



Forced Marriage

Supporting people at risk

Ayrshire multi agency practitioner's guidance

Revised JAN 2019

'Everyone has a right to choose their own spouse and enter into marriage with their full and free consent.

Legislation is in place to prevent an individual from being forced or tricked into marriage'

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Who is this guidance for?

This document is intended to provide initial guidance for any member of staff of any Ayrshire organisation who might come into contact with people at risk of forced marriage.

This Guidance is intended to provide a concise overview of what forced marriage is, the legislation in relation to forced marriage, some of the issues that practitioners' should take into account when dealing with potential cases of forced marriage and the immediate steps practitioners should take if concerned that someone is at risk of, or has been subject to, forced marriage.

It should be read in conjunction with the Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: **Preventing and responding to Forced Marriage – update 2014** produced by the Scottish Government (www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0046/00460555.pdf) and also your organisation's policy and procedures in relation to Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and Forced Marriage, where these are in place. The three Ayrshire Adult Protection Committees have led on the review of this Guidance to support all staff within Ayrshire organisations, including all of the Public Protection Forums.

Definition

A forced marriage is where one or both prospective spouses do not (or, in the case of children cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved.

Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure, threatening conduct, harassment, threat of blackmail, use of deception and other means. It is also 'force' to knowingly take advantage of a person's incapacity to consent to, or understand the nature of, the marriage. Duress may be from a prospective spouse, parents, other family members and the wider community. A forced marriage is always an abuse of someone's human rights.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is entered into freely by both people and families take a role in introducing the marriage partners. Nor is it the same as a sham marriage, where both parties enter into an agreement to marry, e.g. to assist a stay in the UK, and money may be paid to a UK or EU resident to enter into the marriage as a type of illegal 'business arrangement'.

Legislation

Legislation came into force in November 2011 which makes provision for the protection of people being forced into marriage or who have already been forced into a marriage.

The Forced Marriage etc (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011 legislated for Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) which can be granted in the civil courts in Scotland. FMPO's can protect both adults and children at risk.

The provision within the act is designed to enable the courts to tailor the terms of an FMPO to protect and meet the specific needs of victims of forced marriage or potential forced marriage.

For example it might state that:

- The protected person must be taken to a place of safety designated in the order
- The protected person must not be taken to a specified place designated in the order

- The protected person be brought to a court at such time and place as the court specifies
- Any violent, threatening or intimidating conduct be stopped

Forcing someone into a marriage in Scotland is now a criminal offence (under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014), which could lead to a two year prison sentence, a fine, or both.

Research

A recent study commissioned by the Scottish Government in January 2017 highlighted there is no one specific Forced Marriage intervention therefore need to focus on the impact to the individual. There is clear evidence of survivors experiencing suicidal ideation and other mental health problems. It is therefore crucial responders take account of this.

Chloe's Story

Chloe was looking for advice on benefits and told the benefits adviser that she needed to maximise her benefits to help pay for her forthcoming wedding. Chloe has a learning disability and was unable to read and write and has often sought assistance in the past. Chloe was really excited and told the worker that her boyfriend had promised her a new dress to wear. Chloe told the worker that her boyfriend was 'foreign' and he was really excited about getting married, as he will be able to stay in Scotland. Chloe explained that her best friend, who had attended the same special school as Chloe was also going to marry Chloe's boyfriend's friend, who is also 'foreign' and wants to stay in Scotland. The benefits adviser made an adult support and protection referral to her local Social Services department who shared information with the Registrar and ultimately the marriage was stopped. Shortly afterwards, Chloe's 'boyfriend' moved away.



Nina's Story

Nina was a student and contacted the Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline because she had overheard her brothers talking about a wedding being planned for her. The previous summer, her two cousins had returned from a holiday to see family abroad, both with much older husbands whom they had never previously met. Nina was concerned as the summer holidays were approaching and she felt this would be the time that she would be taken abroad. Nina was very concerned about what would happen to her, but also what might happen to her family if she sought support. Helpline staff contacted the Police Public Protection Unit who met with Nina and assisted her in obtaining a Forced Marriage Protection Order. Ultimately, Nina felt protected and secure and shared the information about how to obtain a Protection Order with several of her friends.

