

Forced marriage & honour based violence

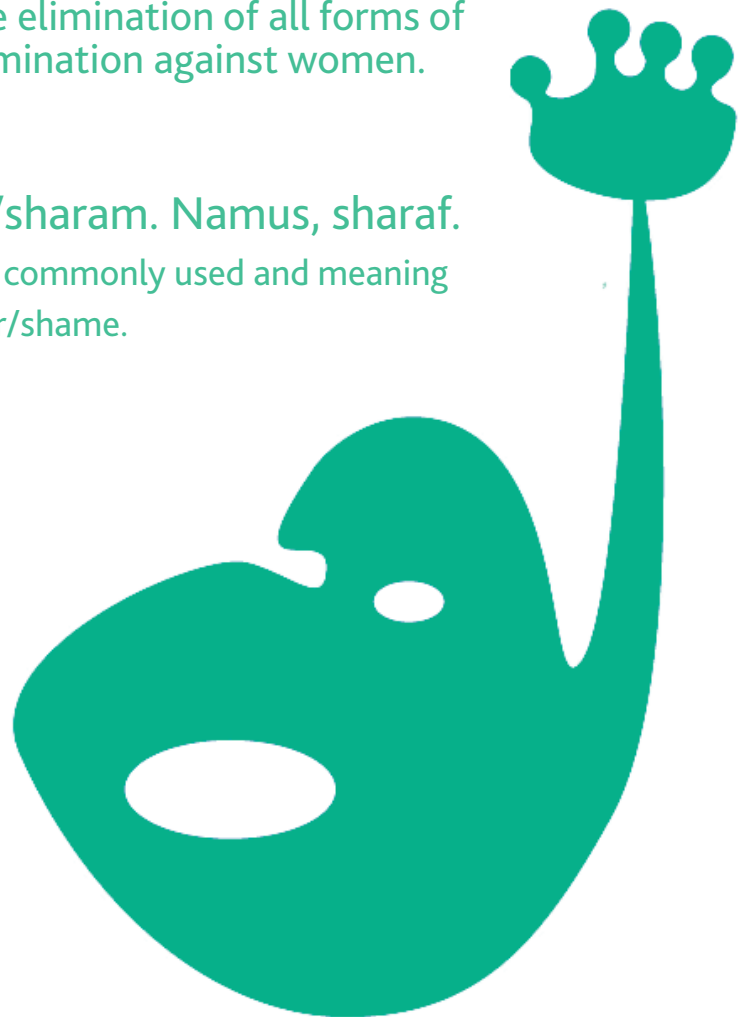
Screening toolkit

Forced marriage is one of the ways honour based violence can be manifested.

A woman's right to choose a spouse and enter freely into marriage is central to her life and her dignity and equality as a human being:

General recommendation number 21, comment article 16(1) (b) UN convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Izzat/sharam. Namus, sharaf.
Words commonly used and meaning honour/shame.



The approach of the Government is to address so-called “honour” – based violence and forced marriage in the context of its domestic violence policy framework, although it recognises that these kinds of violence raise specific issues:

(Home Affairs Select Committee Report June 2008, page 4).

Clients from a very broad spectrum of religious/national and community groups are potential victims of honour based violence and forced marriage

Some characteristics of honour based violence (HBV) and forced marriage (FM)

There is often a relationship between forced marriage and HBV, though HBV can occur where there is no evidence of FM, and FM can be motivated by reasons other than honour, such as finance/visa application.

HBV and FM affect women and men, boys and girls of all ages. The Forced Marriage Unit has dealt with cases of children as young as 6 years old.

One of the key factors motivating HBV and FM is the desire to control behaviour, particularly of girls/women including sexual behaviour that is seen to be unacceptable by the family and/or community. This may include dress or behaviour that is seen to be too westernised or sexual relationships outside marriage. HBV or FM may be seen as a means of preventing such behaviour or restoring honour that has been undermined by it.

Honour based violence can be fatal: it is important to remember that families really do kill in the name of honour and ensuring the safety of the victim is paramount. Violence and death can happen in the United Kingdom and in the countries of origin.

Honour based violence and forced marriage impact men and women very differently, but men can still be victims. The Forced Marriage unit records approximately 14% of their work is with men. It should also be remembered that there can be an international dimension to FM/HBV cases, and they can involve many perpetrators, both here and overseas.

Government reports state that at the present time there are no clear figures for how many incidences of FM or HBV take place in any given year given the hidden nature of these practices. The Forced Marriage Unit however received around 1,700 reports of possible FM a year in 2008 and 2009. The actual number is likely to be significantly higher.

