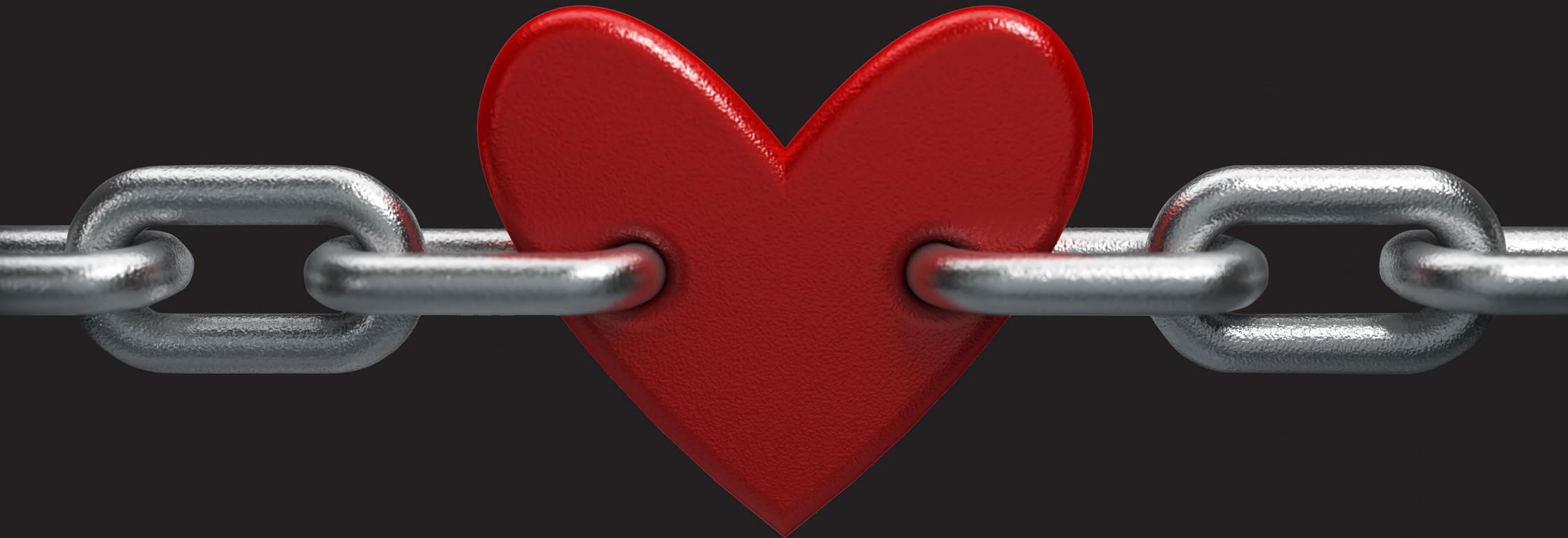




Forced Marriage

Pan Ayrshire multi agency practitioner's guidance



Who is this guidance for?

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

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

It should be read in conjunction with Forced Marriage Statutory Guidance (Scottish Government, 2024, [Forced marriage: statutory guidance - gov.scot](#)) which is intended for Scottish local authorities, NHS Boards, the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA), Children's Hearing Scotland and Police Scotland. It should be read alongside your organisation's policy and procedures in relation to Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and Forced Marriage, where these are in place. This guidance is also intended for Adult Protection Committees, Child Protection Committees, Violence against Women Partnerships, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) as well as individual practitioners.

Definition

A forced marriage is where one or both prospective spouses do not or (in the case of children/young people, or adults with learning and other disabilities) cannot consent to the marriage and duress is involved.

Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure, threatening conduct, harassment, threat of blackmail, use of deception and other means. It is also 'force' to knowingly take advantage of a person's incapacity to consent to, or understand the nature of, the marriage. Duress may be from a prospective

spouse, parents, other family members and the wider community. A forced marriage is always an abuse of someone's human rights.

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

The Scottish Government recognises forced marriage as a form of violence against women/gender-based violence and where children and young people are victims of forced marriage, child abuse. Forced marriage can be associated with other forms of abuse such as domestic abuse and 'honour based' abuse. Forced marriage is considered an abuse of human rights.¹

The Scottish Government's statutory guidance on forced marriage (Forced marriage: statutory guidance - gov.scot) highlights the importance of immediate child protection referrals to Police Scotland and Social Work if a child or young person is at risk of this type of harm and abuse. A child is defined as being under the age of 18 years, in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as incorporated into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

¹ Honour-based abuse and concern cases have been discussed at MARAC in Scotland, please refer to [Guidance on HBA and forced marriage cases in Scotland - SafeLives](#) for best practice responses.

