

GUIDELINES PUBLISHED BY
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office
&
Association of Chief Police Officers

DEALING WITH CASES

OF

FORCED MARRIAGE

GUIDELINES FOR POLICE

These Guidelines are published by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They have been prepared in consultation with the Home Office and UK police forces, with national and local elements of education, health and social services and with relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These guidelines form part of the actions taken in this country and overseas to prevent and remedy serious criminal offences and abuses of human rights associated with forced marriage.

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INTRODUCTION TO FORCED MARRIAGE

The difference between arranged and forced marriage

The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. A clear distinction must be made between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In **arranged marriages** the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether to accept the arrangement remains with the individuals. In **forced marriage** one or both parties **do not consent** to the marriage and some element of duress is involved.

Forced marriage is primarily an issue of violence against women. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 - 30 years, although, there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15% of victims are male.

Incidence of forced marriage

Currently, some two hundred cases of forced marriage are reported to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office each year. Many others go unreported. With greater awareness this figure is likely to increase.

The majority of cases of forced marriage encountered in the UK involve South Asian families. However, despite appearances, this is not solely an "Asian" problem. A reason for this disparity is that the UK has a large Asian population. There are also cases involving families from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa. The issue of forced marriage should not be used to stigmatise any community. Some forced marriages take place in the UK with no overseas element while others involve a partner coming from overseas or a British citizen being sent abroad. The guidelines deal with these different situations.

Motives prompting forced marriage

Parents who force their children to marry often justify their behaviour as protecting their children, building stronger families and preserving cultural or religious traditions. They do not see anything wrong in their actions. Forced marriage is not a religious issue; every major faith condemns it and freely given consent is a prerequisite of Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages.

Often parents believe that they are upholding the cultural traditions of their home country, when in fact practices and values there have moved on. Some parents come under significant pressure from their extended families to get their children married. In some instances, agreements have been made about marriage when the children were very young.

Some of the key motives that have been identified are:

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality (including perceived promiscuity, or being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender) - particularly the behaviour and sexuality of women
- Peer group or family pressure
- Attempting to strengthen family links

- Ensuring land remains within the family
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals which can often be misguided or out of date
- Protecting perceived religious ideals which are misguided
- Preventing "unsuitable" relationships, e.g. outside the ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group
- Assisting claims for residence and citizenship
- Family honour
- Long-standing family commitments

While it is important to have an understanding of the motives that drive parents to force their children to marry, these motives should not be accepted as justification for denying them the right to choose a marriage partner. Forced marriage should be recognised as an abuse which typically involves criminal offences.

Criminal Law and Forced Marriage

Although there is no specific criminal offence of "forcing someone to marry" within England and Wales, the law does provide protection from the crimes that can be committed when forcing someone into a marriage. Perpetrators – usually parents or family members – have been prosecuted for offences including threatening behaviour, assault, kidnap and murder. Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

The victim

Young people forced into marriage often become estranged from their families. Sometimes they themselves become trapped in the cycle of abuse with serious long-term consequences. Many women forced into a marriage suffer for many years from domestic violence. They feel unable to leave because of the lack of family support, economic pressures and other social circumstances. They may live within a forced marriage for many years before they feel able to challenge the situation.

Isolation is one of the biggest problems facing victims of forced marriage. They may feel they have no one to speak to about their situation. These feelings of isolation are very similar to those experienced by victims of domestic violence.

Isolation is also very real for those who have escaped a forced marriage or the threat of one. For many, running away is their first experience of living away from home and they suffer because of having to leave their family, friends and their usual environment. They often live in fear of their own families who will go to considerable lengths to locate them and ensure their return.

For young people, especially females, to leave their family is traumatic at the best of times. For young Asians it can be especially hard. Family occupies a much more important role, and the young person may have no experience of life outside the family. In addition, leaving their family (or accusing them of a crime) will bring shame on the young person and their family in the eyes of the community. For many, this is simply not a price they are prepared to pay.

The needs of victims of forced marriage will vary widely. They may need help avoiding a threatened forced marriage. They may need help dealing with the consequences of a forced marriage that has already taken place.

Whatever an individual's circumstances, there are basic needs that should always be considered, including:

- **Personal safety**
- **Confidentiality**

- **Accurate information about rights and choices**

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL CASES

Information about a forced marriage may be received from the victim or from a friend or relative, or from another agency or NGO. Forced marriage may also become apparent through careful questioning in the course of investigating other incidents/crimes such as domestic violence, assault, abduction or missing persons. If the victim is present the following "First Steps" should be taken.

Cases of forced marriage can involve complex and sensitive issues that should receive the attention of an Inspector or an officer nominated to deal with such matters. Only if there would be unreasonable delay before a suitable officer can attend should front desk staff take the "Additional Steps" set out in this document.

FIRST STEPS:

- See the individual immediately in a secure and private place (Page 22).
- See the individual on their own - even if they attend with others (Page 22).
- Contact, as soon as possible, the nominated officer who has responsibility for such matters, the local domestic violence officer or, in their absence, the duty Inspector/Sergeant .
- Reassure the victim of police confidentiality (Pages 24-25).
- Establish a way of contacting them discreetly in the future (Page 23).
- Obtain full details to create a report to pass on to the nominated or specialist officer.
- Recognise and respect the victim's wishes.
- If under 18 years of age refer to Child Protection Officer (Pages 28-29).

Do Not:

- ✗ Send the individual away in the belief that it is not a police matter.
- ✗ Approach the family unless the individual expressly asks you to do so (Page 24).
- ✗ Approach community leaders unless requested to do so by the individual (Page 24).
- ✗ Share information with anyone without the express consent of the individual (Page 24).
- ✗ Breach confidentiality.

- ✗ Attempt to be a mediator (Page 35).

ADDITIONAL STEPS:

- ✓ Give the individual the choice of the race and gender of the officer who deals with their case (Page 22).
- ✓ Inform them of their legal rights (Pages 32, 33 & 36).
- ✓ Give them personal safety advice (Page 30).
- ✓ Obtain all details of the person involved including date, place of birth, National Insurance Number and a copy of their passport.
- ✓ Create a restricted entry in the force intelligence system.
- ✓ Identify any potential criminal offences (Page 32) and submit a crime report if applicable.
- ✓ Secure evidence at all stages as a prosecution may follow.
- ✓ Give the individual advice on what service they should expect and from whom.
- ✓ Perform a risk assessment in all cases.
- ✓ Maintain a full record of the decisions made and the reason for those decisions.
- ✓ Ensure that the individual has the nominated officer's contact details.

