

What is Forced Marriage?

A forced marriage is when one or both adults do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. They are coerced into it by their families or communities and may go through with it under duress from others in the form of physical, emotional or coercive control.

It is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, both adults give their full consent and have the freedom to accept or reject the arrangement.

What does the law say?

Forced marriage is illegal in the UK. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence to force someone into marriage. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them into marriage, regardless of whether the marriage actually occurs
- Doing anything intended to cause a child to marry prior to their 18th birthday, even if no coercion or force is used
- Causing someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to marry, whether they are pressured into marriage or not

Potential signs for victims of a forced marriage...

- Running away from home
- Self-harm or attempted suicide
- Depression or becoming worried, anxious and withdrawn
- Poor performance at work, school, college or unexplained absence
- A surprise engagement to a stranger you have not heard of before
- A sudden holiday
- No control over own money and finances

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)

The FMU is a Home Office unit which leads on the government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both in the UK and overseas, supporting both victims/potential victims and professionals dealing with cases.

The public helpline can help with safety advice, assist when an unwanted spouse is due to move to the UK and assistance in repatriation of victims held overseas against their will where possible.

Call 020 7008 0151

Email fmufcdo.gov.uk

How to report...

- Call 999 if immediate danger
- Call 101
- Visit a police station
- Report anonymously through Crimestoppers