

Forced Marriage is a Crime

You have a right to choose...



What is Forced Marriage?

From June, 2014, forcing someone to marry will become a crime. This is where one or both spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage, and duress is involved.

It can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In some cases victims suffer violence and abuse from their extended family.

Derbyshire Constabulary is taking a victim led approach in delivering the new legislation. This will respect the views of victims and provide the necessary support.

The new law will offer greater powers in prosecuting those involved and those found guilty can face up to seven years imprisonment.

Seeing the signs...

Both men and women facing Forced Marriage can become anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn.

Work might reveal signs of a victim's situation. Suddenly being met or picked up at work, being subject to cash controls, and poor performance or attendance are all potential signs.

Sudden absence from education or an extended leave from school, college or university, or a failure to return from a visit to another country is possible.

A sudden engagement to an apparent stranger may also point towards forced marriage.

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Some women may have an early or unwanted pregnancy. Someone forced to marry may find it very hard to start any action to end a marriage, and might also be a victim of rape and ongoing domestic abuse

In Derbyshire, every district has a Safeguarding Unit which includes police, local authorities and partnership organisations.

They are there to help and protect victims and prosecute those involved in committing this crime.

A dedicated page on the Derbyshire Constabulary website has been set up to provide information and advice on Forced Marriage and explains how you can report this crime.

A survivor's story

“ My wedding day should have been the happiest day of my life but all I could do was cry. I didn't want to go through with it but felt I had no choice, my family would disown me. I just felt no-one cared about what I thought or what I felt. Why should I be forced to live with someone I didn't even like, let alone love? I left my whole life in the UK behind. What was the point of even living anymore?

After I tried to take my own life the first thing I thought about was the shame I had brought on my family. The same family who had driven me to this. I knew then that I had to stand on my own two feet. I still love my family but it was time to put myself first. I decided to speak to the Safeguarding Unit. It was such a relief to be able to talk to someone who was on my side without any judgement and without the fear they would tell my family. For the first time I realised I had the right to choose. With their help, my confidence grew.

Sometimes I get upset about what happened to me but now I know I made the right decision to leave and live my own life. I wake up each day looking forward to it and I get excited about the future and meeting someone who I want to be with. ”

Useful contacts

Police non emergency: 101

If you are in immediate danger: 999

Crimestoppers Anonymously: **0800 555 111**

Karma Nirvana Helpline: **0800 5999 247**

Derby City Advocate Service: **07812 300927**

Derbyshire County Council Advocate Service: **01246 540444**

The Home Office Forced Marriage Unit
has extensive information and help available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>

Deaf or hard of hearing

Mobile Text Phone: **07786 200 200**

Text Relay **18001 101**

www.derbyshire.police.uk/forcedmarriage



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