Try To:

- Refer the individual, with their consent, to appropriate local and national support groups and counselling services (Page 44)
- Obtain a recent photograph or consider, with their consent, taking a photograph
- Note any distinguishing features i.e. birthmarks

Experience shows that there are four types of situation that a Nominated Officer dealing with cases of forced marriage is likely to encounter. The situations and the appropriate police responses are set out in the following four Sections.

Section A: An individual who fears they may be forced to marry in the UK or

overseas	
Section B:	A report by a third party of an individual having been taken abroad for the purpose of a forced marriage
Section C:	An individual who has already been forced to marry
Section D:	A spouse who has come to the UK from overseas

GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATED OFFICERS

SECTION A

AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FEARS THEY MAY BE FORCED TO MARRY

In these cases the police should be ready to give guidance to the individual about their rights and the choices open to them. Some of these cases will have an overseas dimension but many may not.

An individual may approach the police because they are going on a family holiday overseas and they are concerned about this. They are often told that the purpose is to visit relatives, attend a wedding or because of the illness of a grandparent or close family relative. The individual may suspect that this is a ploy and that there is an ulterior motive involved which is to force them to marry.

If there is an overseas dimension, the police need to gather specific information for the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39).

Choices

If an individual fears they may be forced to marry, they have limited choices:

- To remain with the family and try to resolve the situation
- To accede to the family's wishes
- To flee the family

Remember:

- ⇒ Individuals fleeing a forced marriage that has not yet taken place may be reported as missing by their families. The forced marriage aspect of the case may not be apparent when the report is made.
- ⇒ Care must be taken not to assume that an individual is at risk of being forced into marriage simply on the basis that they are being taken on an extended family holiday. These assumptions and stereotyping can cause considerable distress to families.
- ⇒ Establish if there is a family history of forced marriage i.e. siblings forced to marry. Other indicators may include domestic violence, family disputes or missing persons within the family.

POLICE ACTION:

- ✓ **Refer to general guidelines (Page 7).**
- ✓ Talk to them about whether they can avoid going overseas and discuss the difficulties they may face (Page 27).
- ✓ Establish where the individual may be staying overseas.
- ✓ Gather as much information as possible about the family, including the full name of the victim, the father's name, potential spouse's name (if known), and dates of birth and addresses of the extended family in the UK and overseas (Page 26).
- ✓ Establish if there is a family history of forced marriage.
- ✓ Report details of the case to the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39).
- ✓ Obtain a written statement about threats and any other hostile actions against the individual.
- ✓ Create a restricted entry in the force intelligence system and submit a crime report if applicable.

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

- Request a photocopy of the individual's passport for police retention and encourage them to keep details of their passport number and the place and date of its issue.
- Give them contact details for the force and the nominated officer dealing with the case.
- Encourage the individual to memorise at least one telephone number and e-mail address.
- Establish a code word with the individual to enable positive identification (Page 23).

- Obtain an estimated return date and ask that they contact you **without fail** on their return.
- Encourage them to give you details of a trusted friend/advocate in the UK who they will be keeping in contact with whilst overseas, who will act on their behalf and whom you can approach if they do not return. Make contact with the friend/advocate before the individual departs and request the friend/advocate to make a written statement of their support.
- Give them the details of the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39), ask them to pass these on to their friend.
- Advise them to take emergency cash in case problems arise in the country of destination together with contact details of someone there they can trust to help them.
- Explain the implications of dual nationality (Page 27) or put them in contact with the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39).
- Supply the address and contact number for the nearest Embassy/British High Commission (Page 40).
- Give them a copy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office leaflet "Forced Marriages Abroad".
- Refer the individual to appropriate trustworthy support agencies/non-governmental organisations.

SECTION B

A REPORT BY A THIRD PARTY OF A FORCED MARRIAGE OVERSEAS

Sometimes individuals are taken overseas on the pretext of a family holiday, the wedding of a relative or the illness of a grandparent. On arrival their documents and passports are often taken away from them. Some even report their parents drugging them. In these cases it may be a concerned friend/relative/partner/agency/teacher that reports the individual missing.

As with all cases of forced marriage confidentiality and discretion are vitally important (Page 24). If, through your actions, the family becomes aware that the UK police are making enquiries, they may move the victim to another location or expedite the forced marriage.

Risks that may arise if the police overseas are contacted directly:

- Collusion between the overseas police and the individual's family
- Violence to the individual being held abroad and forced to marry
- Subsequent removal to an unknown destination
- Leaking of information to a third party

In dealing with these cases the police need to gather discreet intelligence about the family (Page 26) and then work closely with the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39) and through them the local Embassy/British High Commission.

Remember:

- ⇒ Reassure the informant that if the individual is being held overseas and wishes to return to the UK, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will do everything possible to repatriate them. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is obliged to ask the individual or trusted friends to contribute towards the cost of repatriation. However, this will never delay the process of getting the individual to safety. In exceptional cases the Foreign Office may loan the individual money to cover the cost of bringing them home.
- ⇒ Extreme care should be taken not to disclose information to the overseas police that could place the individual in further danger i.e. previous/current boyfriends or partners in the UK.

POLICE ACTION:

- ✓ **Refer to general guidelines (Page 7).**
- ✓ Establish the relationship between the complainant and the individual.
- ✓ Find out from the complainant where the individual is being held.
- ✓ Check existing missing persons reports.
- ✓ Gather as much information as possible about the family, including full name of the victim, the father's name, spouse's name and the name of the spouse's father, dates of birth and addresses of the extended family in the UK and overseas (Pages 24-26).
- ✓ Obtain an up to date photograph of the individual and information that only the victim would be aware of (this may assist any subsequent interview at an Embassy/British High Commission in case another person of the same sex/age is produced pretending to be the victim).
- ✓ Obtain details of, and maintain contact with, the informant in case the individual contacts them whilst overseas or on their return (Page 23).
- ✓ Contact the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39). Provide the unit with as much information as possible about the case. The Unit offers advice on dealing with cases of forced marriage. The senior investigating officer should provide the Community Liaison Unit with regular updates.
- ✓ Before approaching an overseas police force, you must establish if any trusted links already exist between your force and the police in the area in which the individual is held. It may be worthwhile contacting other UK police forces with experience in these matters, the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Interpol and other trusted groups to ascertain if such links already exist (Page 42).
- ✓ Create a restricted entry in the force intelligence system and submit a crime report if applicable.

Do Not:

- ✗ Go directly to the individual's family, friends or to the community leaders as this will alert them to your enquiries.
- ✗ Make direct contact with the overseas force, unless tested and trusted links are already in place. If links are not in place contact the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39).

Consider:

- Using an Education Welfare Officer to make enquiries.
- Using existing local protocols for inter-agency liaison.

Try To:

- Ascertain if anyone else is aware of the situation and establish whether enquiries have already been made. Is there evidence to support forced marriage and other crimes?
- Dissuade the complainant and others from making enquiries independently of the police.
- Establish whether any other siblings are involved or at risk.
- Find evidence to confirm the threat of a forced marriage and related criminal offences.

