

Forced Marriage Indicators and Safety Plan

The Trust's Adult Safeguarding Team, with support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Forced Marriage Unit, has produced this guidance. It should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Adult and Children Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Policies.

For any concerns regarding forced marriage, please consult the Trust Safeguarding Team at the earliest opportunity.

Forced Marriage Do's and Don'ts

DO

- ✓ See them on their own
- ✓ Take them seriously
- ✓ Use an accredited translator outside their family/community if one is needed
- ✓ Consider patient confidentiality in light of risk and patient capacity
- ✓ Maintain a full record of the decisions made
- ✓ Seek advice of Trust Safeguarding Team
- ✓ Raise an InPhase alert.
- ✓ Consider if immediate Police report is required.
- ✓ Raise children safeguarding alert if concerns are regarding a child.
- ✓ Raise adult safeguarding alert if concerns are regarding adult with care and support needs.

DO NOT

- × Immediately approach members of their family or the community
- × Assume the individual can speak freely on the phone/in a remote consultation

Potential Indicators of Forced Marriage

The list below provides a non-exhaustive set of potential indicators of patients at risk of forced marriage. The presence of these indicators may not constitute direct evidence of a risk of forced marriage, but they should serve as prompts to safely and sensitively explore concerns further with the patient.

1. Behavioural Indicators

- **Sudden Changes in Behaviour:** Withdrawal, anxiety, or depression.
- **Reluctance to Discuss Home Life:** Avoiding conversations about their family or home life.
- **Absence and Truancy:** Frequent absences from school, college, or work without a valid reason.
- **Decline in Performance:** Sudden drop in academic or work performance.

- **Isolation:** Being prevented from socializing or having limited access to friends. Are they having to report all their movements to family? What would happen if they refused?

2. Physical Indicators

- **Unexplained Injuries:** Signs of physical abuse or injuries that are not convincingly explained.
- **Chronic Health Issues:** Recurrent health issues that may indicate stress or trauma, such as stomach pains or headaches. A learning disability or other cognitive impairment that affects capacity to consent to marriage.
- **Neglect:** Poor personal hygiene, malnutrition, or lack of appropriate clothing.

3. Family Dynamics

- **Overbearing Family Members:** Presence of family members who exert excessive control or supervision, being accompanied by family members for all health appointments.
- **Limited Autonomy:** Lack of freedom to make decisions or participate in normal activities, withdrawal from school extracurricular activities.
- **Strict Boundaries:** Imposing strict rules on behaviour, dress, or interaction with others. Are they being pressured or forced to wear conservative dress or if they are Muslim to wear the Hijab, Abaya, Jilbab, Niqab, Burqa or Dupatta. What would happen if they refused?
- **History of domestic:** Has there been a history of domestic abuse towards the victim or other members of their family?
- **Sexual Abuse:** Has there been a history of sexual abuse towards the victim from anyone in the family?
- **History of forced marriage or honour based abuse:** Is there a history of forced marriage or honour based abuse within the family?
- **So called 'honour':** Are there any perceived concerns about the effect on the family's 'honour' by the victim? These could include romantic relationships, sexual activity outside marriage, suspected or actual pregnancy, socialising with opposite sex, attending parties or social events deemed inappropriate, wearing western clothing or make up, seeking independence (e.g. wants to move out), pursuing higher education or career, defying parental authority, rejecting arranged marriages or matchmaking, adopting different beliefs, breaking cultural norms, LGBTQI+ identity, and friendship with individuals deemed unsuitable.

4. Educational and Social Life

- **Disengagement from Education:** Sudden or unexplained withdrawal from education.
- **Arranged Travel:** Plans for travel to the family's country of origin for extended periods, often during school holidays or mention of an unwell relative overseas, attend family weddings.

- **Lack of Career Aspirations:** Dissuaded from pursuing higher education or career ambitions.

5. Financial Control

- **Economic Abuse:** Lack of access to money or financial resources. Are they allowed a bank account or made to hand over their income? What would happen if they refused? Does a parent or family member manage their benefits?
- **Forced to Work:** Being forced to work in family businesses without remuneration.

6. Communication Restrictions

- **Monitored Communications:** Family members closely monitoring or controlling communications with friends or external parties.
- **Lack of Personal Communication Devices:** No personal mobile phone or access to the internet.

7. Legal and Documentation Issues

- **Confiscated Documents:** Important documents such as passports, birth certificates, or visas being taken away. Do they have their own passport?
- **Lack of Identification:** Absence of personal identification documents.

