

BRIEFING NOTE 32 – WHAT IS FORCED MARRIAGE?

1.0 What is forced marriage?

- 1.1 The Crown Prosecution Service¹ defines forced marriage as “a marriage conducted without the true consent of one or both parties, either because violence, threats or coercion is a factor, or because the victim cannot consent to be married, or they have been deceived”.
- 1.2 The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)² states that “A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.”

2.0 Examples of forced marriage

- 2.1 Forced marriage is not restricted to women and can affect individuals of all genders and ages.
- 2.2 The Norfolk Constabulary³ indicates that the pressure individuals face to marry against their will includes:
- Physical - including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence.
 - Emotional and psychological - for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family.
 - Financial - taking your wages or not giving you any money.

¹ Source CPS <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/so-called-honour-based-abuse-and-forced-marriage>

² Source Forced Marriage Unit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

³ Source Norfolk Constabulary <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/advice/assault-abuse-threats/forced-marriage>

3.0 Victims or potential victims of forced marriage

3.1 Refuge⁴ explains that individuals could be a victim of forced marriage or at risk of forced marriage if:

- they did not say 'yes' to getting married;
- they were not consulted or aware that they were getting married;
- their family or extended family used emotional pressure and/or physical violence to make an individual agree to a marriage;
- they have been forced to stay in confinement and have not been allowed to discuss their marriage with anyone.
- their family is arranging a marriage without their approval;
- their official papers or passport have been taken away;
- they are being taken abroad and they are not sure why;
- they have been told they must leave education against their will.

4.0 Facts and Figures

4.1 The Forced Marriage Unit was established in 2005 and through its helpline provides advice and support to victims of forced marriage.

4.2 The Home Office reports⁵ 'In 2018, the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,764 cases'. The FMU states that:

- the majority of cases – 1,332 (75%) – involved women, with 297 cases (17%) involving men (gender in the remaining cases was unknown)
- 119 cases took place entirely within the UK; and,

⁴ Source Refuge <https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/forced-marriage/>

⁵ Source Home Office FMY Marriage Unit Statistics 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804044/Forced_Marriage_Unit_Statistics_2018_FINAL.pdf

- Of the 1,764 cases the FUM gave advice or support to, 124 victims lived in the Eastern region of the UK.

5.0 The Legislation

5.1 The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014⁶ makes it a criminal offence, punishable by up to 7 years in prison, to force an individual to marry. Under this Act, a Forced Marriage Protection Order issued by the Family Courts can be put in place if an individual is being forced into marriage or has been forced into marriage.

6.0 Where can you seek support, advice and further information in the University?

6.1 The University does not tolerate any form of harassing behaviour, which includes forced marriage, and individuals do not have to tolerate such inappropriate behaviour or believe that it is their fault.

6.2 The University encourages individuals who have experienced or witnessed forced marriage, whether on the UEA campus/Norwich Research Park or off campus, to report it to the University as detailed in paragraphs 6.3 to 6.8, to the Forced Marriage Unit (see paragraph 7.0) and/or to the Police.

6.3 Your line manager or a member of the [Human Resources team](#) can provide advice, support and information, including the identification of appropriate workplace support mechanisms, which may include undertaking a risk assessment and helping individuals develop a personal safety plan.

6.4 If it relates to a student(s) or you are a student and not an employee, contact Student Support Service for advice and support.

6.5 The University also provides a [reporting form](#) as part of Never OK for individuals to report incidents of harassment that is experienced by employees, students

⁶ Source [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#)

and visitors at UEA. The information shared is used to offer support and guidance to individuals.

6.6 You can contact your Campus Trade Union representative ([UCU](#), [UNISON](#), [UNITE](#)) for advice and representation.

6.7 Signposting advice can be provided by

- A UEA [Staff Pride Dignity & Respect Champion](#)
- A member of the [Equality & Diversity Team](#)

6.8 You can self-refer to UEA's [Staff Counselling Service](#).

7.0 Reporting external to University

- Norfolk Constabulary on 101. Information and advice on support can be found at <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/advice/assault-abuse-threats/honour-based-abuse> .
- Forced Marriage Unit (020 7008 0151 / fm@fco.gov.uk). Information and advice on support can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>)

8.0 Help in an emergency

8.1 If you are in an emergency situation on campus dial 999 or 112 for the Police and dial 01603 592222 for Security.

8.2 If you are in an emergency situation off campus dial 999 or 112 for the Police.

9.0 Confidentiality

9.1 Individuals who make a disclosure of forced marriage can be assured that the information they share with the University is confidential and will not normally be shared with other parties without their permission.

9.2 However, there may be situations where confidentiality cannot be kept, and this will be made clear to individuals at the time. For example, where the safety of others is at risk, or the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults. If this is necessary, the University will discuss this with the individual before breaching their confidentiality.

10.0 Links to specialist organisations that can offer expert advice and support

- Forced Marriage Unit (020 7008 0151 / fmfco.gov.uk)
- [Karma Nirvana](#) supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage (0800 5999 247)
- [Victim Support](#)
- [akt](#) (The Albert Kennedy Trust) ‘ supports lgbtq+ young people in the UK experiencing homelessness or living in hostile environments to find safe homes...’
- [Southall Black Sisters](#) ‘a fast paced dynamic and leading advocacy service working to highlight and challenge all forms of gender-related violence against women.’
- [Leeway](#) (0300 561 0077) offer telephone support and hold [weekly appointments](#) on the UEA Campus, where UEA staff and students of all genders can speak confidentially to an outreach worker.
- [Women’s Aid](#) a Freephone (0808 2000 247) 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run by Refuge and Women’s Aid.

11.0 Exiting from a website quickly or hiding your browser history

11.1 Many websites that provide advice and information on forced marriage, honour based abuse, domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault provide an “exit”, “quick escape” or “leave this website” button on their webpages. For

instance, if someone enters the room you can use this button to switch quickly to another website.

- 11.2 To prevent someone from tracking your browser history, try using a different computer or device or turn off your browser history.

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