The one chance rule: a potential victim may only have one chance to ask for help. You may only have one chance to provide help so it is important to get it right on the first occasion.

How honour based violence/forced marriage might be manifested

Emotional control Removing from school or education, controlling freedom of movement up to and including house arrest, preventing the victim from learning English, preventing professionals from having any individual contact with the victim, in the case of incoming spouses, threatening to have incoming spouses deported to the country of origin, often these threats will include removal of the victim's children, control over the victim's visa status, use of black magic by way of amulets, potions or spells to exert control over the victim.

Physical abuse This can involve parents and siblings, husbands and in-laws in terms of an extended family and /or community. This includes the spectrum of physical abuse from threats of physical violence, up to and including acid attacks and murder.

Financial abuse Controlling the income of the victim, many victims will be refused access to any money, even in some cases their own earnings, in order to maintain control and dependency.

Sexual abuse Where there has been Forced Marriage there is often criminal behaviour such as kidnap and abduction, false imprisonment, administering noxious substances (to ensure compliance) and rape. There have been cases of victims having been drugged as part of an abduction both within the UK and to remove victims from the UK for the purposes of marriage.

Emotional abuse to the victim and to a third party Threats of harm to the victim can include family members, both here and in the countries of origin, criticism and humiliation of the victim, enforced servitude by way of unpaid work either in family businesses or within the home, sometimes referred to as a form of domestic slavery. This abuse can involve the victim's children being removed from her care to be cared for by another member of the extended family. Emotional abuse can include threats by the perpetrator to harm themselves (i.e. I will kill myself if you do not marry him or her). They can include shaming in front of the entire community.

Lastly, community collusion A distinct difference between domestic violence and Honour Based Violence is that there is the element of collusion between perpetrators, be they members of the victim's family or in-laws or extended family and the wider community.

Confidentiality and disclosure

Risk can escalate very suddenly and it is vital that you have a clear and thought out process for maintaining the confidentiality of records and who has access to the information, both to protect the client, yourself and other members of your practice.

It should always be remembered that in the case of HBV and FM, perpetrators may go to enormous lengths to obtain information about the whereabouts of a victim in hiding, up to and including hacking into information held in computer databases. In some cases, existing family or professional networks have been used, eg. Taxi Drivers, Bounty Hunters. MPs and GPs have been asked to divulge information. Special care should be given when considering the use of interpreters and advice should be taken if you are unsure as to who is safe.

This guidance should be taken in conjunction with the Law Society guidance on confidentiality and the need to make disclosures if there is threat to the client or another parties' health or wellbeing.

Contact details

Forced Marriage Unit

Tel: 0207 008 0151 (9-5 Monday - Friday)
0207 008 1500 (out of hours access to the FCO Global Response Centre)
www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit operates a helpline to support victims of FM as well as to provide help and advice to professionals dealing with cases. They have published multi-agency Practice guidelines on FM which provide detailed guidance on the issue and how to respond appropriately.

Karma Nirvana

Tel: 01332 347 315 www.karmanirvana.org.uk
Karma Nirvana are a confidential service offering help to victims and survivors, staffed by survivors and working with both men and women. They are a national organisation.

Reunite International Child Abduction Centre

Tel: 0116 255 6234 www.reunite.org

Reunite is the leading charity specialising in international child abduction and offers a 24 hour advice line, providing advice, support and information to professionals and concerned family members and parents alike. Reunite also offers support and information for parents who have abducted their children and assists with international contact issues. Their advice is impartial and confidential to one or both parties involved. They also provide information and support on the issue of Forced Marriage.

Women's Aid

Tel: 0808 2000 247 www.womensaid.org.uk

Women's Aid offers a free 24 hour national domestic violence helpline as an online guide "The Survivors Handbook" available as a PDF download. Children may also benefit from visiting their kids website called "the hideout", this provides a list of regional services and centres – see domestic abuse directory on the home page.

Henna Foundation (Cardiff)

Tel: 02920 498 600/496 920

Henna Foundation are working to meet and advance the needs and concerns and aspirations of Asian and Muslim children and families. Also assist voluntary come statutory services and government agencies.



Southall Black Sisters

Tel: 0208 571 9595

www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Southall Black Sisters is a resource centre in London providing services for women who are experiencing violence or abuse. Counselling, group therapy and advice is offered and this includes a Hindu and Urdu language Service.

