

Forced Marriage Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation





WHAT IS FORCED MARRIAGE?

Unlike an arranged marriage, where the prospective spouses may choose whether or not they wish to accept the partnership, a forced marriage is when one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage, or consent is extracted through duress.

From June 2014, forcing someone to marry against their will is a crime and anyone found guilty can face up to seven years in prison.

Key Motivations of Forced Marriage:

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality (including perceived promiscuity, or being gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans) in particular the behaviour and sexuality of women.
- Protecting “family honour”
- Responding to peer group or family pressure.
- Attempting to strengthen family links
- Ensuring land, property and wealth remain within the family.
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals.
- Protecting perceived religious ideals which are misguided.
- Preventing “unsuitable” relationships, e.g. outside the ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group.
- Assisting claims for residence and citizenship.
- Fulfilling long-standing family commitments.

While it is important to have an understanding of these motives forced marriage should be recognised as a human rights abuse.

Forced Marriage Warning Signs:

Education

- Truancy
- Decline in performance or punctuality
- Low motivation at school
- Poor exam results
- Being withdrawn from education by those with parental responsibility
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities

Health

- Self harm
- Attempted suicide
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Isolation
- Substance misuse

Police Involvement

- Other young people within the family reported missing
- Reports of domestic violence or breaches of the peace at the family home
- Female genital mutilation
- The individual reported for offences e.g. shoplifting or substance misuse

Family History

- Siblings forced to marry
- Early marriage of siblings
- Family disputes
- Running away from home
- Unreasonable restrictions e.g. "house arrest"

Employment

- Poor performance
- Poor attendance
- Limited career choices
- Not allowed to work
- Unable to attend business trips
- Unreasonable financial control e.g. confiscation of wages/income





What is Honour Based Violence (HBV)?

It is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed, to protect or defend the honour of the family and/ or community. HBV has the potential to be both a domestic abuse and child abuse concern.

In terms of domestic abuse risk assessment, HBV is a significant risk factor for victims and must be regarded as a significant predictor of the likelihood of future harm or homicide.

Specific behaviours, attitudes and actions that may constitute 'dishonour' are wide ranging and include –

- Reporting domestic abuse
- Smoking cigarettes
- Inappropriate make-up or dress
- Running away from home
- 'Allowing' rape
- The existence of a boyfriend
- Pregnancy outside of marriage
- Interfaith relationships
- Rejecting a forced or arranged marriage
- Leaving a spouse or seeking divorce
- Kissing, holding hands or other intimacy in a public place
- Gay men or women who are lesbians

declaring their sexuality

- Ostracism by family and community
- Economic damage

Individuals, families and communities may take drastic steps to preserve, protect or avenge their honour.

This can lead to substantial human rights abuses including:

Do not underestimate that perpetrators of HBV really do kill their closest relatives and/or others for what might seem a trivial transgression.

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What is female genital mutilation? (FGM)

FGM involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other damage to the genital organs, for supposed cultural, religious or non-medical reasons. FGM, also known as female circumcision, 'cutting' and 'sunna' can affect females from birth to pregnancy. It inflicts severe physical and psychological damage which can last a lifetime.

While there is some intelligence to suggest FGM is being physically performed in the UK; most victims are usually taken abroad, commonly on flights in the holiday periods of Easter, summer and Christmas.

FGM is routinely practiced in some African and Middle Eastern countries, in some countries up to 98 per cent of young women have undergone the FGM procedure. Around 66,000 girls and women living in England and Wales have undergone FGM, with a further estimated 20,000 girls under the age of 15 at risk.



FGM Warning Signs:

Education

- Days off school
- Not participating in PE
- Broken limbs
- Wearing tight clothing
- In pain/restricted movement
- Change in behaviour/demeanour
- Parents originate from an FGM practising country

Family History

- The family come from a community that is known to practise FGM
- Parents announce they will be taking the child out of the country for a prolonged period
- A child may talk about a long holiday to a country where FGM is routinely practiced
- A child may confide that she is to have a "special procedure" or celebration

Health - the potential effects of FGM include:

- Haemorrhage
- Severe pain & shock
- Urine retention
- Infection including tetanus & HIV
- Injury to adjacent tissue
- Fracture or dislocation to limbs as a result of restraint
- Difficulty with passing urine & chronic urinary tract infections

