



Welfare Factsheet 1 - Forced Marriage

What is a forced marriage?

In a forced marriage you are coerced into marrying someone against your will. You may be threatened physically or blackmailed emotionally to do so. It is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis.

It's not the same as an arranged marriage where you have a choice as to whether to accept the arrangement or not. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and countries for a very long time.

For more information, read the Forced Marriage Unit leaflet ['What is a forced marriage?'](#)

I'm frightened I might be forced into marriage during a family visit overseas, what should I do?

Call the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 before you go and advise Imaan.

And you should think about whether you really want to go. Once you're there you may:

- be isolated
- face emotional pressure
- be watched all the time
- have no money
- not have your passport or ticket
- be a long way from a telephone

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If you still decide to go you should make sure you leave the following with a trusted friend:

- full address and telephone number of where you are going to stay abroad
- your passport details
- all your flight details (there and back)

Find out [where the nearest embassy is](#) and keep the phone number with you at all times.

If you can, take some money with you.

My sister/cousin/friend has not returned from a visit overseas and I'm worried she might have been forced into marriage, what should I do?

Contact the forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151. It will help us if you can give as many details as you can, such as:

- where the person has gone
- when they were due back
- when you last heard from them

They'll contact the relevant embassy on your behalf and they will then try to make contact with the person.

I was forced into a marriage overseas, can you refuse my spouse a visa to come here?

The Forced Marriage Unit may be able to, but you may need to state publicly that you do not want your spouse to join you in the UK. Call The Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 and we will advise you on what we can do to help.

If you have been forced into marriage The Forced Marriage Unit [Survivor's Handbook](#) will offer you some advice and help you plan for the future.