married against their will. A ‘forced’ marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage; in an arranged marriage, the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement ultimately is with those due to be married.

Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and is contrary to UK law. It is a form of violence against women and men, child abuse where it affects children and abuse of vulnerable people where it affects those who cannot consent due to a special education need or disability. There is often the use of coercion to force the marriage ranging from physical violence to psychological pressures. A child who is forced to marry is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Most cases of forced marriage involve girls and young women aged between 13 and 30, although victims can be male. Though now widely condemned forced marriages still take place in various cultures across the world, particularly in parts of South Asia and Africa. Some forced marriages take place in the UK and may involve a partner coming from overseas; others may involve a British citizen being sent abroad. Duress and forced marriage cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds.

Typical reasons that parents who force their children to marry may seek to justify their behaviour include:

- believing that it protects their children
- preserves cultural and /or religious traditions
- caters for stronger family relationships
- controlling unwanted sexuality
- preventing perceived unsuitable relationships
- protecting ‘family honour’
- achieving financial gain
- ensuring care for a child or adult with additional needs
- assisting claims for residence and citizenship

What may cause you to have concerns about forced marriage?

- Long absences or failure to return from a visit to their country of origin
- Deterioration in behaviour, achievement or punctuality
- Self-harm; attempted suicide; eating disorders; depression; female genital mutilation; pregnancy, accompanied to doctors
- Other siblings reported missing; domestic violence; threats or attempts to kill or harm
- Siblings forced to marry, married young
- Missing & running away from home
- Unreasonable restrictions (physical and financial)

Those who force a person to marry can be prosecuted for a variety of offences including: conspiracy, assault, kidnap, abduction, false imprisonment, harassment, child cruelty and trafficking.

Report any concerns to the DSL and follow SSCP procedures.

Contact the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) if you’re trying to stop a forced marriage – Telephone – 020 7008 0151 (Mon-Fri 9-5) or out of hours – 020 7008 1500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)
e-mail – fmufco.gov.uk

Safeguarding

In case of an immediate referral contact Integrated Contact Referral team (ICRT)

Children's Safeguarding	8.30am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 4.45pm Friday	0191 561 7007
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The Out of Hours Team	Available Monday-Thursday 5.15-8.30am and from Friday 4.45pm - until Monday 8.30am. 24 hours Saturday and Sunday	0191 520 5552
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A written referral must be sent within one working day to
safeguarding.children@togetherforchildren.org.uk

In the case of an Allegation

Designated Officer (LADO)	lado@togetherforchildren.org.uk	0191 561 3901
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Early Help

Early Help Advice and Allocations Team	Early Help Together for Children	0191 561 4084
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For more information

SSCP Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership - Home Page
(safeguardingchildrensunderland.com)

[What is a forced marriage? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Forced marriage | Childline](#)

[Forced Marriage Awareness - Free Course | Virtual College \(virtual-college.co.uk\)](#)

Brought to you by the Childcare Team:

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