

Forced Marriage

A **SURVIVORS** HANDBOOK



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Introduction

Everyone has the right to choose who they marry and when they get married. You are not wrong for having made the brave decision to escape a forced marriage. Everyone has the right to live in safety and make their own decisions.

You may be feeling overwhelmed right now but there are a range of organisations to help you rebuild your life. Many provide a variety of services such as counselling, safe accommodation, BME specialists, LGBT services and men's services.

This book will give you useful and practical information to help you take control of your life and focus on the future. This manual provides practical support and information for anyone who has experienced or escaped from a forced marriage. It also provides guidance for people who have been repatriated to the UK and are seeking support.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) was set up in 2005 and is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK, regardless of nationality, faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage. We can also help anyone who has already been forced into a marriage and is now being forced to sponsor a visa for their spouse.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)

Our dedicated team of trained caseworkers understand the issues surrounding forced marriage. We give advice and support to around 1500 people every year, so we know about the pressures you have experienced.

We also know how difficult it can be to talk about your situation. We offer support and information to anyone who has experienced forced marriage, or is worried about being forced into marriage. It's completely confidential and we won't contact your family. We are here to help you without any judgment.

**You can speak to us on
0207 008 0151**

How to Use This Book

You probably feel that you now have lots of questions and difficult decisions you need to make. It can be a confusing time, and you might not be sure how to get all the information you need.

We have tried to think of everything you might need to know more about. We have provided telephone numbers and websites where you can get more details. Some words are highlighted and a definition is provided in the glossary. There are a range of issues covered in the handbook that you will want to think about in the future. There is plenty of space at the back for you to write your own notes including questions you may want to ask or answers you are given.

Each year we speak to a large number of survivors of forced marriage. They tell us that it's not unusual to feel completely alone at first, but you should remember that there are people working for support agencies and organisations who can help you. You don't have to face life on your own if you don't want to.

This book may not be able to answer all your questions, but it will act as a good starting point to help you build your new life. It includes sections on safety, education and work, benefits and finance, health, legal, refuges and housing, childcare, getting a divorce and withdrawing sponsorship for a spouse visa.

A message from another survivor

'My wedding day should've been the happiest day of my life but all I could do was cry. I didn't want to go through with it but felt I had no choice, my family would disown me. Things got really bad and I just felt as if life felt so unfair and no one cared about what I thought or what I felt. Why should I be forced to live with someone I didn't even like, let alone love? I left my whole life in the UK behind and didn't get to finish my degree. What was the point of even living anymore?

After I tried to take my own life the first thing I thought about was the shame I'd brought on my family. The same people who had driven me to this. I knew then that I had to stand on my own two feet and make a change. I still love my family but it was time to put myself first. I decided to speak to the Forced Marriage Unit. I didn't always like the options they gave me but I knew I had to do something. It was such a relief to be able to talk to someone who was completely on my side without any judgement and without the fear that they would tell my

family. For the first time I realised that I had the right to choose what I wanted to do. I was overwhelmed at first but with the help of the Unit, my confidence grew.

Sometimes I get upset about what happened to me but now I know I made the right decision to leave and live my own life. I wake up each day looking forward to it and I get excited about the future and meeting someone who I want to be with. When I first left my forced marriage I had so many questions. This book contains also sorts of useful information and points you in the right direction. I hope it answers some of the questions you have.'

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jasmine" with a small asterisk below the name.

You may feel lonely now but there are so many people out there who want to help you. It hurts now but it is your life and it's time you live it.

Life after Forced Marriage

We understand that you are facing a new and potentially frightening position. You are not alone. There are a range of organisations that specialise in counselling and providing emotional support to survivors. At the back of this handbook is a list of other sources of help that you can contact for advice.

You might like to think about what you want from the future. What are your hopes, dreams and ambitions? You might feel that you are describing an impossible dream, but it will help focus on what you need to do to build your new life and put you in control of the decisions you make.

Make some notes or write a description of your new life as you would like it to be. This will help you visualise your goals and ultimately achieve them. Looking back at these notes will help you stay focused and motivated.

Your safety

Making sure that you are safe is a top priority. If you have left or escaped the threat of a forced marriage, you may have to think about your personal safety in a new way.

You should be aware that your family may try to look for you and may use your relatives, friends or community networks, for example local taxi drivers, to try and find you. You should only tell people you totally trust about your plans. Perpetrators can be

extremely resourceful and you should take your safety seriously.

If you think your family will report you missing you should contact the police to let them know what has happened. They can then tell your family that you are safe and well, but they won't tell them where you are.

The local police will be able to advise you regarding your safety. You can call them on 101 to arrange to speak to an officer about your situation. If you ever feel in immediate danger you should call 999.

Although the FMU cannot guarantee your safety, we can put you in touch with agencies that can protect you.

There are helpful personal safety tips at www.refuge.org.uk – search for safety plan

www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety

If you are under 18 and worried about your safety, you can contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or visit www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline also supports children and young people. You can speak to someone on 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk

Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO)

If you are concerned about your safety you can also apply for a forced marriage protection order to protect you.

A Forced Marriage Protection Order is a legal document issued by a judge which is designed to protect you according to your individual circumstances. It contains legally binding conditions and directions that require a change in the behaviour of a person or persons trying to force another person into marriage.