- leading to renal problems or renal failure
- Difficulties with menstruation
- Acute & chronic pelvic infections leading to infertility
- Sexual dysfunction/psychological damage and flashbacks
- Complications during pregnancy
- Chronic scar formations
- Death

Police Involvement

- It is an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 for a person to excise, infibulate or otherwise mutilate the whole or any part of a girls labia majora, labia minora, or clitoris either in the UK (excluding Scotland) or to arrange for a female to be taken abroad for the purpose of FGM. This includes:
 - Assisting a girl to mutilate her own genitalia
 - Assisting a non-UK person to mutilate overseas a girls genitalia, even if FGM in that country is legal.
 - Anyone found guilty of an FGM offence or aiding and abetting an offence faces up to 14 years in prison.



First Steps:

Where an allegation is made the following steps should be taken.

Do

- Recognise and respect the individual's wishes.
- See the individual immediately in a secure and private place.
- See the individual on their own – even if they attend with others.
- Use LanguageLine as an interpreter if necessary.
- Reassure the victim of police confidentiality.
- Establish a way of contacting them discreetly in the future.
- Contact, as soon as possible, an alliance HBV/FM/FGM SPOC, the local domestic violence officer or, in their absence, the duty inspector/sergeant.
- If under 18 years of age refer to the Child Protection Unit.
- Complete a DASH Risk Identification/Assessment.
- Where possible obtain a statement and full details to create a report, including a detailed family tree, to pass onto a trained or specialist officer.
- Obtain a copy of passport if possible.
- Ask them if they will consent to their photographs/DNA/ fingerprints being taken as a victim/potential victim.
- Packs solely for this purpose are held in custody suites.

Do Not

- Send the individual away in the belief that it is not a police matter.
- Use family members as interpreters.
- Approach members of the family or community leaders unless the individual expressly asks you to do so.
- Share information with anyone without the express consent of the individual.
- Breach confidentiality.
- Attempt to be a mediator.

Additional steps:

- Give the individual, where possible, the choice of the race and gender of the officer who deals with their case
- Record any injuries and arrange a medical examination.
- Give them personal safety advice.
- Identify any potential criminal offences and submit a crime report if applicable.
- Secure evidence at all stages as a prosecution may follow.
- Give the individual advice on what service they should expect and from whom.
- Perform a risk assessment in all cases. Ensure that the individual has the contact details for the trained/ specialist officer.
- Maintain a full record of the decisions made and the reason for those decisions.
- Information from case files and database files should be kept strictly confidential and preferably be restricted to named members of staff only.

Try to:

- Refer the individual, with their consent, to appropriate local and national support groups, counselling services and women's groups that have a history of working with survivors of forced marriage, honour based violence and FGM.
- Encourage the individual to access an appropriate, trustworthy advocacy service that can act on their behalf.
- If police are called to a family home, try to remove the individual to a neutral place to be interviewed.

Remember:

- Circumstances may be more complex if the individual is lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.
- Men can also be victims of forced marriage.



