

Forced Marriage Awareness

Forced marriage is a crime. It involves serious risks to individuals and may also affect others. This poster highlights key facts, warning signs, safeguarding actions, and useful contacts.

What is Forced Marriage?

A forced marriage is when one or both individuals over 18 are coerced into marriage or lack the mental capacity to consent to marriage. Force can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. It differs from arranged marriage, which is legal if both parties aged over 18 consent freely.

Who is at Risk?

People with care and support needs may be especially vulnerable due to reliance on family, communication difficulties, and limited opportunities to disclose concerns.

Warning Signs

It is unlikely that a forced marriage will openly be acknowledged by the person or others. Therefore, it is important to be aware of some signs that could indicate the occurrence of this:

- A person appearing depressed, anxious, or withdrawn
- Evidence of self-harm, substance abuse, or eating disorders
- Unexplained absences from work or school
- Social isolation and distancing from professionals
- Excessive restrictions and control by others
- Always being accompanied during appointments
- Family disputes, domestic abuse, or running away
- Sudden unexplained travel plans

This isn't a full list and any person at risk of being forced to marry may react and show signs differently.

What to Do

If you suspect a forced marriage risk, avoid actions that may escalate the risk. Ensure that your organisation's safeguarding procedures are followed, which will include raising a safeguarding concern with Bradford Council and/or contacting the police in emergency situations. The government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) can also be contacted.

Useful Contacts

- Forced Marriage Unit (FMU): 020 7008 0151 | fmu@fcdo.gov.uk
- Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage is available [here](#).
- Government Guidance is available [here](#) as well as a resource pack [here](#)
- Useful contacts for domestic abuse and sexual violence in Bradford is available [here](#).