The aim of the order is to protect the person who has been or is being forced into marriage. Orders can be made in an emergency to protect someone straightaway. If someone disobeys the order of the court, they can be arrested and brought back to the court, the court has power to send them to prison for up to two years if it finds them in contempt of court.

A Forced Marriage Protection Order could be served on your family members in the UK and it could instruct them to ensure that you are safely brought back to the UK or prevent you from being taken overseas.

If you are in a country where the law states that you need someone else's permission leave, a Forced Marriage Protection Order could state that the person responsible must grant permission for you to leave.

There is more information about FMPOs here <http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/> - search for Forced Marriage Protection Orders.

Copies of the leaflets can be found in Arabic, Farsi, Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu.

Court Process

You can tell the court if you are worried about going to court or giving evidence in court. The court has powers to protect vulnerable or intimidated witnesses. If you are confident speaking English the court can also arrange an interpreter for you.

You will need to complete form FL401A "Application for a Forced Marriage Protection Order"

<http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/courtfinder/forms/fl401a-eng.pdf>

You will have to pay a court fee unless you are in receipt of certain benefits. If you show that a payment of a court fee would involve undue hardship to you, you may only have to pay part of the fee.

For further information visit <http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/courtfinder/forms/ex160a-eng.pdf>

Criminalisation

The Prime Minister announced on 8 June 2012 that forcing someone to marry and breaching Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs) will become criminal offences. This is a way towards increasing protection for victims and ensuring that perpetrators are properly punished.

The civil remedy of FMPOs will continue to exist alongside the new criminal offence. This means that the choice is yours. If you choose to report the offence to the police, they will refer the case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS will then decide whether to proceed with the prosecution. This will only be undertaken with the consent of the victim however if there is overwhelming evidence that it would be in the public interest to prosecute, the CPS may proceed without consent.

Refuge and Housing

After your immediate personal safety, your next priority is likely to be finding somewhere to live. Remaining in the same area as your family can be dangerous and so we often recommend that survivors are relocated to ensure their safety. Take extra when using your phone as it could be "tracked". This is only supposed to happen if you have given your permission but if you have had access to your phone they may have enabled tracking without you realising. If you are in any doubt you should change your phone.

Many people who have left a forced marriage find that staying in a refuge is a reasonable short-term solution. There are women's refuges all over the country. However, unfortunately, few refuges are open to men. Male victims should call the National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 to get information about these refuges.

There are also other options, both men and women can call Shelter's free 24-hour housing advice line on 0808 800 444.

Local authorities have a general duty to make provision for children who are "in need" in their area. A child is a person under the age of 18. You can call our caseworkers if you want help in approaching your local authority.

Living in a refuge

A refuge is an ordinary house for women and children. Only the residents know the address, which makes it a safe place to stay. Some women will stay in a refuge for a short time, others for much longer. It depends on each person's circumstances.

Your rent at the refuge may be covered in full by housing benefit, if you are able to claim this (see section on Benefit). If you are working, key workers at the refuge will give you information about housing, legal and financial matters. They can also help you find out if you are entitled to any financial help, and tell you how to get your name on the local council housing list.

There are refuges all over the UK and it is important to consider where in the UK you will be safe from family members.

For more information on what refuges are like go to

www.womensaid.org.uk/virtualrefuge

You can contact a refuge yourself by calling the free 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247. You can also ask someone from the FMU, the police or social services to refer you to a refuge.

Other housing options

If you are not about to go to a refuge, you can add your name to your local council housing list. If you have nowhere to stay, you can contact your local authority, which will have a Homeless Persons' Unit. They may be able to provide you with temporary accommodation.

They are there to assist people who are homeless, including victims of domestic violence and forced marriage. You can go to any local authority Homeless Persons' Unit; it doesn't have to be the one in the area where you live or used to live. They may be able to provide you with temporary accommodation.

You should be aware that if you want to live with your boyfriend or girlfriend, it is unlikely that the Homeless Persons' Unit will be able to house you together as a couple. You might have to live apart for a while.

If you go to a Homeless Persons' Unit, it's a good idea to take along all of your documentation because you will be asked to produce evidence of your identity. Someone from the Homeless Persons' Unit will interview you about your housing needs and you will be told whether or not they can provide you with temporary accommodation, possibly in a hostel or bed and breakfast.

In the longer term, you have many options about where to live. If you are working, you may want to rent a private property, or you

may want to think about buying or renting a property through a home ownership scheme or applying for a local authority home. You can find out more about your options by searching for housing at www.gov.uk

For more information and advice about housing visit;

www.shelter.org.uk
www.mungos.org
www.refuge.org.uk
www.womensaid.org.uk
www.mensadvice.org.uk
www.stonewallhousing.org (LGBT)

Getting a new identity

Personal information could be used by family members to trace someone who has escaped a forced marriage. Think about changing your mobile phone number as soon as possible. Be careful when using Twitter and Facebook and make sure you switch off the location settings. If you need to ring someone who is not trusted make sure you dial 141 before calling them, this will block your number.

You should also think about changing your bank account details including the address where statements will be sent and any password including online banking. If others had access to your account in the past, it may be necessary to open a new account.

