



**Multi Agency 'Honour' Based Violence and
Forced Marriage Protocol**

Safer Rotherham Partnership Protocol: Forced Marriage and 'Honour' Based Violence

National and local context

Forced Marriage and 'Honour' based violence are a violation against human rights and is a high priority area of the national and local Violence Against Women and Girls Agenda. It is, primarily an issue for young women and girls aged between 13 and 30 years, although evidence collated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office indicates that 18% of the victims are male.

It is estimated that between 5000 and 8000 cases of Forced Marriage are reported per year. In 2013, the Forced Marriage Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office dealt with 1302 cases of Forced Marriage, which is a 16% increase when compared with the previous year. These numbers are broken down as follows:

- 43% Pakistani origin
- 11% Indian origin
- 10% Bangladeshi origin
- 40% under 18
- 15% under 16
- 18% male victims

The majority of cases of Forced Marriage encountered in the UK involved South Asian families, but this is due to the size of the South Asian population in the UK, rather than this being an issue specific to this community. There are also cases involving families from Iraqi Kurdistan, East Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa and from within Czech Roma Communities.

In Rotherham, from 2009 – 2011, Apna Haq, Rotherham's BMER Specialist Domestic Abuse service supported 21 women with issues related to 'Honour' based violence, 2 women in relation to Forced Marriages and 16 of these women had no recourse to public funding. By 2013/14, this increased to 98 referrals received and supported. Of these 98 referrals received, 16 were experiencing Domestic Abuse from a partner, ex-partner or family member, 5 were experiencing Forced Marriage issues, 45 were being subjected to 'Honour' based abuse, 7 were aged 16 – 18, 6 did not have recourse to public funding and 7 referrals required support in relation to their immigration status in the UK.

When working with cases of Forced Marriage and 'Honour' based violence the usual safeguarding principles do not apply because they may, inadvertently, place the victim at greater risk of harm – please refer to the guidance on page 9 of this document for further clarification on this point.

This protocol has been developed to inform an agency's initial response to Forced Marriage and/or 'Honour' based violence.

Each agency can download the Multi Agency Practice Guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage from:

<https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage#guidance-for-professionals>

Professionals supporting victims that are disabled or who have a learning difficulty can also download guidance from the above link.

It is recommended that practitioners who may, or are likely to deal with these issues undertake the local Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Training Modules.

Domestic Abuse:

In 2013, the national definition was changed to:

“Any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse”

In Rotherham, it is accepted that both 'Honour' based violence and Forced Marriage can be forms of domestic abuse.

What is 'Honour' Based Violence?

'Honour' based violence occurs when perpetrators believe a relative or other individual has shamed or damaged a family's or community's honour or reputation (known in some communities as izzat), and that the only way to redeem the damaged 'Honour' is to punish and/or kill the individual who has caused the perceived dishonour. There is a very strong link between 'Honour' based violence, Forced Marriage and domestic abuse.

The concept of 'Honour' may vary between families and communities due to this being grounded in a set of complex rule that will have developed from generation to generation.

Examples of damaged 'Honour' can include:

- Defying parental authority

- Becoming overly westernised in style (e.g. clothing, make up, behaviour, attitudes, etc.)
- Having sex/relationships/pregnancies outside marriage
- Using drugs, alcohol, cigarettes
- Gossip – family honour can be damaged by unfounded or untrue gossip or rumours
- Interfaith or intercommunity relationships
- Leaving a spouse or seeking a divorce

This list is not exhaustive and can include circumstances where a victim may be abused because of a perception of breaching standards of behaviour where this may not have occurred.

Forms of ‘Honour’ based violence can include, but are not limited to:

- Being disowned or ostracised by the community
- Abuse of the victim by family members (including parents, spouse, in laws and extended family), and the abuse can be verbal, psychological, emotional, financial, physical or combination of abusive behaviours
- Restriction of freedom or loss of independence – being “policed” by family members
- Isolation from wider family or community, e.g. stopped from seeing friends and other family/community members
- Reduced access to channels of potential support (e.g. school, college, etc.)
- Forced Marriage
- Murder

Internalisation of guilt or shame by the victim can cause internal conflict for them, and not wanting to cause further shame can result in self harm and suicide attempts.

What is a Forced Marriage?

Forced Marriages must be clearly distinguished from arranged marriages. In arranged marriages, the families of both parties take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice in accepting the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

In a Forced Marriage, one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some vulnerable adults, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress from the victim’s family or community is involved. Duress can involve physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.. The duress is designed to ensure the victim’s compliance with the marriage arrangements.

It is worth noting that there can be cases of 'Honour' based violence where Forced Marriage is not present, but is rare to find a person being subjected to a Forced Marriage without an element of 'Honour' based violence being present.