Legislation

Legislation came into force in November 2011 which makes provision for the protection of people being forced into marriage or who have already been forced into a marriage. This legislation also applies to civil partnerships.

The Forced Marriage etc (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011 legislated for Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) which can be

granted in the civil courts in Scotland. FMPO's can protect both adults and children and young people at risk.

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

For example it might state that:

- The protected person must be taken to a place of safety designated in the order;
- The protected person must not be taken abroad;
- The protected person be brought to a court at such time and place as the court specifies;
- That documents such as passports or birth certificates be handed over to the court;
- That any violent, threatening or intimidating conduct must be stopped.

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

Section 13 of the Civil Partnership Act 2020 amends the offence of forced marriage under section 122 of the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to extend the criminal offence to civil partnerships.

Other legislation may apply:

- Where someone has been a victim of domestic abuse the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 has created an offence of engaging in a course of abusive behaviour to a partner or ex-partner and the court can consider a non-harassment order on an offender convicted of a domestic abuse offence.
- The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 protects an individual who has a mental disorder and the Mental Health (Care & Treatment Act) (Scotland) 2003 may also offer some protection
- Section 6 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 is in place to protect

children and provides for an offence which is committed if a parent takes or sends a child out of the UK without appropriate consent in certain circumstances.

- Section 12 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1937 protects a child under the age of 16 from ill-treatment, neglect and abandonment, meanwhile physical violence against a child can be prosecuted under Section 1 of the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019.
- The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 defines a child as a person under 18 years in relation to sexual exploitation through prostitution or pornography ².
- The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 Act will apply if sexual intercourse occurs without consent or with a child under the age of 16.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (the UNCRC Act) defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years (unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained) and covers a wide range of rights, including the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation. The following rights as defined as articles in the UNCRC are particularly relevant when considering forced marriage:
 - **Article 11 UNCRC (abduction and non-return of children)** states that the government must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their country illegally by their parents or other relatives or being prevented from returning home.
 - **Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)** states that the government must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
 - **Article 34 (sexual exploitation)** should ensure protection of children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - **Article 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)** ensures protection of children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation

- The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 defines a child as a person under 18 years.
- The Children’s Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 details the provisions available to protect children from harm, including forced marriage, through the Children’s Hearings System³.

There are also civil remedies including:

- An interdict. It is possible to attach a power of arrest to an interdict under the Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001;
- A non-harassment order under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- A declarator of nullity of marriage or civil partnership;
- Divorce or dissolution.

Forced marriage is seen as a form of abuse and as such relevant child protection⁴ and adult protection guidance⁵ policies and procedures should be considered.

² When Section 38 of this Act is implemented there will be a statutory duty on certain public bodies to notify Police Scotland about possible victims of human trafficking. The sexual abuse of trust offence applies to persons over 18 who are in a defined position of trust (such as teachers, care workers and health professionals) intentionally engaging in sexual activity towards a person under 18 years (Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, s42).

³ Under that Act, any person or agency can refer a child to the Principal Reporter but local authorities and the police must refer a child when they consider that a child is in need of protection and that it might be necessary for a compulsory supervision order to be made in relation to the child. The Act also outlines emergency child protection measures which can be sought when there is an immediate risk of harm, this may include when there are reasonable grounds to believe a child is being forced to marry even if there is intention to remove the child from the UK to be married.

⁴ National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2023; Ayrshire Multi Agency Child Protection Practitioner Procedures (2023;83)

⁵ Adult Support And protection (Scotland) Act 2027





Case Studies

Chloe's Story

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

Nina's Story

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

Prevalence and reasons for forced marriage

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

In 2023 the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) identified that of the 280 cases of forced marriage, 2% of these were in Scotland. The Scottish percentage has remained consistent since 2012. However, the Scottish Government is aware that this data will not accurately reflect the number of instances of forced marriage in Scotland. Scottish victims often seek advice and support from organisations closer to home and the issue is generally under-reported as a result of a lack of public awareness of the issue, and knowledge of where to seek help and advice. The majority of victims of forced marriage are women; according to data from the FMU, 69% of the cases they supported in 2023 involved female victims.