Prevalence and reasons for forced marriage

Many cases of forced marriage go unreported. Many families do not consider the marriage to be 'forced' and many victims are reluctant to speak out.

The Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline confirmed that during 2017/2018, 4.5% of the total Scottish calls were in relation to forced marriage. It should be noted that this will not represent all concerns in relation to forced marriage in Ayrshire as these could have arisen via a number of other agencies, and that calls may involve more than one victim or repeat victims.

Partners across Ayrshire continue to proactively raise awareness of and respond assertively to this issue. In light of further studies commissioned by Scottish Government in January 2017 this guidance produced in February 2015 has been updated. Systems continue to be improved to better capture the prevalence and experience of Forced Marriage within Ayrshire.

Reasons for forced marriage

Those who force people to marry often justify their actions as upholding cultural/religious traditions or protecting family honour.

This is misguided as forced marriage is condemned by every major faith. Further reasons can include;

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality (perceived promiscuity or being lesbian, gay or transgendered)
- Responding to the pressure of others including family and friends and peers
- Achieving financial gain or control
- Ensure care for a child or adult with a disability as carers now unable to fulfil role
- Assisting claims for UK residence/citizenship
- Marrying off older sibling with a disability because their unmarried status is a barrier to marriage for other siblings

Warning signs and potential indicators

Clearly, the nature of your professional role will present different opportunities to observe or become aware of, warning signs or indicators of forced marriage as the legislation is intended to both stop the course of conduct that would lead to a forced marriage as well as the marriage itself. What is critical, is that you appreciate that forced marriage is a real issue in Ayrshire and that we all have a responsibility to identify and respond effectively to these types of concerns.

The previous section, which sets out some of the reasons for forced marriage, helps to raise awareness of some of the warning signs which are indicative of the grooming process that occurs as part of a forced marriage and some indicators of potential vulnerability to this risk.

For example, disability may increase vulnerability and families who display very controlling behaviour and language towards an individual may pose a higher risk.

The diagram on the following page highlights the key warning signs and indicators that may make you concerned that forced marriage is a risk. Please remember this is not an exhaustive list of signs, and that the presence of these indicators is not conclusive evidence that forced marriage is a risk. You must continue to use your professional judgement and make use of the available guidance.

Given the high risk of mental health decline individuals should be assessed for this and access necessary supports. Always consider the risk of suicide or self harm and ask about this.

If you do suspect forced marriage, also consult the Scottish Government Guidance (see useful links at the end of this document) including the specific Statutory Guidance (where appropriate) and the one chance checklist and flowchart in this guide.

Particular care must be taken around confidentiality; it can be dangerous to involve families, friends or community leaders in any capacity. Do not assume anyone (e.g. the person's mother) will take a protective role. Remember that in some instances, a victim's life may be at stake.



Education

Truancy • Decline in performance or punctuality • Low motivation • Unexpected poor exam results • Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility • Not allowed to attend extracurricular activities

Health

Self harm • Attempted suicide or expressing suicidal thoughts • Eating disorders • Anxiety Depression • Isolation • Substance misuse

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

Police involvement

Other people within the family reported missing • Reports of domestic abuse at the family home • Reports of breach of the peace at the family home • Female genital mutilation • Uncharacteristic police involvement of an individual (begin shoplifting, involvement with drugs etc.) • Running away from home

Family

Sibling forced to marry • Early marriage of siblings • Family disputes • Unreasonable restrictions – e.g. 'house arrest' • Sudden announcement of marriage • Financial restrictions

Impact

Recent studies show that some women who experience Forced Marriage have developed more liberal parenting attitudes which is a protective factor for the future. It remains clear however as a result of forced marriage, individuals may face consequences which can include;

- Sexual degradation and domestic abuse (includes repeated rape, pregnancy and physical harm)
- Additional isolation particularly if the individual has a lack of access to an alternative home or support networks or finances
- Lack of experience of life outside the home or relationships and as such a lack of skills, knowledge or ability to access or understand their rights (leads to desire to run away)
- Fear – of professionals as this may cause them to be ostracised, family or friends who may try to find them
- (Families can report someone missing or falsely accuse them of a crime in order to illicit their return)
- Removal to another country or location causing further isolation

- Death by so called “honour killing”
- High risk of deteriorating mental health therefore responders need to be aware and ensure appropriate responses and supports are made available.