You will need identification to open bank accounts, find your NHS number and claim benefits. If you have left your family home, you may have left your ID documents behind. Getting a copy of your birth certificate is a good place to start. You can apply for a copy online at <https://www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate>, by post or through the local register office.

Changing your name

You can change your name legally using the Deed Poll service. You do not need a solicitor's help, and the process can either be completed online or by post.

You may have to pay a fee to change your name by Deed Poll and

you might also have to pay for some replacement documents such as new passport and driving licence.

For more information, search for Deed Poll at <https://www.gov.uk/change-name-deed-poll>. If you are not a British national please check with your Embassy whether your Deed Poll needs to be witnessed by a UK solicitor or notary public.

Getting a new passport

If you have decided to change your name, or if you no longer have your passport, you can apply for a new one.

If your passport was lost or stolen, you need to report this to the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) and in some cases the police. For more information go to <https://www.gov.uk/report-a-lost-or-stolen-passport>

You can either apply for a new passport by post, online or in person, if you make an appointment at your nearest passport office. Full details and an application form are available on www.gov.uk/renew-adult-passport or www.gov.uk/apply-first-adult-passport

If you have changed your name you will need to provide proof of your new name, such as your paperwork from the Deed Poll service.

Getting a new national insurance number

Everyone aged 16 or over who is an employee or self-employed, and who earns over a certain amount, pays National Insurance contributions. These build up entitlement to certain benefits, including State Pension.

Your National Insurance number is your own personal account number. It ensures that your National Insurance contributions are properly recorded. It also acts as your reference number for government tax and benefits systems.

To find out more general information go to <https://www.gov.uk/national-insurance>

If you are scared that you may be in danger, the police will make an assessment and will take steps to protect you. This might include providing you with a new identity, including a new National Insurance number, as it may be possible for you to be traced through your National Insurance records.

You will not be able to change your National Insurance number without help from the Police.

Benefits and Finances

Many of the people we have helped after a forced marriage have never had to think about their own finances before. If this is true for you, the information below is designed to help you understand how to get your own bank or building society account, claim benefits and manage any debts you may have.

Opening a bank or building society account

If you are eligible for benefits, you will need to have your own bank or building society account before you can claim them. And if you get a job, your employer will want to pay your salary straight into your account.

You can find some useful information about choosing the right account by visiting www.adviceguide.org then going to the section on 'Debt and money' and then to 'Banking'.

Repaying debts

If you are worried about your debts, try not to panic, but do not ignore the problem. Talk to the people or organisations you owe money to and let them know if you are having problems making repayments. Tell them how much you can afford to pay and when you can afford to make payments. Most organisations will be more helpful if you approach them first.

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau will be able to give you advice on managing your debts, and there is a useful online guide at www.adviceguide.org.uk.

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk also give free unbiased money advice and operate a helpline 0300 500 5000.

Claiming benefits

If you have a low income, you may be eligible to claim benefits. These will give you a basic amount to live on. To get them, you will need to pass a means test. This is an assessment of your income and savings. If you now live with a partner, civil partner, husband or wife, their income and savings are also taken into account.

Benefits are paid by the Department for Work and Pensions. Some key benefits are explained below. You can also go to www.gov.uk/browse/benefits, to use the benefits adviser tool which can help you calculate what benefits you are entitled to.

Income support

If you are not able to work full time and you do not have enough money to live on, you might be able to claim Income Support. Whether you qualify or not and how much you get will depend on your circumstances.

Jobseeker's allowance

If you are over 18 but unemployed and looking for work, you may be eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance. You cannot claim this benefit if you are a full-time student.

Working tax credit

If you are over 16, living on a low income and working 16 or more hours a week, you can apply for this benefit. It can also include support for childcare. Extra help is available for disabled people and those aged over 25 who work 30 or more hours per week.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit

You could get Housing Benefit to help you pay your rent if you are on a low income. Housing Benefit can pay for part or all of your rent; how much you get depends on your income and circumstances. You can apply for Housing Benefit whether you are unemployed or working. Council tax Benefit is money off your Council Tax bill; how much reduction you get depends on your circumstances – e.g. your income, if you have children, etc.

You can get other types of help to pay your Council Tax if:

- > you live with another adult (who isn't your partner) – known as the Second Adult Rebate
- > your benefits have stopped

You can apply for Council Tax Benefit whether you own your home, rent, are unemployed or working.

Child benefit

You get Child Benefit if you are responsible for a child under 16 (or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training). You get a tax-free payment for each child. You could also get Child Tax Credit for each child you are responsible for if they are:

- > under 16
- > under 20 and in approved education or training

You don't need to be working to claim Child Tax Credit. You get money for each child that qualifies and Child Tax Credit will not affect your Child Benefit. You should check www.gov.uk for benefit rates.

If your youngest child is under the age of 5, you could claim Income Support instead of Jobseeker's allowance.

Healthy Start Scheme

The Healthy Start scheme also helps low income families by providing vouchers for free fresh milk, infant formula, fresh fruit and vegetables to young children and pregnant women, as well as free vitamin supplements. Qualifying pregnant women and children over one and under four years old get one voucher every week, while children under a year old receive two vouchers per week. Vouchers can be spent at participating retailers, including small businesses, milkmen, supermarkets and chemists. Health professionals play an important role supporting applications for Healthy Start and providing advice on healthy eating and breastfeeding.