Main specialist support organisations in Scotland for female victims include Shakti Women's Aid, Saheliya, Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid, and AMINA – The Muslim Women's Resource Centre (MWRC) and Scottish Women's Aid.

- **Between 2019 - 2022**, Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline there were 125 helpline contacts handled relating to forced marriage. 115 were in relation to a woman or girl, 9 were in relation to a man and boy and in 1 the person's gender was unknown.
- **Between 2019 - 2022**, Shakti Women's Aid supported 47 adult survivors, 162 adults who were married and did not realise their marriage was a forced marriage and 13 children and young people affected by (or victims of) forced marriage.
- **Between 2019 - 2022**, Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid supported 39 cases of forced marriage.

- **Since January 2022**, Saheliya has supported 10 new cases of women affected by forced marriage whilst supporting 200+ migrant women who are living in or have experience of forced marriage that took place prior to migration.
- **Between 2019 - 2022**, Amina MWRC has supported 79 cases of forced marriage.

In 2013/2014 the Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline confirmed that 13% of the total Scottish calls in relation to Forced Marriage were from Ayrshire. Recent figures show a significant reduction, in that less than 2% of calls were from Ayrshire. This indicates a need to revisit public and practitioner awareness of the possibility of Forced Marriage occurring within our communities.

⁶ Forced Marriage Statutory Guidance (2024; 5)

Reasons for forced marriage

Those who perpetuate forced marriage often justify their actions as upholding cultural/religious traditions or protecting family honour.

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

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality (perceived promiscuity or being lesbian, gay or transgendered);
- Preventing 'unsuitable' relationships outside ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group;
- Responding to the pressure of others including family and friends and peers;
- Attempting to strengthen family links;
- Achieving financial gain or control;
- Ensuring care for a child or adult with a disability as carers are now unable to fulfil role;

- Assisting claims for UK residence/citizenship;
- Marrying off an older sibling with a disability because their unmarried status is a barrier to marriage for other siblings;
- Obtaining physical assistance or personal care for ageing parents.

Who may be affected?

- Women, men, children and young people can be forced into marriage, although most cases involve girls and women aged between 13 and 30.
- Women who are divorced or who have children from a previous relationship/marriage and women who are pregnant or who have had children outside of marriage are at particularly high risk as they are deemed to have brought 'shame' to their family or community. This risk involves both Forced Marriage, as well as other forms of so called 'honour' based abuse, including so called 'honour' killings.
- People with physical and learning disabilities may be forced into marriage by families wanting to ensure their long-term care.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are also more likely to be affected. For many communities, the LGBT identity is seen as transgressive of cultural/religious norms and ensuring that a heterosexual marriage takes place is a way of maintaining the family's or the community's 'honour'.
- Although children and young people are most at risk of forced marriage, people of middle/older age can be affected based on their individual circumstances. For example, women who are over 30 who have never married, women who are divorced and/or who have children from a previous marriage/relationship or people who have been widowed might also experience pressure to marry or re-marry. People from this demographic might well be under-represented in services due to a lack of knowledge of where/how to access support.
- Children in care and care-experienced people are also at risk of forced marriage. In the absence of direct family influences, there is often pressure continuing to be exerted by the wider family or community.
- Most reported cases in the UK so far have involved South Asian families (Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi). This partly reflects the large, established South Asian population in the UK. There have been cases involving East Asian, European and SWANA (South West Asia and North Africa) communities as well. It is also important to note that asylum seeking and refugee communities are at particularly high risk, often due to a lack of knowledge that forced marriage is a crime in Scotland, or a lack of awareness of alternatives.
- Gypsy/traveller communities also anecdotally report high rates of forced marriage; this is often not reported to services due to the tightly-knit nature of the community.
- At times, forced marriage involves elements of human trafficking with people moved within or in to the UK for the purposes of marriage and subsequently having their official documents stolen.
- In some communities, such as the Roma community, it is considered 'normal' to be expected to repay a long-standing debt for being transported within or between countries, and this keeps people trapped in forced marriages for longer.
- Forced marriage is an issue that can affect people from all ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. However, it is important to recognise that people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) are particularly at risk of forced marriage, domestic abuse and other forms of violence and abuse.