If an individual has dependent children, they too are likely to be affected by the consequences set out above and this will affect their well-being. In addition, child siblings of those subject to forced marriage may themselves experience some of the consequences outlined above – and may also be at risk of forced marriage themselves.

Girls are at particular risk although it could be a child of any sex or gender identity.

Concerns about children’s well-being should be responded to by using your local GIRFEC processes. Concerns about risk to children should be responded to using your organisations child protection procedures.

One chance checklist

Staff may only have one chance to speak to an individual at risk of forced marriage and thus, protect them.

Do

- See the individual on their own – even if they are accompanied by others – check in private if the person wishes to speak with a male or female member of staff, never use any accompanying person as an interpreter
 - See the individual in a secure and private place where you will not be overheard
 - Reassure the individual about confidentiality (in line with your organisation's policy) and explain that you will not give information to their family/friends or community
 - Accept what the individual says
 - Explain all the options open to the individual and their possible outcomes
 - Recognise the individual's wishes and take these into account
 - Assess the risk faced by the individual by conducting an appropriate and thorough risk assessment (in line with your organisation's policy)
 - Contact, as soon as possible, the Lead Person responsible for Forced Marriage within your organisation – if you are employed by a Statutory Organisation – your Organisation is required to have this (if the individual is under 16 years of age, refer to your organisation's guidance on Child Protection, if they are over 16 refer to your organisation's guidance on Adult Support and Protection) and also contact the Ayrshire Public Protection Unit (Police) in Kilmarnock on 01563 505012
- Agree a way to contact the individual safely (for example agree a code word)
 - Obtain full details, record these securely (in line with your organisation's policy on confidentiality and record keeping) and pass on as appropriate
 - Give the individual (or help them memorise) your contact details and ensure they know the emergency services number for use in an emergency situation and/or give them appropriate agencies contact details (as appropriate to their communication needs)
 - Consider the need for immediate police involvement, protection and placement away from the family and arrange this if necessary: this includes any action to stop the individual being removed from the UK

- Do everything you can to keep the individual safe
- Get immediate advice, while the individual is still with you if possible, if you are not sure what to do
- Ensure you fully consider the mental health needs for the individual and access relevant support.

If you are aware someone is potentially at risk of a forced marriage and you need to take immediate, emergency action in relation to their health or safety - do not hesitate to dial 999 for the appropriate emergency service (Police, Ambulance or Fire)

If Social Services are required in an emergency, (outside of normal office hours), contact Social Services pan Ayrshire Out of Hours Service on 0800 328 7758.

Do not

- Send the individual away or let them leave without a safety plan and follow up arrangements
- Approach the individual's family/friends or community unless they ask you to do so and even then use your professional judgement and discuss the merits of doing so with the individual
- Approach community leaders for advice Share information with anyone without the individual's consent unless there is a risk of immediate harm to any children (this merits a child protection referral to Social Services) or themselves (this merits consideration of an adult support and protection referral to Social Services), whereby contact should be made with Social Services as outlined and the Ayrshire Public Protection Unit (Police)
- Attempt to mediate with any member of the family, extended family or community
- Ignore potential mental health concerns

In all other cases – use the following flowchart to assist your professional decision making:

Concern about forced marriage

Confirm the age of the person (this will impact on the action you will take)



*In all instances for both children and adults where Forced Marriage or potential Forced Marriage is suspected – Police should be notified by contacting the Ayrshire Public Protection Unit

Key local contacts

Lead Person responsible for Forced Marriage within Ayrshire Local Authorities		
Area	Designation	Telephone Number
North Ayrshire	Chief Social Work Officer	01294 317781
South Ayrshire	Head of Community Health and Care Services:	01292 612735
East Ayrshire	Senior Manager –Authority Wide Services, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	01563 503356
NHS AAA	Gender Based Violence Operational Lead	01563 826724

Registrars (Marriage) within Ayrshire Local Authorities		
Area	Service	Telephone Number
North Ayrshire	Registration	01294 310000
South Ayrshire	Registration	01292 617617
East Ayrshire	Registration	01563 576695/6

