

Forced Marriage

Please note, this is a sensitive topic that impacts many people. If you find that this has caused you any upset or distress, please stop and seek appropriate support or feel free to reach out to the Safeguarding team.

Safeguarding support options

Ways to access support if you are worried for yourself or someone else:

- Call us on 07808 050273 or email safeguarding@qa.com
- Complete a [Safeguarding Self-Referral Form](#) if the concern relates to you.
- Complete a [Safeguarding Referral Form](#) if you are worried about someone else.



Contents

- What is a Forced Marriage? 1
- Why does a Forced Marriage happen? 1
- How to Recognise a Forced Marriage.....1
- Some signs that someone could soon be (or is already) a Victim of a Forced Marriage..... 2
- Forced Marriage Offences 2
- Who to Contact and How Can They Help? 2-3
- Activity, video and questions 3

What is a Forced Marriage?

A Forced Marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage, and pressure or abuse is used to force them into marriage. Forced marriage is illegal in the UK. It is a form of domestic abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

For a marriage to be consensual, it must be entered into freely by both people getting married. You should feel you have a choice. Legally, people with certain learning disabilities or severe mental health conditions are not able to consent to marriage, even if they feel the marriage is what they want.

Why does a Forced Marriage happen?

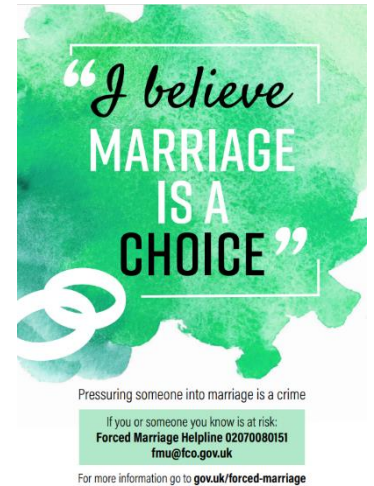
There are many factors that contribute to families forcing their children or family members into marriage. It is important to remember that the practice can never be justified. Factors can include:

- Families or individuals believing that forced marriage is acceptable and is a way to protect their children while preserving cultural and traditional beliefs.
- The view that if a person rejects a proposal, leaves their current spouse or seeks a divorce it brings dishonour or shame on the family.
- A reaction to what is considered to be unsuitable relationships (which might sit outside of caste, religion or culture) and pregnancy outside marriage.
- Families or individuals who want to control sexuality and behaviour. This might include identifying as lesbian, gay bisexual or transgender, or behaviour that is perceived to be too “westernised”.
- An attempt to ensure that land and wealth remain in the family, or to strengthen ties between families.
- An attempt to ensure care for a child or adult with special needs.
- An attempt to assist claims for UK residence and citizenship.

How to Recognise a Forced Marriage

The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

- Physical: for example, threats, physical violence, or sexual violence.
- Emotional and psychological: for example, making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family.
- Financial abuse, for example taking someone's wages, may also be a factor.



Some signs that someone could soon be (or is already) a Victim of Forced Marriage:

- Running away from home
- Self-harming or attempted suicide
- Depression, or becoming worried or withdrawn
- Poor performance at work, school or college or unexplained absence
- A surprise engagement to a stranger you've not heard of before
- A sudden holiday (some people are tricked into going abroad for a holiday or to see relatives)
- No control over their own money
- Not returning from a visit to another country
- Parents removing a child from education, preventing further education or extra-curricular activities

Forced Marriage Offences

Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Arranging a marriage for someone who lacks mental capacity (whether they're pressured to or not)
- Arranging a marriage for someone before they turn 18

Who to Contact and How Can They Help?



- Police 999 or 101 in a non-emergency
- The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) - is a joint Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Home Office unit which leads on the government's forced marriage policy, outreach, and casework. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals).
- **Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151**
- **Email: fmu@fcdo.gov.uk**

The FMU public helpline can help with:

- Safety advice.
- Aiding when an unwanted spouse is due to move to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases).
- Where possible, assistance in repatriation of victims held against their will overseas.

Victims and potential victims of forced marriage.

Professionals dealing with cases. T

- The nearest British Embassy if you are already abroad.

Support

[Forced Marriages in the UK - Halo Project Charity](#) – Specialist support for victims of Forced Marriages.

Activity

Please watch the following video. This will provide you with further awareness and context to this learning. If watching this video has caused you any upset or distress, please stop and seek appropriate support or feel free to reach out to the Safeguarding team at safeguarding@qa.com

[Escaping teenage forced marriage - BBC London - YouTube](#)



Questions:

1. How did others react when Sanaz took an overdose?
2. When did Forced Marriage become an offence?
3. What is a Forced Marriage?

