

Forced Marriage Best Practice Guidance

Do

- Believe the victim
- See victim alone / consider her/his/their wishes (vulnerable not able to make logical decisions)
- Give reassurance of confidentiality - information won't go back to the family
- Consider family members who could be at risk and who could be the abusers - family tree
- Secure a safe contact method with a code word
- Seek help from other agencies
- Consider ward of court, witness protection, holding of passports, DNA, fingerprints, photograph

Don't

- Send the victim away
- Underestimate the perpetrators of Forced Marriage
- Approach the family or community leaders
- Share information without the consent of the individual - discuss with them first before making a decision to contact the family
- Attempt mediation
- Use family as interpreters
- Assume it is a racial, cultural or faith issue
- Assume someone / professional from the same cultural/diverse background is best to deal with such a case.

VICTIM CHECKLIST FOR PROFESSIONALS

Created by the expert author.

1. Consider the need for immediate protection and placement away from the family; seek advice from the Police
 - a. Prepare an emergency plan for leaving i.e. suitcase with clothes, important documents (passports, driving licence, national insurance/ nhs documents), money, mobile phone and family photographs.
 - b. If dual nationality advise victim to take their own and children's passports.
 - c. Consider taking the passport for safe keeping if required
 - d. If there is fear of them being taken out of the country request details of the family home in the said country. This should include the relative's names, full addresses, and the villages, where and with whom the victim may reside with. Liaise with Forced Marriage Unit (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Tel: 0207 008 0151).
 - e. Also if it can be established, the duration of visit, flight details and expected date of return.
 - f. If they fear being forced out of the country consider "All Ports Warning" through the Police

- g. Consider relocating the victim - preferably completely out of the area and not with a family member (let new area know that a high risk victim is placed with them ASAP – let the Police area know that victim has been transferred.
 - h. Develop a safety plan in case victim has been seen i.e. prepare another reason why you are meeting, i.e., give the victim a cover story.
2. If the adult victim wishes to remain in the family home and you believe their life to be in danger, complete the necessary safety planning.
3. Request fingerprints, photograph and DNA – done by the Police and is a voluntary process.
4. If necessary, record any injuries and arrange a medical examination.
5. Arrange to place a “Location of Interest” on the victim’s family’s address.
6. Consider appropriateness of a police mobile phone, alarm, and personal attack alarm.
7. Discuss a code word for them to use so you always know you are talking to the right person (that ONLY they know)
8. Consider any legal remedies available to the individual, i.e., Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO). FMPOs are made with the purpose of protecting those who are being forced into marriage or someone who has been forced into marriage; Police / Social Care or the victim can take these out ex-parte (without notice).

OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

- Gather detailed information of the family set up/family tree
- Establish if there are other members of the family in potential risk i.e. other children, male or female, or parents who may well be at risk once the perpetrator knows the victim has fled.
- Consider siblings / cousins / extended family that have previously suffered HBA, or younger sibling that may suffer HBA
- Establish if there is anybody else involved e.g. boyfriend/girlfriend (consider protection of them and their family)
- Do not speak to the ‘victim’ on a telephone and presume it is the victim. Preferably speak at a neutral safe location where members of the family/community will not see you.
- Give them where possible, the choice of ethnicity and gender of the specialists who deal with their case
- Advise them not to travel overseas.
- Consider dual nationality - Any queries concerning dual nationality should be addressed to the Forced Marriage Unit. It is easier to repatriate on a British passport. If the victim has to travel and has two passports advise them to travel on the British passport. Liaise with Forced Marriage Unit at Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- Families may report a victim as a missing person and use the police to find them in order that they may deal with the issues surrounding forced marriage and honour based violence.
- Relocation of victims out of the area is essential for protecting them from extended family and/or the community as a whole. The area in which the victim

is placed (however temporarily) need to know the potential risks and the area they have come from/going to. Consideration of relocation needs to include the security and transfer of the person's records i.e. patient/medical, school records, national insurance numbers, which could compromise their safety.

- Emergency accommodation – each case will be different and in many cases it will be the responsibility of the local authority to accommodate victims, particularly if they have children.
- Refer to support groups (with their permission) – for cultural reasons, if it is safe to do so.
- Consider alternative venues where the victim will feel comfortable and not at risk of being seen by a family member. Establish whether they can be contacted in confidence at work, school, through a trusted friend, sibling or organisation.
- If you communicate with the victim using mobile phones, establish whether the person or another family member sees the bill. If you use texts, emails, post make sure that messages cannot be intercepted.
- Take note of family views of honour and shame, their standing in the community.
- Be aware of strong extended family network.
- Simply visiting the family home without knowing the circumstances may put the person at risk of harm.
- There may be occasions when someone insists on meeting with his or her family. It should take place in a safe location, supervised by a trained/specialist professional with an authorised accredited interpreter present, as families will sometimes threaten the person in their own language.

DO NOT:

- Send them away – reporting is a very brave first step for someone and an inappropriate response could put the victim at greater risk.
- Speak to the victim/caller in the presence of family, extended family, friends or community members.
- Approach members of the family or community leaders unless the individual asks you to do so.
- Breach Confidentiality - Do not overlook possible breaches of confidentiality including leaks of information from the organisation, from records, interpreters and communications with external agencies and organisations.
- At any time attempt mediation or reconciliation between the victim and the family, do not actively initiate, encourage or facilitate family counselling, mediation, arbitration or reconciliation – whether offered by community councils, religious or professional groups.
- Use a family member, neighbour or those with influence in the community as an interpreter.
- Inform the family of the victim's whereabouts at any time.
- Disclose information to other support agencies without the consent of the victim. If information has to be disclosed to other agencies in case of an emergency, i.e., "threat to life" then request restrictions on the availability of that information.

- Give details of the case to the media without the expressed consent of the person involved – consider “ban on publicity” if there are any court processes.
- Re-house locally unless specifically requested after all the risks of harm have been explained to the person.
- Allow a woman to be accompanied by her children or a child when returning to the family home to collect possessions.
- Allow them to return to their home unless a full risk assessment has been carried out.
- Assume that a Black, Asian Minority, Ethnic (BAME) or someone from the same/similar diverse culture is best placed to deal with the victim.