Information required in all cases

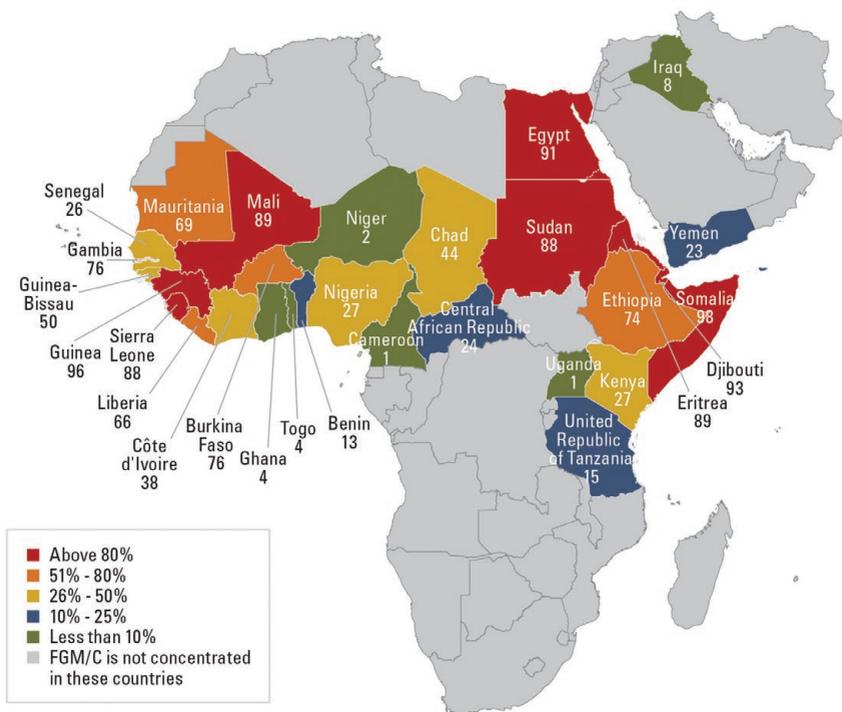
- Obtain details of the person making the report, their contact details, and their relationship with the individual under threat.
 - Obtain details of the individual under threat including:
 - Date of report
 - Full suspect details
 - Name of individual under threat
 - Nationality
 - Age
 - Date and place of birth
 - Passport details
 - School details
 - Employment details
 - Full details of the allegation
 - Name and address of parents or those with parental responsibility
 - National insurance number
 - Driving licence number
 - With consent of the victim/potential victim obtain their fingerprints, photograph and DNA. Ensure that they are clearly identified on the submission as “victim/potential victim - forced marriage/HBV/FGM”.
 - Obtain a list from the individual under threat of all those friends and family who can be trusted.
 - Establish a code word to ensure you are speaking to the right person.
 - Establish a way of contacting them discreetly in the future that will not put them at risk of harm.
 - Obtain any background information including schools attended, involvement by social services, doctors or other health services etc.
 - Record details about any threats, abuse or other hostile action against the individual, whether reported by the victim or a third party.
 - Obtain a recent photograph and other identifying documents. Document any other distinguishing features such as birthmarks and tattoos etc.
 - Establish the nature and level of risk to the safety of the individual (e.g. are they pregnant, do they have a secret boyfriend/girlfriend, are they already secretly married).
 - Establish if there are any other family members at risk of forced marriage or if there is a family history of forced marriage and abuse.
 - Check police and social services’ records for past referrals of family members including siblings.
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Support Agencies

Forced Marriage		
Asian Family Victim Support		0845 3030900
Child Abduction Centre admin line		0116 2556370
Childline	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Forced Marriage Unit	fmufco@gov.uk	0207 008 0151
Henna Foundation	www.hennafoundation.org	029 20496920
Home Office advice	www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage	
Karma Nirvana	www.karmanirvana.org.uk	0800 5999 247
Language Line		0207 250 1430
MIND		0208 519 2122
Muslim Women's Helpline		0208 904 8193
NSPCC		0808 800 5000
Shelterline Helpline		0808 800 4444
Southall Black Sisters		0208 571 9595
Honour Based Violence		
Asian Family Victim Support		0845 3030900
Childline	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Domestic Violence Helpline		0808 200 0247
Honour Based Violence Awareness Network	www.hbvawareness.com/honour-based-violence	
Metropolitan Police advice page	www.safe.met.police.uk/crimes_of_honour/get_the_facts.html	
MIND		0208 519 2122
Muslim Women's Helpline		0208 904 8193
NSPCC		0808 800 5000
Shelterline Helpline		0808 800 4444
Southall Black Sisters		0208 571 9595
FGM support groups/further information		
NSPCC FGM Helpline	fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk	0800 028 3550
28 too many	www.28toomany.org	
Childline	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Daughters of Eve	www.dofeve.org	
Desert Flower	www.desertflowerfoundation.org	
Equality Now	www.equalitynow.org	
FGM Network	www.fgmnetwork.org	
Foundation for Women's Health	www.forwarduk.org.uk	0208 960 4000
Home Office advice		
www.gov.uk/government/policies/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk		
Home Office	Home Office FGMenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	
The Orchid Project	www.orchidproject.org	
Unicef	www.unicef.org	
Local helplines		
Hadhari Nari (Derby Womens Aid)		01332 270101
www.metropolitan.org.uk/support-agencies/hadhari-nari-womensrefuge/		
Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocate Team		07812 300927

Map.4.1 FGM/C is concentrate in a swath of countries from the Atlantic Coast to the Horn of Africa

Percentage of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C by contry



Credit: UNICEF Graphic

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