Warning signs and potential indicators

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

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

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

The diagram on the following page highlights the key warning signs and indicators that may make you concerned that forced marriage is a risk. Please remember this is not an exhaustive list and signs will be inter-linked, the presence of these indicators is not conclusive evidence that forced marriage is a risk. You must continue to use your professional judgement and make use of the available guidance. If you do suspect forced marriage, also consult the Scottish Government Guidance (see useful links at the end of this document) including the specific Statutory Guidance (where appropriate) and the one chance checklist and flowchart in this guide.

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

Warning signs and potential indicators for children and young people

Forced marriage involving anyone under the age of 18 is a crime and constitutes a form of child abuse. A child or young person who is forced into marriage is likely to suffer significant harm through physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Forced marriage can have a negative impact on a child's health and development and can also result in sexual violence including rape.

Children and young people may be taken abroad for an extended period of time for the purpose of being forced to marry, under the pretext of a family holiday, a wedding or illness of a grandparent/family member which could amount to child abduction. Even if the child is not taken abroad, they are likely to be taken out of school to ensure that they do not talk about their situation with their peers.

Warning signs that a child or young person may be at risk of forced marriage or may have been forced to marry may include:

- Extended absences from school/college, truancy, drop in performance, low motivation, excessive parental restriction and control of movements and history of siblings leaving education early to marry.
- A child or young person talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about, fears that they will be taken out of education and kept abroad.
- Evidence of self-harm, treatment for depression, attempted suicide, social isolation, eating disorders or substance abuse.
- Evidence of family disputes/conflict, domestic abuse or running away from home.
- Unreasonable restrictions such as being kept at home by their parents ('house arrest') or being unable to complete their education.
- A child or young person being in conflict with their parents.

- A child or young person going missing/running away.
- A child or young person always being accompanied including to school and medical appointments.
- A child or young person directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.
- Contradictions in the child' or young person s account of events.



Education

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



Employment

- Poor performance
- Poor attendance
- Limited Career Choices
- Not allowed to work
- Unable to attend business trips
- Unreasonable financial control e.g. confiscation of wages



Police involvement

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



Family

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



Health

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

Impact

As a result of forced marriage, individuals may face consequences which can include;

- Sexual degradation and domestic abuse (includes repeated rape, pregnancy, coercive control and physical harm);
- Additional isolation particularly if the individual has a lack of access to an alternative home or support networks or finances;
- Lack of experience of life outside the home or relationships and as such a lack of skills, knowledge or ability to access or understand their rights (leads to desire to run away);
- Fear – of professionals as this may cause them to be ostracised, or family or friends who may try to find them;
- Removal to another country or location causing further isolation
- Death by so called “honour killing”

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

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

Concerns about risk to children and young people should be responded to using your organisations child protection procedures and with reference to the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2023 as well as Ayrshire Multi Agency Child Protection Practitioner Procedures.

One chance checklist

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

Do

- See the person on their own, even if they are accompanied by others, check in private if the person wishes to speak with a male or female member of staff, never use any accompanying person as an interpreter;
- See the individual in a secure and private place where you will not be overheard;
- Reassure the individual about confidentiality (in line with your organisation’s policy) and explain that you will not give information to their family/ friends or community;
- Accept what the individual says;
- Explain all the options open to the individual and their possible outcomes;
- Recognise the individual’s wishes and take these into account;
- Assess the risk faced by the individual by conducting an appropriate and thorough risk assessment (in line with your organisation’s policy);
- Contact, as soon as possible, the Lead Person responsible for Forced Marriage within your organisation – if you are employed by a Statutory Organisation – your Organisation is required to have this
- Agree a way to contact the individual safely (for example agree a code word);
- Obtain full details, record these securely (in line with your organisation’s policy on confidentiality and record keeping) and pass on as appropriate;
- Give the individual (or help them memorise) your contact details and ensure they know the emergency services number for use in an emergency situation and/or give them appropriate agencies contact details (as appropriate to their communication needs);

- Consider the need for immediate police involvement, protection and placement away from the family and arrange this if necessary: this includes any action to stop the individual being removed from the UK;
- Do everything you can to keep the individual safe;
- Get immediate advice, while the individual is still with you if possible, if you are not sure what to do.