Receiving your benefits

You will be asked for your bank, building society or credit union account when you claim, and you can normally only get paid in a different way if you have problems opening or managing an account. You can get a Post Office card which is specifically designed for you to receive benefits, state pension and tax credits. If you do not have a bank or Post Office card account, you need to contact the office that pays your benefit to find out how to get your benefits paid.

More information about claiming benefits can be found at: www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser

Ending Your Marriage

If you were forced into a marriage overseas, and that marriage is valid in the country you were in, it is likely that it will also be valid in the UK. There are two ways to legally end your marriage: divorce or an annulment.

Getting an annulment

If you think your marriage should never have been a legal marriage, you can ask the court to 'annul' it. This means that, legally, the marriage has never happened. Marriages can be annulled if they are not legally valid i.e. 'void' or is defective i.e. 'voidable'.

A marriage can be 'voidable' if:

- > It not been 'consummated' (this means you haven't had sex with the person you married since the wedding),
- > One of you did not agree to the marriage – for example if you were forced or did not have capacity to consent to the marriage.

You can get a marriage annulled anytime after the wedding (unlike a divorce where you have to wait a year). To annul a marriage you will need to fill in a nullity petition which can be found online at www.gov.uk/how-to-annul-marriage

The judge will look at how long it has been since your wedding took place. If a judge thinks you took too long to make an application, the annulment may not be given. It is advisable to get some legal advice and consider your options.

Getting a divorce

Another way of dissolving a forced marriage is by getting a divorce. You might need to do this if your marriage took place more than three years ago, or if a solicitor feels there's not enough evidence for an annulment. To get a civil divorce, recognised by law, you should contact a solicitor.

There are various grounds that you may be able to use to apply for a divorce. In cases of forced marriage, the most likely ground for divorce is 'unreasonable behaviour.' For more information visit www.gov.uk/divorce

Religious divorces, such as a 'Talaq' or a 'Get' are not usually legally valid in the UK, therefore you may need to get a civil divorce as well as a religious divorce.

More information about getting an Islamic divorce can be found here;

www.islamic-sharia.org/

Legal help

We cannot recommend individual solicitors or firms, but finding legal help may be easier than you think. For details of solicitors in your area go to www.gov.uk/community-legal-advice

You may be able to get help with legal costs through the Legal Help Scheme, which is sometimes called legal aid. You can find out if you are eligible by looking at the Community Legal Advice website (above) or by speaking to a solicitor www.lawsociety.org.uk or someone from the Citizens Advice Bureau www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Visas

If you have been forced to marry someone from overseas, you may also be forced to sponsor a spouse visa so that the spouse can join you in the UK.

New Immigration Rules came into force on 9 July 2012. This increased the probationary period for a spouse settlement visa from two years to five years. If the spouse is granted a visa it will also be necessary to renew the probationary period with the UK Border Agency after two and a half years. If, at the end of the five year period you are still married, your spouse can apply to live in the UK permanently. This is called indefinite leave to remain (ILR).

The Immigration Rules that need to be satisfied for the spouse settlement application are:

- > You met each other before you married
- > You are legally married to each other
- > Your marriage is not polygamous or bigamous (this means you are not also married to anyone else and your spouse is not married to anyone else)
- > Your spouse is not under 18 years of age and you are not under 18 years of age
- > You both intend to live together permanently as husband and wife in the UK
- > You are present and settled in the UK
- > You can support yourselves and any dependants without any help from public funds (this means that you are not claiming any benefits). There is a minimum income threshold of

£18,600 for sponsoring a spouse to come to the UK. This amount increases if any children are also sponsored (for example if a child is also applying to join you in the UK the minimum income increases to £22,400 with an additional £2400 for each further child). Evidence of this will also need to be shown with the application as well as to the UK Border Agency when renewing the probationary period

- > Suitable accommodation is available
- > Your spouse provides an original English language test certificate

You can find out more about UK visas at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/partners-families/citizens-settled/

Refusing to sponsor a visa

If you are being forced to sponsor a spouse visa, the FMU can provide you with information on your options. Your husband or wife will not be granted a spouse visa to come to the UK if you make a disclosable (something that will be known publicly) Public Statement saying that you do not support his or her application. A caseworker in the FMU can provide you with instructions on how to write your statement. They will also talk you through what happens afterwards. If you cannot make a Public Statement, perhaps because of pressure from your family, we may still be able to help you. One of our caseworkers will be

able to explain your options in more detail.

If your husband or wife is already in the UK and you are being forced to sponsor their ILR, we or our UKBA colleagues may be able to help you. In some cases, spouse visas can be cancelled and your husband or wife may be asked to leave the country. Our caseworkers will be able to explain to you the situations where this might happen.

