



1. What is the difference between a Forced Marriage and an Arranged Marriage?

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of some people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or duress is used. Forced Marriage is breach of human rights and a criminal offence in the UK.

An arranged marriage occurs in many cultures and often involves an introduction by a family member. The individuals have a choice at all times and the marriage will only go ahead with the full consent of both parties. If a person feels pressured or is expected to marry against their wishes, this is a forced marriage.

2. What are the effects of a forced marriage?

Forced marriage transcends many cultures, religions, age, class, gender or sexuality. This can result in false imprisonment, kidnapping, threats of violence, blackmail, rape, assault, domestic violence, 'honour' based abuse and even murder. An estimated 5000 to 8000 forced marriages are reported in the UK

It may be difficult for victims of forced marriage to come forward or disclose; there may be underlying concerns such as risk to life or reputation of family members or siblings, fear of shame or guilt, sense of duty, dishonour, isolation, disownment and cultural conflict that may be perceived as being of greater importance.

3. Does forced marriage only happen to women?

Both men and women can be victims of a forced marriage; however statistics show that significantly more women are forced into a marriage. In 2016 the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) handled 1428 cases, but this is just the tip of the iceberg as many more cases continue to go unreported. 20% were reported from male victims and 80% from female victims 45% of all cases handled were aged 16 – 25.

Did you know that globally every 7 seconds a girl under 15 is forced into a marriage?

[Report: Every Last Girl, Save the Children]

4. What can I do if someone has been or is at risk of a forced marriage?

It can be difficult to know what to do and what not to do if someone discloses that they or somebody they know and care about is affected or at risk of a forced marriage.

Do: BELIEVE what they are telling you. SPEAK with them alone in a secure and private place and REASSURE them of confidentiality. RESPECT and recognise their wishes and ENSURE they are dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive way. ARRANGE for an independent interpreter if required and with their consent, CONTACT the FMU or the police, a member of Staff or The Sharan Project for further support and assistance.





Do Not: Speak to your peers or their family if you have concerns as this may put them at risk, RELY on family or community members to act as an interpreter, SHARE information with anyone without their consent, ALLOW them to leave with their family or community members if you believe them to be in danger, ATTEMPT to mediate between parties, this could make things worse, Decide to nothing, always remember the ONE CHANCE RULE – you may only have one chance to support them

5. What are the motivations behind forced marriage?

It is important to remember not all parents or family members force their children to marry, but those who do often justify their actions as preserving cultural or religious traditions, however, no religion accepts forcing someone to marry against their will.

The motivations for a forced marriage vary and include: securing immigration status or strengthening family ties or wealth, escaping poverty, repay debts, controlling unwanted behaviour such as sexual orientation, promiscuity, conduct that is viewed as 'too western', prevent 'unsuitable' relationships e.g. outside a particular faith or religious group, promoting and protecting family status for so called 'honour', securing a carer for a disabled or elderly family member or to reduce stigma of mental health.

6. What are the impacts of a forced marriage?

Individuals forced to marriage may feel trapped in a cycle of abuse with serious long-term consequences including self harm and suicide. Often victims feel unable to leave their marriage or home because of a lack of family or economic support and are told to endure the abuse or are blamed for their abusers behaviour.

If a victim does leave, they are often cast out or disowned and removed from their familiar environment, making them vulnerable and isolated. This in turn can affect their education, employment, health, housing and legal options.

8. Where can you go for more information or support?

The Sharan Project works to support women who have been or are at risk of forced marriage, you can contact us on **08445043231** or email Sharan at **info@sharan.org.uk** or go to **www.sharan.org.uk** for more information and access to other organisations

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a specialist government service working to end forced marriages, they can provide advice and guidance as well as support British nationals who may have been or are at risk of being taken abroad to be forced to marry, you can call on **0207 008 0151** or email **fmufco.gov.uk**

In an emergency, you can contact the Police on **999** or **101** for non-urgent queries; they can assist with supporting an individual, issuing a protection order and provide information of local services

For details of the **Our Girl** campaign and partners, go to **www.ourgirl.co.uk**



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