If there are any concerns in respect of a child or young person under the age of 18:

- Child protection processes should be considered. An immediate child protection referral to Police Scotland and Social Work may be appropriate.
- You may also consider whether urgent action may be required to protect a child or young person from actual or likely significant harm.
- Discuss your concerns with the Child Protection lead within your agency and share your concerns with police or social work. Recognising responding, recording and reporting a concern can assist with the initial risk assessment and protection of children and young people when considering the complexity of forced marriage.
- Refer to Scottish Government Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (2023) for further guidance.
- Refer to Ayrshire Multi-Agency Child Protection Practitioner Procedures including sections titled extra-familial harm and contextualised safeguarding.⁸
- Listen to the child and young person and hear what they have to say, let them know that you are listening. Remain calm.
- Maintain thorough, accurate and up to date records about the child protection concern.
- Tell the child or young person what you are going to do next and tell them that you will speak to someone who may be able to help.

- Identifying a concern about a child can be distressing and individuals may worry about following the correct procedures. Every organisation and agency should have a designated Child Protection Lead who can be consulted and should have procedures for reporting concerns.

⁸ Extra-familial harm relates to harm that is experienced by children and young people up to the age of 18 years old outside their family and home environment, either from adults or other young people. A key element of extra-familial harm is that harm does not arise from the home environment; parents may not be aware that their child is at risk or may be struggling to protect their child and the family from harm from others. Child exploitation i.e. forced marriage, trafficking, is a form of extra-familial harm. Therefore, a child protection referral should be made to Police Scotland and Social Work when there are concerns about a child or young person at risk.

Do not

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

In all other cases use the flowchart on the following page to assist your professional decision making.

Concern about forced marriage

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

If the person is under
18 years

If your organisation has a
lead person responsible
for Forced Marriage
ensure they are notified

If the person is over
18 years

Follow your organisations
Child Protection
procedures

Contact the
Ayrshire Public
Protection Unit
(Police)* on
01563 505012

Consider whether the
adult could be an 'Adult
at Risk' under ASP
legislation - contact
social services

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

If you are aware someone is potentially at risk of a forced marriage and you need to take immediate, emergency action in relation to their health or safety **DO NOT HESITATE** to **dial 999** for the appropriate emergency service - Police, Ambulance or Fire.

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





Trauma informed practice

Trauma informed practice is an approach to care provision that considers the impact of trauma on an individual's biological, psychological and social development. Delivering services in a trauma informed way means understanding that individuals may have a history of traumatic experiences which may impact their ability to feel safe and develop trusting relationships with services and professionals. Taking a trauma informed approach to supporting children, young people and adults affected by forced marriage enables practitioners to better understand the range of adaptations and survival strategies that people may make to cope with the impacts of trauma. Practitioners should be alert to the need to view behaviours that compromise health, wellbeing and safety as adaptations that may have played a useful role in the individual's life in helping them to survive, and cope with, their experiences of trauma.

In 2017 Transforming Psychological Trauma: A Knowledge and Skills Framework for the Scottish Workforce details the specific range of knowledge and skills required across the workforce, depending on their and their organisation's role and remit in relation to people who have experienced trauma. Those with direct and frequent contact with people who may be affected by trauma should be equipped to 'trauma skilled' level of practice. Those professionals with regular and intense contact with people affected by trauma and who have a specific remit to respond by providing support, advocacy or specific psychological interventions, should have adequate training and experience to practice at 'trauma enhanced' level ([nationaltraumatrainingframework-final.pdf](#))

Key local contacts

Lead person responsible for Forced Marriage within Ayrshire Local Authorities

Area	Designation	Telephone Number
East Ayrshire	Senior Manager – Authority Wide Services	01563 503356
North Ayrshire	Senior Manager – Mental Health & Learning Disabilities	01294 317718
South Ayrshire	Head of Community Health & Care Services	01292 612735

Registrars (Marriage) within Ayrshire Local Authorities

Area	Service	Telephone Number
East Ayrshire	Registration	01563 554460
North Ayrshire	Registration	01294 310000
South Ayrshire	Registration	01292 617617

Useful links - Local

Ayrshire Police

Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit: 01563 505014 OR 101

Ayrshire Social Services

Out of Hours Service: 0800 328 7758

East Ayrshire

Adult Support & Protection

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/SocialCareAndHealth/Protecting-people/Adult-protection/Adult-support-protection.aspx>