Destitution Domestic Violence Concession

At present some spouses are forced to stay in abusive relationships because they are in the country on a spousal visa, and unable to access support services during the two year probationary period. The introduction of the Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession is aimed at protecting victims of domestic abuse, by allowing them to notify the UK Border Agency (UKBA) that they need to access public funds while they make a claim for indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic violence. These funds could be used to pay for a place in a refuge for instance. More information can be found here <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/while-in-uk/domesticviolence/>

European Economic Area Nationals

If you are EEA or Swiss national, you have the right to live and work in the UK (known as the 'right of residence') if:

- > you are working here (and have obtained our permission to work if this is required – Bulgarian and Romanian nationals); or
- > you can support yourself and your family in the UK without becoming an unreasonable burden on public funds.

You can find out more about your rights and responsibilities on the UKBA website:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/rightsandresponsibilities/>

Education and Work

Studying

Once your immediate priorities are taken care of, you may start to think about getting new skills and knowledge. There are lots of different options available. For some of these you might be able to get financial help, so it is worth doing lots of research and thinking carefully about the type of study you would like to do.

You may want to study full time, part time or at evening classes. Or perhaps you want to improve your basic skills in IT or reading, writing and numeracy to help you find a job or complete application forms.

Whatever you decide you want to learn, there is a range of information and financial support available to help you get the skills and qualifications you need.

If you are under 18 years old

If you are under the age of 16, Children's Social Services will arrange for you to be re-enrolled into school full time until you are 16 and able to take your exams.

If you are aged between 16 and 18, you have the option to enrol at college to take AS/A levels or vocational course such as an NVQ or BTEC. These qualifications relate to a particular industry or sector and you can study for an NVQ at work, college or as

part of an apprenticeship. GNVQs are another kind of vocational qualification that will give you a more general introduction to an area of work.

Financial help

If you are 16 or over and are studying, financial assistance may be available to you in certain circumstances; for example, if you are living away from your parents (or anyone acting in place of your parent such as a guardian) because you are in physical or moral danger, you are estranged from them, or there is a serious risk to your physical or mental health.

If you are 18 or over

If you are 18 or over, your educational options include an access course, foundation degree or going to university. Universities and colleges are not just for school leavers. Every year, thousands of adults who have been out of education for some time choose to develop their skills by going into higher education.

'Mature Students' are people who are 21 or over when they enter the first year of a higher education course. If you do not have the qualifications you need to get on to a higher education course, you can take an access course to get all the skills you will need.

Access courses are aimed at adults (19 years or over) who want to get on to a higher education course but don't have the necessary qualifications. Access courses are a good way to get back into study because they help learners find out how to study at this level, as well as teaching you more about a specific subject.

Access courses are usually run at local colleges and take up to a year to complete. They are flexible, though, so learners can study over two years if they want to.

Financial help

You may be eligible for financial support if you have experienced particular difficulties that mean you need extra help so that you can study. You are also eligible if you are continuing with a course started before you reached 19, and/or if you have childcare needs.

If you are starting a higher education course, you will have to meet a number of expenses at the beginning of the first term. There may be financial help available – probably more than you think – from your chosen institution and from the Government. You could also look at other sources of finance, such as part-time work. This will help cover expenses such as tuition fees, and other costs of living such as accommodation, bills and food.

Basic skills

There is a lot of help available if you want to improve your basic skills in reading and writing, IT or maths. Many of these courses are free, and you can find out about what is on offer in your area by visiting www.learndirect.co.uk or call 0800 100 900.

You can find information on all your learning options by visiting www.gov.uk/browse/education

www.learndirect.co.uk
www.aimhigher.ac.uk
www.hotcourses.com
www.connexionslive.com
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise

Looking for work

Work is often an important part of leading an independent life. As well as earning money, you can make friends through your job, and you can learn new skills and develop new interests.

Jobcentre Plus is a good place to start looking for work opportunities, whether you want something full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent. Many jobs are now listed online at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk. You will also find advice on job

hunting, completing application forms, and claiming benefits while you look for work.

You can also speak to a personal adviser at your local Jobcentre Plus (details are on the website). He or she will be able to help you find the kind of job that is right for you, whether you are looking for your first job or returning to work after a break. They can also help you arrange any training you need for the job you want. The following websites are useful starting points if you're looking for work:

www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job
www.monster.co.uk
www.jobsite.co.uk

Health and Childcare

If you feel ill, depressed or anxious, you should seek medical attention. To do this you will need to register with a local GP. If you need medical help before you have registered with a GP, you can visit your nearest Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) or an NHS walk-in centre where you will be treated. You can find details of all of these – and opticians, dentists, chemists and hospitals – by visiting www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

If you are feeling ill and you are not sure if you need to see a doctor, you can look at the self-help guide on the NHS Direct website or call 0845 4647 to speak to someone who can help.

If you have experienced sexual violence or rape it is important to get help. You can get counselling and support through your GP or speak to Rape Crisis at www.rapecrisis.org.uk 0808 802 9999 or Victim Support at www.victimsupport.org.uk 0845 303 0900.

If you have had female genital mutilation (FGM) you may need to seek medical advice, especially if you are pregnant. You can ask your GP for help or for advice and support contact Forward www.forward.org.uk 0208 960 4000 or Daughters of Eve www.dofeve.org.

You can find general information on FGM treatment available on the NHS from:
NHS Choices Direct at www.nhs.uk/FGM

If you are concerned about alcohol visit www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
www.drinkaware.co.uk

If you have any worries related to drugs visit www.talktofrank.com and www.brook.org.uk offers free and confidential sexual health advice and contraception to young people up to the age of 25.