Forced Marriage cases can develop to the extent that the victims need protection from the family, relatives and wider community. It is common for individuals being forced to marry to experience being forced to travel abroad, being kidnapped, being physically and mentally abused. In extreme cases, the lack of compliance with the marriage can result in a so called 'Honour' killing because the victim may be seen to be deliberately shaming the family by refusing to consent to, or go through with, the marriage.

Many young people, throughout their childhood, expect their parents to choose or select their marriage partner for them, and may not realise they have a fundamental human right to choose their spouse. Motives behind Forced Marriage can be justified, by the perpetrators, as protection of their children or preservation of cultural or religious traditions, and they are unlikely, therefore, to see anything wrong with their actions. Some of the key motivations, identified by practitioners working with victims of Forced Marriage, include:

- Controlling unwanted or perceived promiscuity
- Controlling sexuality
- Preventing "unsuitable" or undesirable relationships (e.g. outside ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group)
- Protecting family honour and pride/izzat
- Responding to peer group or family pressure
- Fulfilling long standing family commitments and/or to strengthen family links or ties
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals
- Protecting perceived religious ideals which are misguided
- Ensuring care for a child or vulnerable adult with special needs
- Assisting claims for UK residence and/or citizenship
- Protecting family wealth, land or property or increasing wealth

Some factors increase the risk of someone being forced into marriage and can include:

- Bereavement within a family – occasionally, when a parent dies, the remaining parent feels an urgency to ensure the children are married
- When a step parent moves in with the family
- When an older child refuses to marry a younger child may be forced in to the marriage to protect the family honour or fulfil the original contract
- When a disclosure of sexual abuse is made – parents may feel the marriage will restore the family honour or stop the abuse

These motivations may help practitioners understand why parents may force their children to marry but cannot be used as justification for denying their children their human right to choose their own marriage partner. The above list is not exhaustive.

Every major faith group, including Islam, Sikh, Hindu and Christianity, condemns Forced Marriage and all require freely given consent as a pre requisite for a valid marriage to take place.

One Chance Rule

In cases of 'Honour' based violence or Forced Marriage there may only be **one chance** to save a life.

Practitioners need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they come across cases of 'Honour' based violence and/or Forced Marriage. If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support being offered, that one chance may have been wasted.

Initial Response – Best Practice Guidance

When dealing with cases of 'Honour' based violence and/or Forced Marriage, it is important to take a victim centred approach. The victim should be listened to and their wishes respected as much as possible. There may be occasions where the victim chooses to take a course of action that may put them in danger, and in these instances the risks should be explained to the victim, and safety planning advice offered. Where it is appropriate to do so, practitioners may need to follow their child or adult protection procedures, and this should be explained to the victim prior to those actions being undertaken, and the impact of those actions on the victim's safety need to be considered with the victim and these discussions need to be recorded. Victims should also be given the opportunity to access support from agencies with specialist expertise in 'Honour' based violence and Forced Marriage, and if the victim is agreeable to do there needs to be an agreed safe method of contact with the victim.

A good initial response includes:

- Seeing the victim alone, in a secure, private place, where the conversation cannot be overheard - even if they attend with others
- Assuring the victim they are believed
- Ascertaining what 'Honour' or *izzat* may mean to the victim
- Explaining all options open to the victim, but respect their wishes and ensure their safety is taken into account and discussed with them

- Seeking advice from a Forced Marriage Specialist and/or the Police's Public Protection Unit, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates or other local specialist agency
- Reassuring the victim of their confidentiality, and that the family will not be informed unless there is a risk to others and this will not impact on their safety
- Undertaking DASH risk assessment and referring cases assessed as high risk to the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and local Independent Domestic Violence Advisors
- Ensuring that there is a way to contact the victim discreetly in the future
- Referring to your agency's vulnerable adult or child safeguarding procedures in relation to 'Honour' based violence and activate them if appropriate
- Initiating strategy discussions under the relevant safeguarding procedures and ensure the victim is kept informed of those discussions and the actions that have been agreed in those discussions
- Considering the need for immediate protection away from the family
- Referring all cases of 'Honour' based violence to the South Yorkshire Police (by telephoning 101 or 999 if it is an emergency), in addition to MARAC and the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (01709 823196) when the risk to the client is high

Additional steps to take include:

- Give the victim, where possible, the choice of the ethnicity and gender of the specialist who deals with their case
- Inform them of their right to seek legal advice and representation
- If necessary, record any injuries and arrange a medical examination
- Give them personal safety advice
- Develop a safety plan in case they are seen when accessing support (i.e. prepare another reason why you are meeting and consider where it is safe for you to meet with the victim)
- Establish if there is a family history of Forced Marriage, e.g. siblings forced to marry. Other indicators may include domestic violence, self-harm, family disputes, unreasonable restrictions (e.g. withdrawal from education or "house arrest") or missing persons within the family
- Advise them not to travel overseas. Discuss the difficulties they may face (see below)
- Identify any potential criminal offences and refer to the SYP Public Protection Unit (PPU) if appropriate, and support the victim in making complaints to the Police if they choose to do this
- Give them advice on what service or support they should expect and from whom
- Ensure that they have the contact details for any trained specialist they will be referred to and that the specialist agency knows of the agreed safety