SECTION C**AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN FORCED TO MARRY**

These cases are frequently brought to police attention when an individual is forced to act as a sponsor for their spouse's immigration to the UK. Often they are reluctant to tell the immigration service that it was a forced marriage because of threats and fear of reprisals from the family. A person whose application to enter the UK as an immigrant is refused has a right to know the reasons why - and the right to appeal against the decision. This can place the individual in a difficult situation.

Choices**An individual who has already been forced to marry has limited choices:**

- To stay with the marriage
- To flee the family home
- To try to sabotage the visa application without letting the family know

Remember:

- ⇒ Although individuals may be tempted to prevent a successful visa application for their spouse, in reality, it is not possible to do this without all parties concerned being aware of the individual's reason for not wishing to sponsor their spouse's visa application

Other cases of forced marriage may initially be reported as cases of domestic violence. Many individuals forced into marriage suffer for many years from domestic violence. These victims feel unable to leave because of the lack of family support, economic pressures and other social circumstances. The forced marriage aspect may only become apparent later on in the investigation and it may be many years after the actual marriage that some cases come to light.

In all cases, the individual needs to be made aware of the possible consequences of their chosen course of action.

POLICE ACTION:

- ✓ **Refer to general guidelines (Page 7).**
- ✓ Record full details of the individual together with details of marriage including date and place.
- ✓ Establish if there are any other family members at risk of forced marriage.
- ✓ Refer to the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if the marriage has an overseas angle (Page 39).
- ✓ Refer to the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if the victim has concerns about their "spouse" getting a visa (Page 39).
- ✓ Take a written statement about threats and any other hostile actions against the individual whether reported by the victim or a third party.
- ✓ Create a restricted entry in the force intelligence system and submit a crime report if applicable.
- ✓ Refer to Social Services if the individual is, or has children, under the age of 18 years (Page 28).
- ✓ Refer to Child Protection Unit if the individual is, or has children, under the age of 18 years (Page 28).
- ✓ Explain the possible courses of action available to the victim.

If the individual does not want to return to the family home then an exit strategy should be devised and personal safety advice discussed (Page 30).

Do Not:

- ✗ Send the individual back to the family home against their wishes.

If the individual wishes to remain at the family home

Try To:

- Maintain contact without placing the individual at risk (Page 23).
- Refer the individual to counselling/support services (Page 44).

Consider:

- Maintaining contact using community workers, health visitors etc (Page 34).
- Referring the individual to domestic violence/victim liaison/vulnerable officer or family protection unit.

SECTION D

A SPOUSE WHO HAS COME TO THE UK FROM OVERSEAS

A spouse may come to the UK from overseas and report that they have been forced to marry overseas. Often the individual may not speak English and may not be aware of the support to which they may be entitled. Again these cases may be reported initially as cases of domestic violence or missing persons.

If the individual has not got indefinite leave to remain (ILR), exceptional leave to remain or a right of abode in the UK then they are likely to have a restriction on receiving public funds. Public funds include income support and housing benefit. As a result individuals may find tremendous difficulty in finding alternative accommodation and a means by which to live. This may lead individuals to feel they have no option but to remain in the marriage and to feel unable to co-operate with the police.

Choices

The choices available to victim are limited:

- To stay within the marriage
- To flee the marriage and apply to be allowed to remain in the UK indefinitely (those without indefinite leave to remain)
- To flee the marriage (those with indefinite leave to remain)
- To flee the marriage and return home to their country of origin

Remember:

- ⇒ The individual may be extremely frightened by contact with the police as they may have been told that the police will deport them and/or take their children from them. Extreme sensitivity to these fears is required when dealing with any individual from abroad, even if they have indefinite leave to remain or a right of abode as they may not be aware of their true immigration position. These circumstances make them particularly vulnerable.
- ⇒ If you discover that the individual is in breach of immigration rules (for example if they are an overstayer) remember that they may also be the

victim of a crime and be traumatised as a result. Do not allow any investigation of the individual's immigration status to impede your investigation of the crimes that may have been committed against the victim (Domestic Violence Concession (Page 38)).

- ⇒ For many individuals returning to their country of origin is not an option – they may be ostracised, subjected to violence or even killed.

POLICE ACTION:

- ✓ **Refer to general guidelines (Page 7).**
- ✓ Ensure the individual is dealt with in a culturally sensitive way and the victim's wishes are recognised and respected.
- ✓ Arrange for an authorised interpreter who speaks the dialect of the victim. Obtain consent from the individual (through Language Line, if necessary (Pages 24 & 44)). Establish any preferences regarding the gender of the interpreter.
- ✓ Refer to an advice agency/women's group/citizens advice bureau/law centre/solicitor (Page 44). If you believe that immigration advice is required, refer the individual to an appropriate adviser e.g. trustworthy local solicitor with an immigration and asylum franchise, law centre and/or the immigration advisory service.
- ✓ Record any injuries and with consent take a photograph (Page 22).
- ✓ Notify domestic violence/victim liaison/vulnerable persons officer or family protection unit.
- ✓ Refer to Child Protection Unit and Social Services if under 18 years or have children under 18 years (Page 28).
- ✓ Create a restricted entry in the force intelligence system and submit a crime report if applicable.

Do Not:

- ✗ Use a relative, friend, community leader or neighbour as an interpreter - despite any reassurances from this known person. Information at the interview may be imparted to other members of the community and put the individual at risk (Page 24).
- ✗ Attempt to give the individual immigration advice.

Remember:

- ⇒ Anyone who has been granted indefinite leave to remain or exceptional leave to remain or who has a right of abode in the UK has the same entitlements to public funds as a British citizen.
- ⇒ Even if the individual is subject to a restriction on receiving public funds, he/she may be entitled to funding from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) due to a claim for asylum or in some cases a claim under the Human Rights Act.
- ⇒ Funding for legal advice is not counted as public funds, and individuals may be entitled to free legal advice whatever their immigration status.

- ⇒ Social Services have the power to make discretionary payments to families with children under s17 of the Children Act. These payments do not count as public funds.
- ⇒ If the individual is suffering domestic violence the Domestic Violence Concession may apply (Page 38). However, the Concession only applies where the perpetrator of the violence is either cautioned, convicted or where a non-molestation order is obtained against them. Advise the individual to see a solicitor to be advised on seeking a civil injunction against the perpetrator in all cases where the perpetrator is not cautioned, as conviction cannot be guaranteed.
- ⇒ Police records and statements may be vital evidence in an individual's immigration case. Provide the individual with written contact details of the officer dealing with the case to give to their solicitor.

