



ONE MINUTE GUIDE:

Forced Marriage and Honour based Violence

What is forced marriage?

In forced marriage one, or both, spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure.

Is this the same as an arranged marriage?

No. In an arranged marriage the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement ultimately is with the young people who are going to become married.

Who are victims of forced marriage?

Victims of forced marriage vary in age and can be anything from as young as 13 years old up to the age of 30 years. Victims can also be male.

Where does forced marriage take place?

Some marriages take place in the UK – sometimes a partner may come from abroad. Others can involve a British citizen being sent overseas.

Is Forced marriage illegal?

Yes it is against UK law and is an abuse of human rights. When a child is forced to marry the child is at risk of sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 makes provision for protecting children, young people and adults from being forced to marry, through Forced Marriage Protection Orders. The minimum age at which a person is able to give consent to marriage is 16 years old.

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.

Why do parents force their children to marry?

Parents may believe that by forcing their children to marry protects them and honours cultural and religious traditions. Other reasons include protecting 'family honour', obtaining financial gain, preventing unsuitable relationships, undesired sexuality, assisting claims for citizenship, enabling care for a young person with additional needs and to enforce control.

What is honour based violence?

Honour based violence is the term used to describe murders in the name of so-called honour, sometimes called 'honour killings'. These are murders in which predominantly women are killed for perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame.

Honour based violence cuts across all cultures and communities. Murders in the name of 'so-called honour' are often the culmination of a series of events over a period of time and are planned. There tends to be a degree of premeditation, family conspiracy and a belief that the victim deserved to die. Victims are sometimes persuaded to return to their country of origin under false pretences, when in fact the intention could be to kill them.

What should professionals do?

Professionals should make themselves aware of potential signs of 'honour-based' violence. Children may:

- go missing (from home and school) in an attempt to keep themselves safe
- self-harm, appear depressed, angry and/or desperate
- be restricted in their movements and overly supervised
- not have access to the internet, mobile phones, their passport or to family members
- be forced to marry or forced to live elsewhere

What should professionals do if a child discloses about "honour-based" violence?

If a child tells a practitioner about 'honour-based' violence in respect of themselves or another family member, the practitioner should:

- Recognise the seriousness and immediacy of the risk of harm;
- See the child immediately in a secure and private place and on their own;
- Explain to the child the limits of confidentiality;
- Ask direct questions to gather enough information to make a referral to the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) including recording the child's wishes and explain to the child the referral will be made;
- Encourage and/or help the child to complete a personal risk assessment;
- Develop an emergency safety plan with the child;
- Agree a means of discreet future contact with the child;
- Record all discussions and decisions carefully;
- Contact the [Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) on **01904 551900**.

Practitioners should also be aware that children who are at risk of serious harm through child sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, 'honour-based' violence and female genital mutilation are often 'hidden' and may be also missing from education and/or care or home.

Should a professional contact a member of the family and/or community for help and assistance e.g. translating?

No. Professionals should not approach the family or community leaders, share any information with them or attempt any form of mediation. In particular, members of the local community should not be used as interpreters.

How should a professional respond if a child discloses this information?

For a child to report to any agency that they have fears of honour based violence in respect of themselves or a family member requires a lot of courage and trust that the professional and agency they disclose to will respond appropriately. Specifically, under no circumstances should the agency allow the child's family or social network to find out about the disclosure, so as not to put the child at further risk of harm.

Authorities in some countries may support the practice of honour-based violence, and the child may be concerned that other agencies share this view, or that they will be returned to their family. The child may be carrying guilt about their rejection of cultural or family expectations. Furthermore, their immigration status may be dependent on their family, which could be used to dissuade them from seeking assistance.

How can I get further advice or help?

A free [e-learning course is available here](#). The course raises awareness, challenges perceptions and gives information about the correct actions to take should you suspect someone is at risk.

Information about a possible or actual forced marriage may come from the child/young person concerned or a friend or relative. It may also become apparent in relation to other family issues, such as domestic abuse, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, child abuse or neglect, family conflict or when a child/young person has gone missing.

If any practitioner suspects a child is a victim of forced marriage or at risk of honour-based violence please contact the [Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) or the Police.

Useful Links

The Forced Marriage Unit provides advice on stopping forced marriages.

Childline has further advice.

Karma Nirvana is an award winning British charity supporting victims for 25 years

Child Helpline International has international phone numbers for getting help.

Where do I go for further information?

Please visit the [CYSCP website](#) for up to date information and latest news.

Please also sign up to the [CYSCP Newsletter](#) and follow us on Twitter [@YorkSCP](#)