

# forced marriages

*"I have had a few meetings with another family to talk about an arranged marriage but my parents have said the decision is mine as they want me to be happy."*

Arranged marriages have been a tradition for centuries. Two families come together to discuss a marriage, and the young people from each family choose whether or not they want to get married.

But forced marriages are very different to this - young people are made to marry, even if they don't want to. Girls (some may be quite young) can be forced into marriage, but it can also happen to boys. Often, their families use physical force or emotional pressure to make sure the marriage happens.

Being forced to marry is traumatic and frightening. You might become very isolated, and feel like you have no one to talk to. You may get depressed and start to self-harm, develop an eating disorder or even have suicidal thoughts.

Many young people in forced marriages are too scared to ask for help - but don't suffer alone - see the helplines listed under Contacts.



LOOK OUT FOR

- Forced marriages can happen to boys but they usually happen to girls.
- Forced marriage is currently not against the law in Britain.
- People who have been forced to marry can become depressed, scared and isolated.



WHAT NEXT

**If you are worried that you may be taken abroad and forced to marry:**

- Contact the Forced Marriage Unit which offers confidential support and information.
- If you can, you should leave details of flights, travel plans, destinations with someone you trust.
- Make a note of passport numbers to leave with someone you trust in the UK.

**If you are worried that someone you know has not returned from a visit abroad:**

- Speak to an adult you trust as soon as possible.



CONTACTS

- Connexions Direct  
080 800 13 2 19  
[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit.  
020 7008 0151 [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)
- Police (in an emergency) 999
- Childline 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Samaritans 08457 90 90 90  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- [www.channelmogo.org](http://www.channelmogo.org) go to 'Need some advice'