BEST PRACTICE

i. Venue for interviews

It can be anticipated that the victim or complainant will probably be anxious and distressed. The interview should take place in a private and secure part of a police building free from interruptions, in accordance with local force practices and procedures. The room should not be adjacent to the public part of the building. There have been cases reported of individuals being forcibly removed from police stations by their families.

Remember:

- ⇒ The victim may wish to be interviewed by an officer of the same gender.
- ⇒ They may not want to be seen by an officer from their own community.
- ⇒ Develop a safety plan in case the individual is seen by someone hostile at or near the police station i.e. prepare another reason why they were there.
- ⇒ Before attempting to obtain evidence from an individual under the age of 17 years refer to the Memorandum of Good Practice Guidelines (1992) on video recorded interviews with child witnesses for criminal proceedings.

Do Not:

- ✗ Use family members, friends, neighbours or community leaders as interpreters - individuals may feel embarrassed to discuss personal issues in front of them and sensitive information may be passed on to others. Furthermore, such an interpreter may deliberately mislead the police and/or encourage the individual to drop the complaint.
- ✗ Speak to the person in the presence of "friends".

ii. Medical examination

It may be necessary in some cases to arrange medical attention to injuries for treatment or evidential purposes. It may not be advisable to call a medical practitioner from the local ethnic community as this may threaten the security of the victim.

iii. Future contact and meetings

Agree where future meetings can take place if the individual does not want to meet at the family home or the police station e.g. local libraries/cafes, somewhere the individual will feel comfortable. Establish whether they can be contacted in confidence at work, at school or through a trusted friend, sibling or organisation.

Consider:

- ⇒ Mobile phones
- ⇒ Text messages
- ⇒ E-mail

Remember:

- ⇒ The individual may not want the officer dealing with them to be in uniform or in a marked police vehicle.
- ⇒ Establish a code word to ensure when communicating by telephone you are speaking to the right individual.
- ⇒ In some cases contact will be through a third party who is the only link to the individual. This situation can arise when a victim has been taken overseas.

Do Not:

- ✗ Meet them at their new address, refuge or friend's house.
- ✗ Put the individual at risk.
- ✗ Speak to the person in the presence of "friends".
- ✗ Put yourself at risk.

You Must:

- ✓ Undertake a risk assessment.
- ✓ In cases of a third party report obtain details of, and maintain contact with, the informant.
- ✓ Arrange with the informant as to the best time/place to make contact to ensure that they can talk freely and openly.

iv. Confidentiality and security of information

Confidentiality is vital because forced marriage is a sensitive issue for the individual involved and for family, friends and the community. The issue raises strong emotions.

Contact with:

- ⇒ The victim must be discreet and private
- ⇒ Family and friends should only be made at the request of the individual
- ⇒ Schools, community leaders and others may unwittingly place the individual at Risk

Do Not:

- ✗ Overlook possible breaches of security of police records, police interpreters and communications with external agencies and organisations.

- ✗ Share information received with anyone without the express consent of the person involved.

Remember:

- ⇒ Access to police reports and records should be restricted.
- ⇒ There should be continuity of officers dealing with the case in order to limit the leakage of confidential information and to provide a consistent service.
- ⇒ Police do not have to disclose to the Court the whereabouts of individuals under 17 years (Section 33 Family Law Act 1986).

You may be placed under pressure from relatives, community leaders, councillors or MPs to say where the individual has gone

DO NOT divulge this information

iv. Confidentiality and security of information (Continued)

Children and young people

Circumstances sometimes arise where a child, or more probably a young person, explicitly asks police not to give information to their parents/guardians or others with some authority over them. Such requests can cause difficulties and in such situations the following should be taken into account:

- ⇒ The overriding concern in all cases is the welfare of the child or young person
- ⇒ Circumstances will arise when consultation with those who have parental responsibility might not be in the best interests of the child or young person

Consider:

- ⇒ Consultation with the local child protection team
- ⇒ Consultation with other agencies, particularly social services which has primary responsibility for child welfare – be guided by the local child protection team
- ⇒ The ability of the child or young person to make an informed decision

v. Gathering essential information and intelligence

Beware of how you gather intelligence
Indiscreet approaches may alert those forcing
the victim into marriage

You should build up a thorough understanding of the relationships between the key people and their extended family including the head of the family, brothers and associates. This should include the names and addresses of family, in the UK and abroad. Gathering information about the individuals and families involved may be problematic.

Consider:

- Local schools
- Local Education Authority
- Voters register
- Social Services
- Benefits Agency
- Passport Office
- Child protection register
- Police databases including domestic violence databases
- Housing agencies
- Health Services
- Voluntary groups

If the case has an overseas dimension:

You Must:

- ✓ Forward the information gathered to the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39) and through them to the local British High Commission.

vi. Dual nationality

The children of Pakistani or Bangladeshi nationals
will automatically have dual nationality status
whether or not they want it, or know it.

Some countries – including Pakistan and Bangladesh – deem anyone whose mother or father comes from that country to be automatically a national of that country.

This means a young girl born and raised in London with a Bangladeshi father will be regarded as Bangladeshi by the Bangladeshi Government – whether she likes it or not.

This can sometimes make it hard for the British Consul in those countries to help them. If the person concerned is normally resident in the UK, the British Consul will treat them as British, and try to offer full consular protection. But, under international law, the local Government is entitled to object.

It is important that this situation is discussed with the individual if they are travelling overseas with their family. Any queries concerning dual nationality can be addressed to the Community Liaison Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Page 39).

vii. Difficulties faced when overseas

For many young people it may be their first experience of travelling overseas. If they are being held against their will and forced to marry there are various difficulties they may encounter if they want to return to the UK. They may find it impossible to communicate by telephone, letter and e-mail. Individuals may not have access to their passport and money. Young women may not be allowed to leave the house unescorted. They may be unable to speak the local language. Often these young people find themselves in remote areas where even getting to the nearest road can be hazardous. They may not receive the assistance they might expect from the local police, neighbours, family, friends or taxi drivers. Some individuals may find themselves subjected to violence or threats of violence.

viii. Individuals under the age of 18 years

You Must:

- ✓ Consult with a Child Protection Officer or if not available, the Duty Inspector.
- ✓ Inform the local Social Services Department. Individuals may wish to see a social worker of the same gender. They may not want to see a social worker from their own community.
- ✓ Inform these officers/agencies of the circumstances as soon as possible even if the child's immediate safety is **not** in question.
- ✓ In all cases, check the Child Protection Register maintained by the Social Services.
- ✓ Ensure an appropriate adult is in attendance at interviews.

Do Not:

- ✗ Have family members present at the interview.