8. Direct Disclosures

- **Expressing Fear of Marriage:** Directly or indirectly expressing fear about an upcoming trip abroad or fear of being forced to marry.
- **Seeking Help:** Approaching trusted individuals or authorities for help or expressing a desire to leave home.
- **Lack of understanding of marriage:** disclosing marriage or being excited about marriage but seemingly not have any understanding of it.

9. Health and Mental Well-being

- **Mental Health Issues:** Signs of severe anxiety, depression, self-harm, or suicidal tendencies.
- **Pregnancy:** Unwanted pregnancies, especially in teenagers, might be linked to coercion or control.

10. Immigration status

- **Leave to remain:** Being in the UK with limited leave to remain so more of an urgency to get married.
- **Trafficking/Modern slavery:** disclosures of being in the UK on a spousal visa and acting as a carer for husband/wife.

Forced Marriage Safety Plan

The following is a set of suggested actions to work through and share with the person at risk of forced marriage. This is not a protection plan to be used as part of a safeguarding enquiry; however, completing a safety plan should be considered a key action of any enquiry.

1. Immediate Safety Measures

Emergency Contacts:

- Police (Emergency): 999
- Local Police Station: [Insert Contact Information for closest publicly open police station]
- Forced Marriage Unit (UK): +44 (0) 20 7008 0151 and consulate details for countries of concern (where there may be travel plans to). Forced marriage - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Trusted Friend/Relative: [Insert Name and Contact Information]
- Local Authority/Support Worker/Social Worker: [Insert Name and Contact Information]

Safe Places:

- Identify Safe Locations: [List safe places where the individual can go if they feel threatened or in danger, such as a trusted friend's house, a shelter/refuge, or a safe room at work/school.]
- Emergency Accommodation: [Contact details for emergency shelters or safe houses or local authority homeless person unit].

Code Words:

- Establish Code Words: Agree on a code word or phrase that the individual can use to signal that they are in danger and need immediate help.

Location Services and tech abuse:

- Ensure location services are switched off. Follow <https://refugetechsafety.org/> advice on online and tech safety.

2. Personal Safety Strategies

Daily Routine:

- Vary Routine: if not living with family or in contact with them change daily routines to make it harder for the person to be tracked or monitored.
- Travel with Others: Avoid traveling alone and stay in the company of trusted individuals whenever possible.

Communication:

- Mobile Phone: Keep a fully charged mobile phone with emergency contacts saved under easily accessible numbers.
- Secret Phone: Consider having a second mobile phone hidden in a safe place for emergencies.
- Social Media: Adjust privacy settings on social media accounts and be cautious about sharing location or travel plans online.

Documents and Finances:

- Important Documents: Keep copies of important documents (passport, birth certificate, financial documents) in a safe place or with a trusted person.
- Emergency Funds: Keep a small amount of money hidden for emergency use.

3. Support Networks and Resources

Friends and Family:

- Trusted Individuals: Maintain regular contact with friends and family members who are supportive and aware of the situation.
- Check-Ins: Arrange regular check-ins with a trusted friend or relative to confirm safety.

Professional Support:

- GP services: Book a GP appointment or an appointment to discuss safeguarding which may not arouse suspicion to family members.
- Legal Advice: Seek legal advice regarding rights and options, including applying for a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO).
- Advocacy Groups: Connect with advocacy groups that specialise in forced marriage cases (e.g., Karma Nirvana, Southall Black Sisters [Forced Marriage survivors handbook](#))

4. Long-Term Safety Planning

Education and Employment:

- School/College/Workplace Safety: Inform a trusted teacher, or supervisor about the situation so they can provide support and monitor for signs of distress.
- Alternative Arrangements: Consider alternative education or employment arrangements if the current environment is not safe.

Living Arrangements:

- Safe Housing: Explore options for safe and secure housing, potentially through local authorities or domestic violence shelters.
- Confidentiality: Ensure living arrangements are confidential and address is not shared without consent. This may mean having housing or social care records locked down as I have across data breaches by friends of family members in the past.

5. Legal Measures

Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO):

- Application: Work with legal advisors to apply for an FMPO to prevent family members from forcing the marriage or taking the individual abroad.
- Police Support: Ensure the local police are aware of the FMPO and have copies of the order.

Restraining Orders:

- Additional Legal Orders: Consider applying for restraining orders against specific individuals if there are ongoing threats or harassment.

6. Emergency Plan

Immediate Action Steps:

1. Call for Help: Use emergency contacts or call the police if in immediate danger.
2. Go to Safe Place: Move to the nearest safe place as identified in the safety plan.
3. Notify Trusted Person: Inform a trusted friend, relative, or support worker of your location and situation.
4. Activate Code Word: Use the agreed-upon code word to alert others to your need for immediate help