There are useful links about a range of issues at www.nhs.uk. If you would like to speak to someone about anxiety or depression, visit Mind at www.mind.org.uk or Samaritans at www.samaritans.org. You can also seek emotional support from Samaritans or 08457 909090.

Concern about Other Potential Victims

If you have left or escaped a forced marriage you may well find that other siblings may also be at risk of forced marriage or honour-based violence.

In the UK

The FMU can help them in the UK even if they are not a British National. We can talk through their options and give you advice and support.

For more information, visit the FMU's website at www.gov.uk/forced-marriage or call 0207 008 0151 to speak to one of the team.

For example we could contact the police if you want their assistance to help a sibling or friend leave the family home or we could help them find refuge accommodation. Every situation is different and we will only take action if they want us to. Safety is the top priority.

Victims with learning disabilities

If you know or suspect that somebody with a learning disability is being or going to be forced into a marriage but you feel that they would lack the capacity to be able to consent to the marriage or to understand the implications/consequences of marriage, you

should contact the FMU on 0207 008 0151. The FMU will follow up any referral by contacting Social Services and where risk is confirmed, will request a capacity assessment to be undertaken. They will also notify colleagues in British Embassies and British High Commissions overseas so that an alert can be placed on any visa applications that have been submitted to join that vulnerable adult in the UK should they be a non-British national.

LGBT Victims

Some people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gendered communities also experience pressure from their families to enter into marriages that they don't want. FMU's caseworkers understand the issues that people from LGBT community can face; we don't judge. There is also a list of organisations specifically for the LGBT community who can offer advice at the back of this book.

Overseas

If you have concerns about a British national overseas we can work to help them get back to the UK. How we do this will depend on which country they are in and the laws of that country.

Some countries' laws will mean that they will need someone else's permission to leave that country. In other countries we won't need anyone else's permission to help them get back to the UK.

Each person's case will be different and their safety is the priority. You can contact the nearest British High Commission or Embassy to discuss the options available.

Waiting to be repatriated

They will be supported by someone from the British High Commission, Consulate or Embassy. This person will keep in touch with them after they've been taken to temporary accommodation.

They should not call anyone except their contact from the British High Commission, Consulate or Embassy. Speaking to members of their family at this stage could put them in danger. They may also put other people living in the refuge in danger.

Travel arrangements

If their British passport has been lost or taken away, the British High Commission, Consulate or Embassy can issue an emergency travel document.

They can arrange flights back to the UK. In doing so they will try to arrange direct flights and avoid using airlines that might pose a risk to their safety (for example, flights that family members might be taking).

They will be asked to pay for their flight and emergency travel document. If they have a friend or relative in the UK who can help, the FMU will contact them and arrange for the money to be transferred to the British High Commission, Consulate or Embassy.

In exceptional circumstances, if they are unable to pay for their flight and don't have anyone who can help with the cost, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office may be able to loan the money. They will have to repay the money when you are back in the UK.

Arriving in the UK

If they have a friend or relative who can meet them at the airport when they arrive back in the UK, the FMU will let the contact know their flight details. If they are able to stay safely in the UK with a friend or relative, the FMU can arrange for them to go to their home from the airport. If they do not have anywhere to stay, we can help find refuge accommodation.

The National Domestic Violence Helpline (0808 2000 247) which is run by Women's Aid and Refuge holds information about refuges all over the UK.

If they have any particular needs you have not already mentioned, let the FMU know and we will do our best to make suitable arrangements for their arrival.

Glossary

TERM	MEANING
Annulment	The formal declaration that makes a marriage void
Apprenticeship	This is a form of employment where you are trained to do a job as you work.
Bank	A company that will look after your money. They offer current accounts (for day-to-day spending) savings accounts, credit cards and loans. You will need a bank account for any wages or benefits to be paid to you.
Basic Skills	These are skills in reading, writing, maths and IT at a level necessary for everyday life.
Benefits	Allowances paid by the Government to people who need financial help and who meet the eligibility criteria.
Bigamous	Getting married to someone when already married to someone else. Bigamy is illegal in the UK.
British High Commission, Embassy or Consulate	Representatives of the British Government overseas who work in a High Commission, Consulate or Embassy.
Building society	A savings and loan company.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
Deed Poll	This is a legal document that allows you to change your name.

TERM	MEANING
Divorce	The legal end to a marriage
Estranged	No longer in contact with one another
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	This is the Government department which represents the UK overseas
Foundation degree	Foundation degrees are higher education qualifications that combine academic study with workplace learning.
Grounds for divorce	Reasons given in court by someone trying to get a divorce
Homeless Persons' Unit	This is part of the local authority that is responsible for helping homeless people to find temporary accommodation quickly.
Indefinite leave to remain (ILR)	Permission granted to a foreign national to stay in the UK indefinitely
IT	Information technology – using computer equipment and software.
Legal aid	Help with legal costs.
Means test	This is when your income and savings are assessed to see if you are entitled to any financial help.
National Insurance number	This is your personal account number for the National Insurance you pay when you are working. The Government uses this to record your contributions and to work out your eligibility for certain benefits.