Remember:

- ⇒ To ensure that Social Services understand the implications of returning a minor to their family home.
- ⇒ An individual under the age of 18 years is entitled to be seen by a solicitor and legal aid will be available.
- ⇒ An individual under the age of 17 years can apply to the Court in their own name to become a ward of Court, thus preventing them from being physically taken out of the jurisdiction of that Court.
- ⇒ Before attempting to obtain evidence from an individual under the age of 17 years refer to the Memorandum of Good Practice Guidelines (1992) on video recorded interviews with child witnesses for criminal proceedings.

ix. Police Protection for individuals under the age of 18 years

Where there is reasonable cause to believe that an individual under the age of 18 years is likely to suffer significant harm, an officer may place them under Police Protection.

You Should:

- ✓ Remove the individual to a place of safety.
- ✓ Arrange a placement for them in accommodation provided by the local Social Services or on behalf of them or in a refuge.

Remember:

- ⇒ The officer has a power, under Section 17(1) (e) of PACE, to enter by force if necessary in order to protect life or limb.
- ⇒ The officer can also prevent an individual's removal from a hospital or other safe place in which the individual is accommodated.
- ⇒ An individual may remain in Police Protection for a maximum of 72 hours.
- ⇒ If there is reasonable cause to believe that an individual would be likely to suffer significant harm if released after 72 hours, an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) should be applied for in conjunction with Social Services.
- ⇒ Under Section 31(3) Children's Act 1989 no care or supervision order can be obtained for a 17 year old or for a child of 16 years who is, or has been married.

You may be placed under pressure from relatives, community leaders, councillors or MPs to say where the individual has gone

DO NOT divulge this information

x. Personal safety advice and devising exit strategies

When devising an exit strategy the individual should:

- ✓ Be fully consulted as to their future needs and their wishes respected.
- ✓ Open a bank/savings account in their name.
- ✓ Leave copies of important documents such as passport, national insurance number and birth certificate with the police or a trusted friend.
- ✓ Leave spare clothing and cash etc with a trusted friend.
- ✓ Keep help-line numbers close at hand.
- ✓ Have a telephone card or change for urgent phone calls.
- ✓ Arrange alternative "emergency" accommodation should the need arise.

You Must:

- ✓ Record any copies of documents and retain in compliance with force policy.

Get the individual to think about:

- Who could they go to in an emergency.
- Who would be able to send them money if necessary.
- All the things they may need to start a new life.
- The possible finality of this decision.

If the individual is leaving the family home:

- ✓ Police officers should accompany them if they insist on returning to the family home to collect their possessions.
- ✓ Consider asking a third party to collect the individual's possessions i.e. a social worker.
- ✓ Consider witness protection schemes.
- ✓ Consider sensitising benefit records to ensure that the individual's details remain confidential.
- ✓ Use existing domestic violence safety measures such as mobile phones and alarms.
- ✓ Refer them to appropriate agencies/support groups for information and assistance.

Do Not:

- ✗ Re-house locally.

Remember:

- ⇒ **The following items are not as important as the safety of the individual**

Personal possessions should include:

- ✓ Proof of identity (something with a photograph and signature i.e. passport, student ID card, photo-card driving license or National Insurance card).
- ✓ Benefit books, money, cheques books, bank and credit cards.
- ✓ Medication and medical card.
- ✓ Address book and photographs.
- ✓ Marriage/divorce papers.
- ✓ Jewellery and clothing.

Male victims of forced marriage may encounter difficulties being taken seriously. If they then wish to leave the family home refuge accommodation tends to be limited so the use of hostels may be the only alternative.

Ask the individual if they want anyone to be told that they are safe and well. If so, who?

What information do they want the police to give out?

Many individuals who remain in contact with their families once they have left home continue to be subjected to emotional pressures. This may include stories about the illness/death/dying of parents, relatives or siblings. Reassure them that if such a message is received the police will check the details if the individual wishes.

xi. Offences associated with forced marriage

There is no specific criminal offence within England and Wales of "forcing someone to marry". However, the law does provide protection from the crimes that can be committed when forcing someone into marriage.

There is a spectrum of behaviour behind forced marriage which ranges from emotional pressure, exerted by close family members and the extended family, to extreme cases which can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence, rape, and in some cases murder.

The Marriage Act 1949 and the **Matrimonial Causes Act 1973** govern the law on marriage in England and Wales. The minimum age at which a person is able to consent to marriage is 16 years old; a person under the age of 18 may not marry without parental consent (unless the young person is a widow/widower).

Section 12c of the **Matrimonial Causes Act 1973** states that a marriage shall be voidable if "either party to the marriage did not validly consent to it, whether in consequence of duress, mistake, unsoundness of mind or otherwise". (voidable means the marriage is valid until it is challenged by one of the parties, at which time the court can award a decree of nullity invalidating the marriage)

Possible Offences include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| • Common Assault | S39 Criminal Justice Act 1988 |
| • Cruelty to persons under 16 | S1(1) Children and Young Persons Act 1933 |
| • Failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil | S.444 (1) Education Act 1996 |
| • Theft (i.e. passport) | S.1 (1) Theft Act 1968 |
| • Child Abduction | S.1 (1) Child Abduction Act |
| • Abduction of unmarried girl under the age of 16 from parent or guardian | S.20 (1) Sexual Offences Act 1956 |
| • Abduction of a woman by force or for the sake of her property | S.17 (1) Sexual Offences Act 1956 |
| • Aiding and abetting a criminal offence | Common Law |

- Kidnapping Common Law Offence
- False Imprisonment Common Law Offence

Note: This list is not intended to be exhaustive

xii. Civil Law

In addition to the assistance provided by police officers, there are many situations where the victim or potential victim or a forced marriage will also need to resort to civil law.

In relation to minors (under 18 years) where the Local Authority decline to take care proceedings, it may be necessary for the child either by themselves or through a guardian or other competent adult to take proceedings under the Children Act 1989 and/or Wardship, to initiate orders for their personal protection e.g. an order to "deliver-up" their passport. If this action is not taken then the only persons who have parental responsibility for the child are the parents. Through civil proceedings parental responsibility can be awarded to another person or vested in the court. The court can also make orders to prevent certain acts being taken in respect of the child i.e. removal from an address or the country.

There may be situations where the harassment or interference with the victim or potential victim falls short of a criminal offence. In most cases of a threatened forced or effective forced marriage, personal protection orders are required. The victim (including children) can obtain injunctive relief under Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996. A power of arrest can be attached to the orders. Importantly, a wide range of relatives can be named in the order.

Where a forced marriage has taken place the victim will need either to dissolve the marriage by way of divorce or to void the marriage by way of a nullity decree under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1983. The fact that the marriage has taken place abroad does not necessarily mean that it is not a valid marriage in this country.