Child Protection

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/SocialCareAndHealth/Protecting-people/Child-protection/ChildProtection.aspx>

North Ayrshire

Adult Support & Protection

<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/public-protection/adult-support-and-protection>

Child Protection

<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/public-protection/child-protection>

South Ayrshire

Adult Support & Protection

<https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ASP>

Child Protection

<https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ProtectingYoungPeople>

East Ayrshire Social Services

Kilmarnock: 01563 554200
Cumnock: 01290 427720

North Ayrshire Social Services

Irvine & Kilwinning: 01294 310300
Garnock Valley: 01505 684551
North Coast Locality: 01475 687592
Arran: 01770 600742
Three Towns Locality: 01294 310005

South Ayrshire Social Services

Adult Support & Protection 01292 612055
Child Protection 01292 612729
South Ayrshire Social Services 0300 1230900

East Ayrshire

Woman's Aid

01563 536001 <https://www.eastayrshirewomensaid.org.uk/>

Telephone Interpreting

Global Connects 0141 352 5663 interpreting@globalconnects.com

North Ayrshire

Woman's Aid

01242 602424 <https://nawomensaid.com/>

Language Line

www.languageline.co.uk

Telephone interpreting for emergency & non-emergency needs

South Ayrshire

Woman's Aid

01292 266482 <https://southayrshirewomensaid.org.uk/>

Language Line

www.languageline.co.uk

Telephone interpreting for emergency & non-emergency needs

Useful links - Scottish

Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

It is free and trained advisors are on hand 24 hours a day

Also for anyone who has experienced domestic abuse (signposting for male victims)

0800 027 1234 <https://www.sdafmh.org.uk/en/>

Shakti Women's Aid Support

Helpline. Advocacy, refuge and information to all black minority ethnic women, children and young people experiencing and/or fleeing domestic abuse

0131 475 2399 <https://shaktiedinburgh.co.uk/>

Hemet Gryffe Women's Aid Support

Helpline. Advocacy, refuge and information to all black minority ethnic women, children and young people experiencing and/or fleeing domestic abuse

0141 353 0859 <https://www.hematgryffe.org.uk/>

Amina

Helpline. Muslim women's resource centre that empowers and supports Muslim and Black & Minority Ethnic women by serving as a vital link between them and the barriers they face every day

0808 801 0301 <https://mwrc.org.uk/>

Help for women with no recourse to public funds

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-benefits-for-visa-holder-domestic-violence>

Scottish Women's Rights Centre

Supports women aged 16 and over who have been affected by violence and abuse in Scotland. Services are free confidential and include; helpline, advice surgeries, legal representation, advocacy support and services for migrant women.

08088 010 789 scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk

Victim Support Scotland

Helpline. Provides emotional support, practical help and essential information to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime

0800 160 1985 <https://victimsupport.scot/>

Useful Links – UK Government departments

Forced Marriage Unit Joint Foreign & Commonwealth Office/Home Office Service

Email: fm@fcdo.gov.uk

020 7008 0151 <https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

UK Visas and Immigration

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

0300 123 2241

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

Forced Marriage – Scottish Government Guidance

Multi-agency practice guidelines

preventing and responding to forced marriage – update 2014

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/forced-marriage-practitioner-guidance-update-2014/>

Forced Marriage And Learning Disabilities

[Forced Marriage and learning disabilities guidelines FINAL.PDF](#)

Statutory Agencies

Forced Marriage – Statutory Guidance

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/forced-marriage-statutory-guidance/>

Responding to forced marriage

Working with children and families factsheet

[responding-forced-marriage-working-children-families-factsheet.pdf](#)

Responding to forced marriage

Work with Adults factsheet

[responding-forced-marriage-working-adults-factsheet.pdf](#)

Responding to forced marriage

Health Professionals Factsheet

[responding-forced-marriage-health-professionals-factsheet.pdf](#)

Responding to forced marriage

Education Factsheet

[responding-forced-marriage-education-factsheet.pdf](#)

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2012 (updated 2023)

[www.NationalGuidanceforChildProtectioninScotland2021-updated2023 - gov.scot](http://www.NationalGuidanceforChildProtectioninScotland2021-updated2023-gov.scot)

MARAC Guidance

[Guidance on HBA and forced marriage cases in Scotland - SafeLives](#)