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Forcing someone to marry is a criminal offence (under the Crime and Policing Act 2014) and something that can lead to lifelong suffering for the victim from physical abuse, sexual abuse and servitude.

An “arranged” marriage is one which has the consent of both parties and is perfectly legal and acceptable. Forced marriage (FM) is where one or both parties do not agree to the marriage and where fear/ coercion/ duress or force is a factor.

Coercion (or duress) can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure.



Forced Marriage



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In the worst cases, where the victim of FM either resists the marriage or leaves the marriage later, it can end with kidnap, assault and even murder for the victim. Affected communities often do not readily ask for help as they distrust authority or fear dishonouring their family/community and being ‘disowned’.

Forcing children to marry is child abuse and puts children and young people at risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Nationally, 27% of reported forced marriages in 2019 involved victims below 18 years of age.

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What does this mean for me?

- Have I completed the online Forced Marriage training? [Click Here to Register](#)
- Am I clear about my responsibilities with regards to forced marriage?
- Am I able to recognise potential triggers for forced marriage?
- Have I read the multi-agency guidance available from the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)? [Click Here to View](#)

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Indicators of Forced Marriage

The factors below collectively or individually may be an indication that a person fears they may be forced to marry, or that a forced marriage has already taken place:

- Education-truancy from lessons
- Low motivation in school
- Poor exam results
- extended periods of authorised absence for sickness or overseas family commitments
- unofficial withdrawal from school/ college/university
- history of other siblings missing education and marrying early

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Forced Marriage Protection Orders

- Any person at risk of forced marriage can make their own application
- A ‘relevant 3rd party’ – specified as the local authority
- Any person who is given leave of the court e.g. police, solicitors, charities, family members, friends
- The Court
- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-forced-marriageprotection-order>

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Forced Marriage Protection Orders

Forced Marriage Protection Orders: FMPO's enable courts to prevent forced marriages from going ahead and to protect those who have already been forced into marriage. Only [specified courts](#) can issue FMPO's such as Manchester County Court and Family Court. Similar to Non-Molestation Order, but it can be made against a wide range of people. – it is not restricted to ‘associated persons

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- Health- self harm, attempted suicide, eating disorders, depression, isolation;
- Employment- poor performance or attendance, limited career choices, not allowed to work, unreasonable financial control. e.g confiscation of wages/income;
- Family history- siblings forced to marry family disputes, domestic violence and abuse, running away from home, unreasonable restrictions e.g house arrest;
- Risky behaviours such as missing from home or child sexual exploitation.