Recourse to civil law will depend on the individuals involved, their circumstances, age and situation. The individual should be advised to take legal advice before any action is initiated under civil law.

An individual under the age of 18 years is entitled to be seen by a solicitor and legal aid will be available.

xiii. Partnerships with agencies and organisations

As with the needs of victims of domestic violence and child abuse, the needs of victims of forced marriage cut across service providers' boundaries. It is very unlikely that the police, or any other single agency, will be able to meet all the needs of a person who is either at risk or actually forced into a marriage. It is essential that the police use a multi-agency approach to the problems faced by victims of forced marriage and develop partnerships with the following:

- **Social services** - to provide safe, appropriate accommodation and a source of income for individuals wishing to flee a forced marriage or the threat of one.
- **Local schools and colleges** - can alert authorities if they are concerned that individuals may be taken abroad for the purpose of a forced marriage or are concerned that an individual may be forced into a marriage in the UK. They should be encouraged to notify police if a vulnerable individual is missing from

school. Schools and colleges may have further detailed information about an individual's family and the area overseas from which they originate.

■ **Local support/counselling services/non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) - community based organisations, including women's group have a wealth of expertise and knowledge. These services are widely seen by women to be non-judgemental and understanding, and are often more accessible due to reasons of gender, language or culture. These organisations can offer victims long-term support and counselling.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** – can offer advice and assistance to individuals

- Who fear they may be forced into a marriage overseas
- Who fear for a friend who has been taken overseas and may be forced into a marriage
- Who have already been forced to marry and do not want to support their spouse's visa application

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office can also provide information about any existing links with the overseas police, contact details for the British High Commissions and overseas non-governmental organisations

■ **Health Authorities, GPs and psychiatric units** – cases of forced marriage may come to the attention of health professionals. They should refer individuals to the police as well as appropriate agencies, support groups and counselling services.

■ **Housing Departments and the Benefits Agency** – may be able to provide police with useful information.

Officers need to be aware of the advantages and potential dangers from overt links with schools, community leaders and support groups. These networks must be used to guarantee the highest level of support to the individual. Difficulties will arise if any member of these groups breaches confidentiality and by their actions places the individual in a potentially dangerous situation. Officers should consider approaching established women's groups who have a history of working with survivors of domestic violence and forced marriage and ask these groups to refer them to reputable agencies.

There are many similarities between fleeing a forced marriage and fleeing from domestic violence (Refer to Home Office Circular HOC 19/2000 Domestic Violence: Revised Circular to the Police). It is possible that the systems and partnerships already in place for victims of domestic violence can be used for victims of forced marriage. This may include using a partnership approach to provide a continuing source of support and follow-up for victims and their families. This will require a detailed plan and follow-up dates.

Public services, other agencies and NGOs should notify police of any case in which there is a credible threat of assault or other offences such as abduction. Police should respond without delay to secure the safety of the individual and the confidentiality of the steps taken.

xiv. Mediation/Reconciliation

Police officers are trained to enforce the criminal law and investigate offences. The efforts of police should be concentrated on securing the safety, confidentiality and legal rights of victims of forced marriage as well as dealing with any criminal activities disclosed.

Police are not trained in mediation, reconciliation or counselling. These are specialist activities requiring unlimited time and attention from experienced professionals. Therefore, police officers should not attempt to perform the roles of other agencies. Doing this may increase the individual's vulnerability and place them in danger.

If an individual **requests** mediation, reconciliation and/or counselling they should be referred to the appropriate agencies at the first possible opportunity.

In cases of abuse, mediation can be dangerous. It can result in further abuse when the victim has contact with the family or community members. Individuals need to be aware of these potential dangers.

Note: Police premises should not be used in connection with any form of reconciliation.

xv. Individual rights

Remember

Everyone's fundamental human rights should be respected.
Forced marriage is an infringement of those rights

"Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses"

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16 (2))

"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 No. 21, UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)

APPENDICES

IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY POLICY DIRECTORATE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONCESSION

The domestic violence concession was introduced on 16 June 1999 to assist those subject to immigration control, whose marriage breaks down during the probationary year as a result of domestic violence. It provides for the person to be granted settlement, exceptionally outside the Immigration Rules, if the domestic violence occurred while the marriage was subsisting and the applicant is able to produce evidence in the form of:

- an injunction, non-molestation order or other protection order against the sponsor (other than an ex-parte or interim order); or
- a relevant court conviction against the sponsor; or
- full details of a relevant police caution issued against the sponsor.

Where an application for an order or prosecution is pending, the applicant may be granted further periods of 6 months limited leave to remain, subject to the same conditions, until the outcome of the proceedings is known.

- In order to benefit under the concession, an applicant has to provide objective evidence that he or she has been the victim of domestic violence. This is essential if applications are to be dealt with swiftly and with fairness and consistency;
- We gave much thought to the types of evidence we could reasonably expect an applicant to produce before drafting the concession and to the types of proof which were not open to manipulation. The criteria we settled on reflect the need to ensure that the concession does not open up an avenue of abuse for those whose marriages break down for other reasons, or those who are prepared to use marriage as a device to obtain settlement in the United Kingdom to which they would otherwise not be entitled.
- The correct medium for assessing claims of domestic violence is the police or courts service and we need to encourage women to report domestic violence to the police and to ensure that criminal procedures are operated. We do not consider it unreasonable to expect a person who might otherwise choose not to report domestic violence to the police or courts to do so in order to establish their claim.
- We can appreciate that it may be difficult for women from certain cultural backgrounds to come forward and report domestic violence. But we must all do everything we can to encourage them to do so. We cannot sweep such violence under the carpet. To condone women remaining silent about such abuse would be quite wrong. If a violent husband physically assaults his wife, then he should be subject to the due process of law;
- We are closely monitoring the use of the concession over the first two years and looking at whether we should extend the range of evidence which satisfies the criteria currently set out in the concession.

Enquiries should be directed to:

Immigration and Nationality Policy Directorate
Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon, CR9 3RR
Telephone: 0870 606 7766

COMMUNITY LIAISON UNIT

The Community Liaison Unit is part of the
Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London.