- plan including an explanation of who they are when they make contact with the victim
- 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
 - Refer them, 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 domestic abuse and Forced Marriage

Remember:

When referring a case of Forced Marriage to other organisations, ensure they are capable of handling the case appropriately. If in doubt, approach the Safer Rotherham Partnership Domestic Abuse Coordinator (01709 334567) who can advise on agencies that have experience of working with survivors of 'Honour' based violence and/or Forced Marriage

Practitioners should **not**:

- Treat allegations as a case of domestic abuse – whilst there will be links with domestic abuse, the response required is a specialist approach that ensures victim safety and that of others who may also be at risk and this will be informed by undertaking DASH Risk Assessment and making the appropriate referrals to MARAC, IDVA and specialist agencies with expertise in dealing with cases of 'Honour' based violence and/or Forced Marriage
- Send the victim back to the family home as part of the routine safeguarding procedures – practitioners need to be sure that such action will be safe for the victim and, if it is, that the victim has a safety plan and is clear on how to access support when it is needed at any point in the future. If the victim is determined to return home, and this will place them and/or others at risk, there will be a need to trigger the appropriate safeguarding procedures in addition to other procedures that are triggered by the disclosure and the victim needs to be aware of this
- Ignore what the victim has disclosed
- Breach confidentiality unless it is necessary to ensure victim safety
- Approach the victims family or friends or those who have influence within the community without the expressed permission of the victim
- Use friends, family members, community leaders or members as interpreters even if they give reassurances of their support for the victim
- Share information from any strategy meetings or MARAC discussions without the agreement of partners at those meetings
- Attempt mediation, reconciliation or family counselling

Remember

Cases of 'Honour' based violence and Forced Marriage may not fit with some of the principles of working with children and families, as they may, inadvertently, place the victim at greater risk of harm. This includes the principle that the best place for a child or young person is with his/her family. It also includes the practice of attempting to resolve cases through family mediation, counselling, arbitration or reconciliation.

If a victim is being taken overseas

Some Forced Marriages take place in the UK with no overseas element, but there may be others that involve a partner coming from overseas or a British citizen being taken abroad. Or there may be situations where a person may be told they are going abroad for a holiday or family visit and then find out the purpose of the travel was their marriage.

Where a victim is being taken overseas, often it is education or health professionals rather than the Police or Social Care staff, who will hear of the travel plans. If foreign travel with the family becomes unavoidable, the following precautions should be taken:

- A photocopy of their passport for retention. Encourage them to keep details of their passport number and the place and date of issue
- Gather information about the travel plans – dates, places they will be staying, full names of who they will be travelling with and staying with and phone numbers
- Gather as much information as possible about the family (this will need to be gathered discreetly) including:
 - Full name and date of birth of the person under threat
 - Their father's name
 - Any address where they may be staying overseas
 - Potential spouse's name (if known)
 - Date of the proposed wedding (if known)
 - The name of the potential spouse's father (if known)
 - Addresses of the extended family in the UK and overseas and any known phone numbers
- Information that only they would be aware of (if the victim is a British national, this may assist any subsequent interview at an Embassy/British

- High Commission in case another person of the same age and gender is produced pretending to be them)
- Names and addresses of any close relatives remaining in the UK
 - A safe means by which to contact them e.g. a mobile telephone that will function overseas. Record the number
 - Details of the third party in order to maintain contact in case the person contacts them whilst overseas or on her return
 - An estimated return date. Ask that they contact you without fail on their return
 - A written statement by the person explaining that they want the police, adult or children's social care, a teacher or a third party to act on their behalf if they do not return by a certain date.

Remember:

If the family are approached, they may deny that the person is being forced to marry, move them, expedite any travel arrangements and bring forward the Forced Marriage.

Report details of the case, with full family history, to the Public Protection Unit and inform the Forced Marriage Unit.

Encourage the person to get in touch with the Forced Marriage Unit. The Unit gives confidential advice and support to anyone who fears they may be forced to marry.

The person may be a dual national and have two passports or if they are under 18 years, they may be listed on their parents' foreign passport.