Glossary

TERM	MEANING
Numeracy	Basic maths
Polygamous	Having more than one wife or husband at the same time. This is legally acceptable in many Muslim countries but it is illegal in the UK.
Refuge	A safe house where women and children can stay temporarily. Refuges are found all over the UK. There are some spaces for men as well.
Repatriation	The return of a person to their country of birth, citizenship or origin. If you are a British National, the British High Commission, Consulate or Embassy can help you get back to the UK from overseas.
Solicitor	A person who can represent you in court (in some cases) or help with other legal matters.
Spouse visa	A certificate in a passport giving permission to enter the UK as the spouse of a British national.
Tuition fees	The cost of doing an educational course.
Vocational	Training that is directed at a particular type of work.

Useful Contacts

GENERAL	
Police (in an emergency)	999
Police	101
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline A free, confidential service for anyone concerned about children at risk of harm	0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau Helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice	08444 111 444 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Child Line This service is for any child or young person with a problem	0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
UK Border Agency A helpline for general immigration enquiries	0870 606 7766 www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk
Samaritans A 24-hour helpline for any person in emotional distress	0845 790 9090 www.samaritans.org
Money Advice Service Free, unbiased and independent advice on managing your money.	0300 500 5000 www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Useful Contacts

SAFETY, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

National Domestic Violence Helpline

A 24-hour free phone

0808 200 0247

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 10 800

www.welshwomensaid.org

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline

0800 027 1234

www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Domestic Violence Helpline

0800 917 1414

www.niwaf.org

Amina (Scotland)

Dedicated to helping Muslim women with issues facing those experiencing domestic abuse

0808 801 0301

www.mwrc.org.uk

Ashiana Network (London)

Offers emotional, practical help and accommodation for women and children escaping violence. Provides two refuges specifically for South Asian, Turkish and Iranian women between the ages of 16-30 at risk of forced marriage.

0208 539 0427

www.ashiana.org

Ashiana Sheffield

Works with Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) adults, children and young people fleeing domestic and sexual abuse, forced marriage, human trafficking, gang violence and 'honour'-based violence. Provides accommodation for BAMER women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

0114 255 5740

www.ashianasheffield.org

info@ashianasheffield.org

BAWSO Women's Aid (Wales)

Specialist service to BME women and children escaping violence

0800 731 8147

www.bawso.org.uk

Useful Contacts

SAFETY, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

Freedom Charity

Raise awareness and prevent child abuse to keep children safe

0845 607 0133 (24 hour helpline)

Text "4freedom" 88802 (24 hour text line)

Free app for smartphones – search for Freedom

www.freedomcharity.org.uk

Gaia Centre (London)

The Gaia Centre provides confidential and independent support for anyone experiencing gender violence in the London borough of Lambeth. Also provides refuge spaces.

0207 733 8724

www.refuge.org.uk search for 'Gaia Centre'

Hemat Gryffe (Glasgow)

Provides safe, temporary accommodation, support and information to BME women experiencing domestic violence and forced marriage.

0141 353 0859

www.hematgryffe.org.uk

Henna Foundation (Cardiff)

Supports Asian and Muslim women and families

029 2049 6920

www.hennafoundation.org

info@hennafoundation.org

Imkaan

Imkaan is the national Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) charity dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls

0207 250 3933

www.imkaan.org.uk

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation

Provides advice and support to Middle Eastern women and girls facing honour based violence, domestic abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

0207 920 6460

www.ikrwo.org.uk

JAN Trust

Raise awareness and prevent abuse and violence against women and girls including honour based violence, domestic abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Specialist service for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, Refugee (BAMER) and Muslim women.

0208 889 9433

www.jantrust.org

Useful Contacts

SAFETY, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

Jeena International Dedicated to empowering women and young people to initiate personal and social change. Provide counsel and support sessions. Also provides safe homes for families that are victims of domestic violence.	01753 424 240 www.jeenainternational.org info@jeenainternational.org
Karma Nirvana Honour Network (Leeds) Helps male and female survivors of forced marriage and honour-based violence.	0800 5999 247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk
Newham Asian Women's Project (London) Provides advice and support for Asian women and children experiencing domestic violence specifically safety planning and advice, emergency refuge space and translation services.	0208 472 0528 www.nawp.org
Rape Crisis Rape Crisis centres provide crucial crisis and long term specialised counselling, support and independent advocacy for all women and girls of all ages who have experienced any form of sexual violence both recently and/or in the past; centres are community based and independent of government and the criminal justice system.	0808 802 9999 www.rapecrisis.org.uk
Roshni Asian Women's Aid Provides refuge for south Asian women and children experiencing domestic violence	0115 924 2864 www.womensaid.org.uk search for Roshni
Savera (Liverpool) Savera Liverpool is dedicated to tackling domestic abuse within Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee Communities and to preserve and protect of the mental and physical health of women from these communities who are experiencing, or have experienced domestic abuse	07716 266 484 www.saverliverpool.co.uk saverliverpool@hotmail.co.uk
Scottish Women's Aid Lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse	0131 226 6606 www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Useful Contacts