The staff can offer advice and assistance to people who:

- Fear that they are going to be forced into a marriage abroad
- Fear for a friend or relative who has been taken abroad and may be forced into a marriage
- Have been forced into a marriage and do not want to support their spouse's visa application

The unit can assist police by:

- Co-ordinating with Embassies and British High Commissions
- Advising on and accessing overseas non-governmental organisations
- Accessing police overseas
- Providing consular protection through overseas Embassies and High Commissions
- Providing information about existing networks within the UK, including police and non-governmental organisations

How to contact the Community Liaison Unit

(Monday – Friday 09.00 – 17.00)

The Community Liaison Unit
Room G/55
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2PA
Telephone: 020 7008 0151/0230/0109
E mail clu@fco.gov.uk

For emergencies out of hours telephone 020 7270 1500 and ask to speak to the Resident Clerk

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONS

Bangladesh

Dhaka

British High Commission
United Nations Road
Baridhara
Dhaka

Postal Address: PO Box 6079, Dhaka - 1212

Telephone: (00) (880) (2) 8822705

Office Hours (GMT):

Sun to Thurs 01.30 - 08.30

Local Time

07.30 - 14.30

India

New Delhi

British High Commission
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110021

Telephone: (00) (91) (11) 687 2161
17.00

Facsimile: (00) (91) (11) 687 2882

Office Hours (GMT)

03.30 - 07.30 and 08.30 - 11.30

Local Time

09.00 - 13.00 and 14.00 -

India

Mumbai (Bombay)

Office of the British Deputy High Commissioner
Maker Chambers IV
222 Jamnalal Bajaj Road
PO Box 11714 Nariman Point
Bombay 400 021
16.00

Telephone: (00) (91) (22) 283 0517/2330

Facsimile: (00) (91) (22) 202 7940

Office Hours (GMT)

02.30 - 07.30 and 08.30 - 10.30

Local Time

08.00 - 13.00 and 14.00 -

Pakistan

Karachi

British Deputy High Commission
Shahrah-E-Iran
Clifton
Karachi 75600

Telephone: (00) (92) (21) 5872431-6

Facsimile: (00) (92) (21) 5874014

Office Hours: (GMT)

Mon - Thurs 03.30 - 11.00

Fri 03.30 - 07.30

Local Time

Mon - Thurs 08.30 - 16.00

Friday 08.30 - 12.30

Pakistan

Islamabad

British High Commission
Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5
PO Box 1122
Islamabad

Telephone: (00) (92) (51) 2822131/5

Facsimile: (00) (92) (51) 2823439

Office Hours (GMT)

Mon - Thurs 03.00 - 11.00

Fri 03.00 - 07.00

Local Time

Mon - Thurs 08.00 - 16.00

Friday 08.00 - 12.00

CONTACTS AND LINKS

Listed below are the names of British police forces and the links that they have already established with police services overseas. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office may also be able to assist.

Community Liaison Unit

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room G/55
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2PA
Tel 020 7008
0151/0230/0109
e-mail clu@fco.gov.uk

Delhi, India

West Midlands Police Crime Support Family Protection Unit Bradford Street Police Station Bradford Street Birmingham B12 0JB Tel 0121 6096909	South Yorkshire Police Minorities Department Snig Hill Sheffield S3 8LY Tel 0114 2523413
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Faisalabad, Pakistan

Lothian and Borders Police
Diversity Unit
Fettes Avenue
Edinburgh
EH4 1RB
Tel 0131 311 3131

Gujarat, India

Leicestershire Constabulary Community Affairs Department PO Box 999 Leicester LE99 1AZ Tel 0116 222 2222	Lancashire Constabulary Community Safety Department Police Headquarters PO Box 77 Hutton Nr Preston PR4 5SB Tel 01772 618796
Metropolitan Police Service Diversity Directorate DCC4 (3) New Scotland Yard Broadway London SW1H OBG 0207 230 4374	

Islamabad, Pakistan	Lothian and Borders Police Fettes Avenue Edinburgh EH4 1RB Tel 0131 311 3131	South Yorkshire Police Minorities Department Snig Hill Sheffield S3 8LY Tel 0114 2523413
Lahore, Pakistan	Lothian and Borders Police Fettes Avenue Edinburgh EH4 1RB Tel 0131 311 3131	South Yorkshire Police Minorities Department Snig Hill Sheffield S3 8LY Tel 0114 2523413
Mirpur, Pakistan	West Yorkshire Police PO Box 9 Wakefield WF1 3QP Tel 01924 375 222	South Yorkshire Police Minorities Department Snig Hill Sheffield S3 8LY Tel 0114 2523413
Punjab, India	West Midlands Police Crime Support Family Protection Unit Bradford Street Police Station Bradford Street Birmingham B12 0JB Tel 0121 6096909	South Yorkshire Police Minorities Department Snig Hill Sheffield S3 8LY Tel 0114 2523413
	Metropolitan Police Service Diversity Directorate DCC4 (3) New Scotland Yard Broadway London SW1H 0BG 0207 230 4374	

Sylhet, Bangladesh

Greater Manchester Police Community Relations Department 4 th Floor Chester House Boyer Street Manchester M16 0RE Tel 0161 8725050	Metropolitan Police Service Diversity Directorate DCC4 (3) New Scotland Yard Broadway London SW1H 0BG 0207 230 4374
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NATIONAL AND LOCAL SUPPORT AGENCIES AND NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Details of local and national professional/support agencies including addresses, telephone numbers and an explanation of the service should be noted in this section. A comprehensive list of local organisations will need to be prepared by each individual force.

Careline

020 8514 1177

This is a national confidential counselling line for children, young people and adults on any issue including family, marital and relationship problems, child abuse, rape and sexual assault, depression and anxiety.

Child Line

0800 1111

This service is for any child or young person with a problem.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau offers free, confidential and impartial information and advice on a wide range of subjects including consumer rights, debt, benefits, housing, employment, immigration, family and personal matters. For a list of branches see "Citizens Advice Bureau" in the telephone directory.

Language Line

020 7520 1430

This service can provide an interpreter on the telephone immediately in 100 different languages, 24 hours a day.

Local Women's Aid refuge services

There are nearly 300 local refuge projects in England and Wales. Many local Women's Aid groups also run advice centres, drop-in centres or outreach services to more isolated areas, as well as local helplines. You can call in to see someone, or telephone for advice and support, without having to stay in a refuge.

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard 020 7837 7324

This service provides a 24 hour helpline.

NSPCC**0808 800 5000****Child Protection Helpline**

This free, confidential service for anyone concerned about children at risk offers counselling, information and advice. The service also connects vulnerable young people, particularly runaways, to services which can help.

Refuge 24-hour National Crisis Line 0990 995 443

This service provides information, support and practical help, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to women experiencing domestic violence. It can refer women and their children to refuges throughout the UK.

Reunite
line)**020 7375 3441** (administration**020 7375 3440** (advice line)**020 8607 9660** (emergency line)

Reunite is the leading charity specializing in parental child abduction. Their main objective is to provide a 24 hour telephone advice line offering practical advice and information on the issue of parental child abduction and international custody disputes. Reunite's advice is impartial and confidential to one or both parties involved in a dispute, although they are unable to negotiate on your behalf. Reunite also provides specialist advice to lawyers and other interested professionals working in this area.

Shelterline**0808 800 4444**

This service provides emergency access to refuge services.

