

# Forced Marriage



## What is Forced Marriage?

A forced marriage is when someone is forced to marry without consent. A victim of forced marriage may be coerced through the use of physical threats, physical violence, sexual violence or psychological pressure. Often, victims are made to feel like they will bring shame on their family if they do not marry.

Forced marriages and arranged marriages are not the same. In an arranged marriage, although you may not be given the choice of whom you marry, you can ultimately choose if the marriage goes ahead. In a forced marriage, a victim is given no choice whatsoever.

Forced marriage is illegal in the UK. In England and Wales forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years.

## Statistics

- **In 2014 the UK's Forced Marriage Unit dealt with 1267 possible cases of forced marriage.**
- **In 2014 79% of cases involved female victims.**
- **In 2014, 38.3% of cases involved Pakistan. However, 23% of cases were based in the UK and had no foreign ties.**
- **135 victims with disabilities were recorded in 2014**
- **Age of victims forced into marriage in 2014 is: 11% below 16 years old, 11% 16-17 years old, 17% 18-21 years old, 14% 22-25 years old, 8% 26-30 years old, 5% 31-40 and 2% over 41 years old.**

## What are the signs?

- Young people who are persistently absent from school.
- Requests for extended leaves of absence, particularly if overseas travel is involved.
- Inflexibility with arrangements and future planning. Victims of forced marriage are often subjected to strict controls over their movements.
- A woman who is often accompanied by male members of their family.
- Evidence of domestic abuse or depression.
- Young people who are prevented from continuing into higher education.
- Young people who are anxious about school holidays.

## Useful resources

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Forced Marriage Unit <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>
- 'The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage' [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/322310/HMG\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_publication\\_180614\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322310/HMG_Statutory_Guidance_publication_180614_Final.pdf)

## Who to contact?

Contact the Forced Marriage Unit on **020 7008 0151** if you're trying to stop a forced marriage or you need help leaving a marriage you've been forced into.

Call **101** to contact your local police or 999 in an emergency

Call the Salvation Army's 24-hour confidential Referral Helpline on **0300 3038151**

\*All statistics taken from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/412667/FMU\\_Stats\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412667/FMU_Stats_2014.pdf)