If foreign travel with the family becomes unavoidable, the following precautions should be taken:

- Give them the contact details of the department and practitioner handling their case
- Encourage them to memorise at least one telephone number and e-mail address, preferably (if they are a British national) those of the British Embassy or British High Commission
- Supply the address and contact number for the nearest British Embassy or High Commission

Dual Nationality

If a person is a British national and also holds the nationality of another country, they are considered to be a dual national. This can mean that when the

individual is in the country of their other nationality, the authorities in that country will not recognise that the British Embassy or high Commission has any right to assist them or permit any assistance to be given.

However, where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office considers there is a special humanitarian reason to do so, it will consider offering assistance to dual nationals in the country of their other nationality.

Legal Position

In England and Wales, it is now a criminal offence to force someone to marry and/or take a British National to another country with the intention of forcing them to marry. In commissioning this offence other criminal offences may be committed, such as:

- Threatening behaviour
- Assault
- Abduction
- Theft (e.g. passports)
- Rape

There are a number of civil and family orders that can offer protection to protect those threatened with or already forced into marriage. These include:

- Application for care or supervision order – Children Act 1989
- Wardship proceedings issued by the High Court
- Adults can seek protection from harassment via the Police or non molestation orders through the Family Court
- Forced Marriage Civil Protection Orders can be sought under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Court of Protection Proceedings for vulnerable adults

If the victim chooses to access legal orders of protection then they need to be aware that these will be served on the individuals perpetrating the abuse and discussions undertaken with the victim about how this will impact on their safety.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This provision came into force on 13th April 2011. The Safer Rotherham Partnership will undertake review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by

- (a) a person to whom he was related or with whom s/he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship,

or

(b) a member of the same household, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

When undertaking a DHR, the Safer Rotherham Partnership will be seeking any lessons to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims. This includes ascertaining that accepted contemporary best practice has been adhered to in cases of 'Honour' Based Violence and/or Forced Marriage, and deaths where this type of abuse is a feature is a special point for consideration in the Multi Agency Statutory Guidance for Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Cases of Domestic Abuse, including 'Honour' based violence and Forced Marriage, will require Domestic Abuse risk assessment to be undertaken once it is recognised that they are a feature in the case. Cases assessed as "High Risk" are required to be referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Independent Advocacy Service. In Rotherham, all agencies are risk assessing cases of Domestic Abuse with the DASH risk assessment tool.

For further information about Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment and training available, please contact the SRP Domestic Abuse Coordinator.

You can also contact any of the agencies listed in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 - Potential indicators of 'Honour' based violence and/or Forced Marriage:

Cases will rarely present as Forced Marriage and/or honour based violence, and the victim (particularly children and young people) will not usually mention either Forced Marriage or 'Honour' based violence

Education

- Withdrawal of student from school by those with parental responsibility
- Removal of day centre for person with physical or learning disability
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Student being prevented from attending higher education
- Truancy or persistent absences
- Request for extended leave or student not returning from an overseas visit
- Surveillance by siblings/cousins/extended family members at school
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality, poor exam results – in particular for previously motivated students
- Decline in physical presentation or demeanour

Health

- Patient constantly being accompanied on visits to doctor, midwife and/or clinics
- Self harm and/or eating disorders
- Attempted suicide
- Depression
- Isolation
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Early, unwanted or constant pregnancy
- Female genital mutilation (an offence under the Female Genital mutilation Act 2003)

Family History

- Siblings being forced to marry
- Early marriage of siblings
- Self harm or suicide of siblings
- Death of a parent
- Family disputes
- Domestic Violence and abuse
- Running away from home

- Unreasonable restrictions (e.g. house arrest)
- Never being allowed to leave the home unescorted
- Financial restrictions (e.g. not being given access to own money or bank account)

Employment

- Poor performance
- Poor attendance
- Limited career choices
- Change in career choices
- Unable to attend business trips or functions
- Not allowed to work
- Subject to financial control (e.g. not being given access to own money or bank account)

Police Involvement

- Victim or other sibling being reported as missing
- Reports of domestic abuse, violence harassment or breaches of the peace in the family home
- Reports of other offences such as rape or kidnap
- Victim reported by family for alleged offences (e.g. substance misuse, shoplifting)
- Threats to kill
- Attempts to kill or harm
- Acid attacks
- Female genital mutilation (an offence under the Female Genital mutilation Act 2003)

Appendix 2 - Points of contact and/or further information

South Yorkshire Police, Public Protection Unit – 101

Safer Rotherham Partnership Independent Domestic Violence Advocates –
01709 823196

Safer Rotherham Partnership Domestic Abuse Coordinator 01709 334567

Apna Haq – 01709 519212/211

Choices and Options – 01709 838400

Rotherham Women's Refuge – 0870 850 2247

The Forced Marriage Unit – 020 7008 0151
fmf@fco.gov.uk

Honour Network Helpline – 0800 5 999 365 (free phone)

Karma Nirvana – 01332 604 098