

Forced marriage



What is it?

A forced marriage occurs when coercion, intimidation or threat is used to marry two individuals without one or both parties consent. Coercion and threat can take the form of physical violence and/or emotional abuse.

A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of their parents or a third party (such as a matchmaker) in identifying a partner. A forced marriage, whether a religious or civil ceremony, cannot be justified on religious grounds; every major faith condemns it and freely given consent is a prerequisite of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages.

A clear distinction must be made between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the child / young person.

How would you recognise forced marriage is a risk?

The factors outlined below, collectively or individually, may indicate a forced marriage is a risk:

- **Family History**
Siblings forced to marry; family disputes; domestic violence and abuse; running away from home; unreasonable restrictions e.g. house arrest
- **Education**
Truancy; low motivation / changes in motivation; poor exam results; withdrawal from school life
- **Health**
Self-harm; attempted suicide; eating disorders; depression; isolation
- **Employment**
Poor performance; poor attendance; limited career choices; not allowed to work; unreasonable financial control e.g. confiscation of wages / income

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What should you do if you are worried a child may be at risk of forced marriage?

Forcing someone to marry against their will is a criminal offence and if you are a member of the public you should report your concerns to the police using **101**; if the child is in immediate danger you should ring **999**.

If you work or volunteer in Bolton you should discuss your concerns with your designated safeguarding person and where agreed refer the child to Children's Social Care. Where there is immediate threat to the child you should contact the police directly.

Key Contacts and Information Sources

Bolton Safeguarding Children Board Forced Marriage Process

http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_force_marriage.html?zoom_highlight=forced+marriage

Reporting your Concerns about a Child

<http://boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child/>

Children's Social Care Tel: **01204 331500**

National Forced Marriage Unit Tel: **020 7008 0151**

All the local info I need
is just a **click away!** 

Bolton
Council