Southall Black Sisters**020 8571 9595**

This is a resource centre offering information, advice, advocacy, practical help, counselling and support to black and minority women experiencing domestic violence. Southall Black Sisters specialise in forced marriage particularly in relation to South Asian women. The office is open weekdays (except Wednesday) 10.00 – 12.30 and 13.30 – 16.00.

The Asian Family Counselling Service 020 8567 5616

This is a national service offering counselling on marital and family issues for Asian men and women. The national helpline is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Telephone counselling is also available.

Heathrow Travel Care**020 8745 7495**

This service ensures that individuals are able to leave the airport and arrive at their destination safely and without delay. Victims of forced marriage may require assistance when they arrive at Heathrow and Travel Care can be contacted for advice. The service is available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Victim Support**0845 30 30 900**

Victim Support offers information and support to victims of crime, whether or not they have reported the crime to the police. All help given is free and confidential. You can contact Victim Support direct, or ask the police to put you in touch with your local group. The national helpline is open from 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 7pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Women's Aid National

Domestic Violence Helpline**08457 023 468**

This service can give the individual support, help and information. They will discuss the practical and legal options available, and if the individual wishes refer them to a local Women's Aid refuge and advice service, or other sources of help. All calls are taken in strictest confidence. The helpline is open from 10am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and from 10am to 3pm on Fridays. Outside these hours you can contact the local Women's Aid service through the local phone book, or access the Women's Aid website (www.womensaid.org.uk). In Wales you can also call Welsh Women's Aid on 01222 390874.

**ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE
CONSULTATION PROCESS****SOUTH WEST REGION**

Bristol City Council
Bristol Pakistani Women's Organisation
Mewn Cymru, Cardiff
Minority and Ethnic Women's Network,
Swansea
Next Link Domestic Abuse Services,
Bristol
Townhill Park Youth Project,
Southampton
Ty Keir Hardie, Merthyr Tydfil
United Bristol Hospital Trust

THAMES VALLEY REGION

Aylesbury Women's Project
Buckinghamshire Council
Bury Park Resource Centre, Luton
Citizens Advice Bureau, Slough
East Berkshire Women's Aid
High Wycombe Citizens Advice Bureau
Kinara Asian Womens Refuge, Slough
Luton Borough Council
Pakistani Community Centre, Reading
Ravi Dassia Community Centre, Hitchin
Sahara Asian Women's Project, Reading
Social Services Department, Wexham
Park Hospital
Wycombe Women's Aid

NORTH EAST REGION

DIVA, Newcastle
Gateshead and South Tyneside Health
Authority
Gateshead Council
International Community Centre,
Middlesbrough
Istree Samaj. Newcastle
Middlesbrough Council
Newcastle Domestic Violence Forum
Northumbria Community Safety
The Angelou Centre, Newcastle upon
Tyne
Women's Refuge, Newcastle

WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Banardos, West Midlands
Coventry Domestic Violence Partnership

Hundard Project, West Midlands
 Interpreting/Translating Service,
 Birmingham
 Jyoti Ashram, Birmingham
 Roshni Asian Womens Refuge
 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
 Sandwell Women's Aid, Oldbury
 Social Services Department, Solihull
 Stepping Stones, Walsall
 The Childrens Society, Birmingham
 Walsall DV Forum
 Wolverhampton Domestic Violence
 Forum

LONDON REGION

Asian Family Counselling Service, London
 Basildon Women's Refuge
 Dawson Cornwell Solicitors, London
 GALOP, London
 Hastings and Rother Domestic Violence
 Project
 HMIC
 Housing, London Borough of Tower
 Hamlets
 Kashmiri Women's Group, Crawley
 Kent Domestic Violence Advisory Group
 Kent Social Services
 Sompriti, Lewes
 Metropolitan Police Sikh Association
 Nacro, Crime and Social Policy Section,
 London
 North Sussex Women's Aid
 Ravi Asian Women's Refuge, Sevenoaks
 Southall Black Sisters, London
 West Kent Health Authority

NORTH WEST REGION

Alcohol and Drugs Services, Preston
 Audley Community Centre, Blackburn
 Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council
 Blackburn Racial Equality Council
 Blackburn with Darwen Primary Care
 Team
 Burnley Borough Council
 Burnley Women's Refuge
 Chorley Women's Refuge
 Crime and Disorder Team, Manchester
 Empower, Lancashire
 Hyndbrun Women's Steering Group,
 Blackburn
 Hyndburn Culture Centre, Accrington
 Interagency Project, Manchester
 Lancashire County Council
 Lancashire County Council Youth and
 Community Service
 Lancashire Wide Network for Minority
 Ethnic Women
 Learning Skills Council, Blackburn
 Manchester Health Promotion
 Oldham Forced Marriage Forum
 Pakistani Resource Centre, Manchester

Preston and West Lancashire Race
 Equality Council
 Preston Muslim Forum
 Preston Social Services
 Rochdale Women's Refuge
 Saheli Asian Women's Refuge,
 Manchester
 Social Services, Accrington
 Sure Start Burnley
 Training and Employment Access Point,
 Burnley
 West Brookhouse Community Centre,
 Blackburn
 Westwood Advice Centre, Oldham
 Youth and Community Service, Burnley

YORKSHIRE REGION

Airedale Hospital
 APNA HAQ Project, Rotherham
 Asian Women's Refuge, Brighouse
 Asian Women's Resource Centre,
 Sheffield
 Ausra Project, Brighouse
 Black & Asian Youth Work Project,
 Rotherham
 Bradford Social Services
 Bradford Women's Aid
 Education Bradford
 Harrison Bunday Solicitors, Leeds
 Huddersfield Women's Aid
 KABWWA, Huddersfield
 Kirklees Asian & Black Women's Welfare
 Organisation
 Kirklees Metropolitan Council
 Kriklees Domestic Violence Forum
 Leeds City Council
 Leeds Inter Agency Project
 Leeds Road Hospital, Bradford
 Leeds Women's Aid
 Our Voice, Bradford
 Selhal Housing Group, Leeds
 SHAP, Huddersfield
 Sheffield Social Services
 Shipley Women's Aid
 The Fairweather Project, Bradford
 Umoja House Project, Leeds
 West Yorkshire Housing Association

EAST MIDLANDS REGION

Asian Counselling Services, Leicester
 ISIS Project, Leicester
 Leicester City Social Services
 Leicestershire and Rutland Probation
 Service
 Leicestershire County Council
 NSPCC, Leicester
 Social Services, Leicester
 Sunflower Centre, Northampton
 Victim Support Leicester
 Women's Aid Leicestershire

Please send comments to:

Eleanor Stobart
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room G55
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AF

Telephone: 01943 602041
e-mail: eleanorstobart@compuserve.com