Useful links - Local

Ayrshire Police:

Public Protection Unit: 01563 505012

Ayrshire Social Services:

Out of Hours Service: 0800 328 7758

North Ayrshire

Adult Support and Protection:

www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/asp

Child Protection:

www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info

North Ayrshire –

Access to Mental Health Supports: 01294 310300

Information about Mental Health Supports:

www.nahscp.org/community-mental-health-service

Women's Aid: 01294 602424

www.nawomensaid.org.uk

Telephone interpreting:

Language Line:

www.languageline.co.uk

Telephone interpreting for emergency and non-emergency needs

East Ayrshire

Adult Support and Protection:

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/asap

Child Protection:

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/childprotection

East Ayrshire Mental Health Support

<https://eastayrshi.re/mentalhealthadvice>

East Ayrshire Social Services:

Kilmarnock: 01563 554200

Cumnock: 01290 427720

Galston: 01563 503400

Doon Valley: 01292 552900

Women's Aid: 01563 536001

www.eastayrshirewomensaid.org.uk

Telephone interpreting:

Alpha Translation and Interpretation Ltd:

www.alphatrans.co.uk

South Ayrshire

Adult Support and Protection: 0300 123 0900

www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/adultprotection

Child Protection: 01292 267675

www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/childprotection

South Ayrshire

Mental Health Support: 01292 513144

South Ayrshire Social Services: 0300 1230900

Women's Aid: 01292 266482

www.southayrshirewomensaid.org.uk

Telephone interpreting:

Language Line:

www.languageine.co.uk

Telephone interpreting for emergency and non-emergency needs

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Child Protection - *If a member of NHS staff has a concern about a child and is looking for advice and support in the first instance contact:*

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Child Protection Health Team: 01563 826001
01563 826002

Adult Support and Protection – *staff in Acute services can access advice and support from the:*

Adult Support and Protection

Advisor – Acute Services: 01292 559832

Telephone Interpreting: *Contact:*

Language Line 0800 028 0073

You will require to provide an ID code which is available from switchboard. Further information on interpretation services within NHS Ayrshire & Arran can be found on the [flowchart](#) on Athena.

Useful links – Scottish

Scottish Government:

Forced Marriage Helpline 0800 027 1234
It is free and trained advisors are on hand 24 hours a day

Shakti Women's Aid Support:

Helpline: 0131 475 2399
www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk
Advocacy, refuge and information to all black minority ethnic women, children and young people experiencing and/or fleeing domestic abuse

Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid Support:

Helpline: 0141 353 0859
www.hematgryffe.org.uk
Advocacy, refuge and information for black minority ethnic women, children and young people experiencing and/or fleeing domestic abuse

Scottish Domestic Abuse:

Helpline: 0800 027 1234 (24 hours)
For anyone who has experienced domestic abuse (signposting for male victims)

Help for women with no recourse to public funds:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-benefits-for-visa-holder-domestic-violence

Women who entered the UK on spousal or partner visa and are eligible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain(ILR) under the Domestic Violence Rule

Men – AMIS (Abused Men in Scotland):

Helpline: 0808 800 0024
www.abusedmeninScotland.org

Victim Support Scotland:

Helpline: 0845 603 9213
www.victimsupportsco.org.uk
Provides emotional support, practical help and essential information to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime

Forced Marriage - Scottish Government Guidance:

Multi-agency practice guidelines: preventing and responding to forced marriage – update 2014
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0046/00460555.pdf>

Statutory Agencies:

Forced Marriage – Statutory Guidance
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0046/00460509.pdf

Forced Marriage - Scottish Statutory Guidance:

Supplementary Guidance Document 2014
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0046/00462181.pdf

Useful links - UK

Government departments

Forced Marriage Unit Joint Foreign & Commonwealth Office/Home Office service:

Helpline: (Mon-Fri: 9am–5pm) 020 7008 0151

www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage

Email: fm@fco.gov.uk

For emergencies out of hours, phone 020 7008 1500 and ask for the Global Response Centre

UK Border Agency:

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

Enforces immigration and customs regulations and considers applications for permission to enter or stay in the UK, and for citizenship and asylum