SAFETY, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

Shakti Women's Aid (Edinburgh) Support and information to all BME, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse	0131 475 2399 www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk
The Sharan Project Provides confidential advice, befriending service and practical support for South Asian Women towards leading successful independent living.	0844 504 3231 www.sharan.org.uk info@sharan.org.uk
Sodasa Project (Bradford) Provides information, advice and support for women who experience domestic violence, particularly Asian and African women.	01274 577571
Solace Women's Aid (London) Works with women and children who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence. Range of services including emergency accommodation.	0808 802 5565 www.solacewomensaid.org info@solacewomensaid.org
Southall Black Sisters (London) Offers information, advice, advocacy, practical help, support and counselling to black and ethnic minority women experiencing domestic abuse and forced marriage	0208 571 0800 www.southallblackisters.org.uk
Victim Support Provides support and information to victims of crime (whether or not you have reported the crime to the police)	0845 3030 900 www.victimsupport.org.uk
Women's Aid Provides services for women and children who have been affected by the experience of domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse.	0808 800 0028 www.womensaid.org.uk

Useful Contacts

HEALTH

Forward Support charity dedicated to advancing sexual health and rights of African girls and women	0208 960 4000 www.forwarduk.org.uk
Mind A mental health charity working for a better life for anyone with experience of mental distress. Services include a general helpline.	0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk
NHS Direct Health advice and reassurance, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year	0845 4647 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

REFUGE AND HOUSING

Kiran Project The Kiran Project provides safe, temporary accommodation to Asian women and their children	0208 558 1986 www.kiranproject.org.uk
Mungos Mainly based in London and the South, they provide over 100 accommodation and support projects day in, day out. They run emergency homeless services - including street outreach teams, and accommodation for rough sleepers and hostels.	020 8762 5500 www.mungos.org
Refuge Refuge's network of safe house provides emergency accommodation for women and children	0808 2000 247 http://refuge.org.uk/
Shelter A service providing housing advice	0808 800 4444 www.shelter.org.uk

Useful Contacts

LGBT ORGANISATIONS

Housing	Albert Kennedy Trust (London) Albert Kennedy Trust (Manchester) Advice and support for LGBT 16-25 yr olds who are made homeless	0207 831 6562 0161 228 3308 www.akt.org.uk
	Stonewall Housing Housing advice for LGBT	0207 359 5767 www.stonewallhousing.org
General	Broken Rainbow Domestic violence helpline for LGBT	0300 999 5428 www.brokenrainbow.org.uk
	Himat (East London) A group for south Asian or middle Eastern gay and bisexual men in east London	0207 791 2855 himat@positiveeast.org.uk
	Imaan Imaan supports LGBT Muslim people, their families and friends, to address issues of sexual orientation within Islam. It provides a safe space and support network to address issues of common concern.	0203 3393 5188 www.imaan.org.uk info@imaan.org.uk
	London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard Provides free and confidential support and information to LGBT communities throughout the UK	0300 330 0630 www.llgs.org.uk
	Safra Project Supports lesbian, bisexual and transgender Muslims. For reasons of confidentiality, the Safra Project does not have a telephone number.	info@safraproject.org

Useful Contacts

MEN'S ORGANISATIONS

Mankind Initiative Support for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence	01823 334244 www.mankind.org.uk
Men's Advice Line Advice and support for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse	0808 801 0327 www.mensadvice.org.uk info@mensadvice.org.uk
Gemini Project Safe, emergency accommodation and support for men (also women) experiencing domestic abuse, including a helpline and support group	0870 066 4233

VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Ann Craft Trust Offers advice to professional, parent, carers and family members on issues relating to the protection of vulnerable adults and disabled children	0115 951 5400 www.anncrafttrust.org ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk
Respond Provides a range of services to victims of abuse who have learning disabilities	0808 808 0700 www.respond.org.uk

Recommended Reading

Some of us from the FMU have found these books helpful. We've also recommended them to some of the survivors we've spoken to. They might help you to remember that you are not alone and that you can build a better future for yourself.

Jack and Zena: A True Story of Love and Danger – by John McCarthy, Jack Briggs and Zena Briggs (2000, Victor Gollancz)

Shame – by Jasvinder Sanghera (2007, Hodder paperbacks)

Shame travels: A family lost, a family found – by Jasvinder Sanghera (2012 Hodder paperbacks)

Daughters of Shame – by Jasvinder Sanghera (2009, Hodder paperbacks)

(Un)arranged Marriage – by Bali Rai (2001, Corgi Childrens)

The Imam's Daughter – by Hannah Shah (2010, Rider)

I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced – by Nujood Ali (2010 Three Rivers Press)

But it's not fair – by Aneeta Prem (2011 Prem Publishing) pdf version of this book can be found on www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Secrets of the Henna Girl – by Sufiya Ahmed (2012 Puffin)

Burned Alive – by Souad (2005, Bantam)

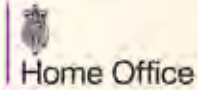
In the Name of Honour – by Mukhtar Mai (2007, Virago Press)

Belonging – by Sameem Ali (2008, John Murray)

Notes



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Forced Marriage Unit

King Charles Street
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
London
SW1A 2AH

Telephone: 0207 008 0151
(Monday – Friday 9-5pm)

0207 008 1500
(out-of-hours emergency)

Email: fmufco.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/forced-marriage