Choice Helpline

Tel: 0800 5999 365

This confidential helpline is staffed by specially trained police officers and is based in the North East of England, although other regional services will soon go online.

IKWRO

Tel: 0207 490 0303 www.ikwro.org.uk

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation

Ashiana (Sheffield)

Tel: 0114 255 740 info@ashianahelp.org.uk

Ashiana provides specialist refuge accommodation for Asian women, not exclusively for women in the South Yorkshire region.



Panah

Tel: 0191 284 6998 panahrefuge@hotmail.com

Panah provides specialist refuge accommodation for Black and Minority ethnic women, not exclusively for women in the North East of England.

Ashiana (London)

Tel: 020 8539 9656

Ashiana in London provides help and support for South Asian, Turkish and Iranian women between 16-30 escaping any form of abuse.

The Ethnic Minority Forced Marriage Website

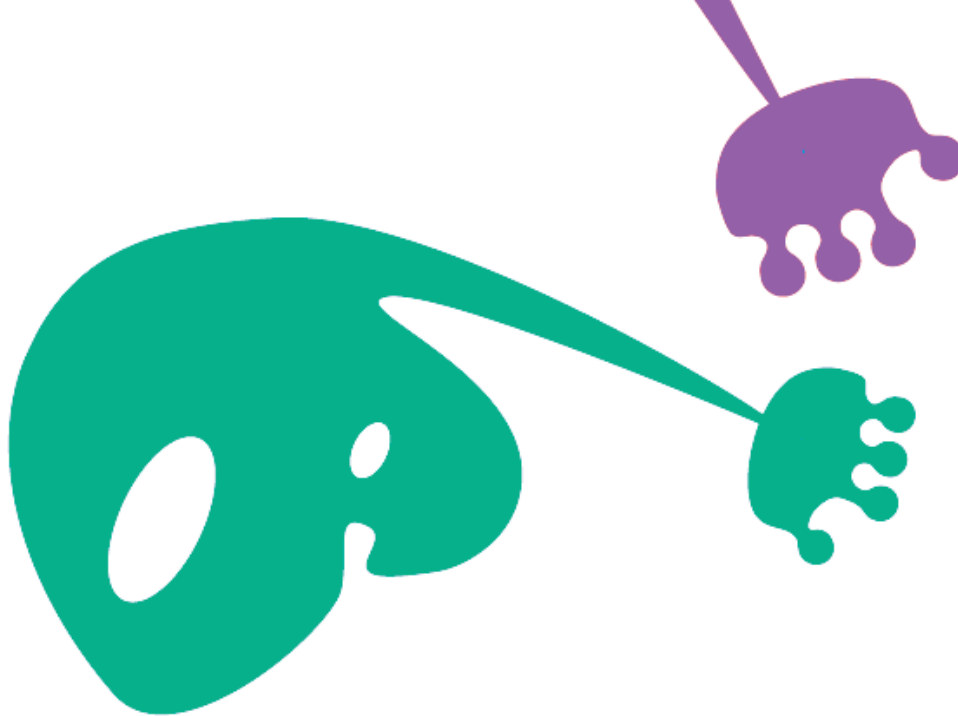
www.forcedmarriage.net

Offers an online resource for people of all ages with a useful bibliography, short films and case studies. This resource is sponsored by the FCO, the Government Equality Office, Women's Aid, CPS and the police, amongst others.



The Forced Marriage Unit:

Responding appropriately to forced marriage and honour-based violence requires specialist skills and specialist knowledge. The Forced Marriage Unit has seen the value and importance of this expertise in its day to day work supporting victims



Screening questions

Is honour/izzat important to your family/in-laws?

Are your family/in-laws concerned about what the community/extended family will think?

Are boys/men treated differently to girls/women in your house?

Did you/will you choose who your marriage partner will be?

Have any of your siblings been forced to marry?

Have your family/in-laws prevented you from obtaining an education, for example have you been prevented from learning english?

Have you ever been kept in the house for periods of time?

(Where appropriate) have you been allowed to maintain contact with your family following your marriage?

Has anyone in your family/in-laws used or threatened violence to you?

(If applicable) do you know what your visa status is?

(If applicable) have you been threatened with being sent back to your country of origin?

Are you allowed to come and go from the family home as you choose?

Are you only allowed out with an escort from the family/your in-laws?

Are you allowed to work?

Do you have any physical/emotional health problems (include in this questions about self-harm)?

Does anyone in your family/in-laws practice black magic or use magic as a form of threat?