

Silence Hurts Too

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

U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

You think you may be forced into a marriage – what to do:-

At Home:-

- **Tell a trusted person** what you think may be about to happen. This person can be a friend, teacher, or anyone you are comfortable with.
- **Give them** the details of where you are going, the date you expect to return, contact numbers, passport details, important documents (or copies) and personal items.
- **Ask** them to contact the Police, local authorities, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Community Liaison Unit in London if you do not return as expected.
- **Get Advice** on the variety of laws that help protect you, provide safe housing and shelter. **You can also** get advice on benefits and other support available. (see the list of organisations)
- **Keep safe with you** – your passport, important documents (or photocopies). Try to keep a list of emergency telephone contacts and important personal notes safe.
- **If held at home against your wishes** you can contact the Police – you can tell the attending officers that you want to leave and they will take you out to a safe place.
- **Have cash, and a bag of essential items, ready** – in case you leave quickly.
- **Travelling** – do not eat or drink before the trip in case the food is drugged.

At Airport:-

- **Tell Airport Officials** you do not want to go and why.
- **Pretend – if necessary** – to be ill, say you need the bathroom, scream for help.
- **Emergency Helpline Telephone Numbers are available** at both Heathrow and Gatwick. The numbers are Heathrow, Gatwick

Abroad:-

- **Any British National** who gets into difficulty overseas can turn to the nearest diplomatic British Mission/Embassy for help.
- **Get in touch** with friends and ask them to contact Police or consular services.
- **The Foreign & Commonwealth Liaison Office** will work with others to arrange safe houses/refuges abroad, give help with replacement passports, loans of money for return ticket and:-
 - a) Arrange for its representatives to meet the victim at Heathrow Airport on their return to UK, and discuss their concerns and needs and the appropriate course of action
 - b) Work with **UK** organisations – such as charities – to provide emotional support, counselling, safe accommodation, general advice & information on finances, legal issues etc. As well as specialist expert solicitors on Wardship proceedings if appropriate.
 - c) Liaise with Immigration Officers in UK to advise them of the forced marriage.

The Marriage has taken place and you return to the UK:- there are a number of ways of delaying or stopping entry to the UK for your partner. **Ask for help. Get legal advice** about what is right for your current situation.

Never be afraid to reach out and ask.

THE LAW – Both Criminal and Civil Laws can help. Legal advice and aid is available to everyone regardless of age or sex.

Civil law provides for Injunction Orders amongst other Protection Orders, and Orders that allow provision of safe accommodation and/or guardianship for minors.

There are no specific criminal offences in England and Wales of forcing someone to marry however –

The law provides protection from crimes that can be committed when forcing someone to marry.

Important Addresses

Citizen's Advice Bureau - Tel: 01582 731616
24-26 King Street, Luton
(Information, Referrals, Advice, Support)

Ghar se Ghar Asian and Ethnic Minorities Women's Group - Tel: 01582 450194
c/o Bury Park Resource Centre, Dunstable Road, Luton.
(Support, Information, Referral, Relationship Counselling Service supported by Asian Family Counselling)

Luton Law Centre - 01582 481000
28 Clarendon Road, Luton
(Legal Advice and Rights)

Luton borough Council - Tel: 01582 546000 Housing and Social Service Department Unity House, 111 Stuart Street, Luton
(Advice, Statutory Services re Care)

Luton Women's Aid - Tel: 01582 394384
Monday - Friday, 10am—5pm
(Refuge, Advice, Support, Information)

AWAAZ Women's Project - Tel: 01462 626200 Ravidassia Multicultural Centre 2 Knowl Place, Wilbury Way, Hitchin
(Provides Counselling, Mediation, Advice and Support)
Police Domestic Violence Unit - Tel: 01582 394384 Police Station, Buxton Road, Luton

Samaritans - Tel: 01582 720666
33 Cardiff Road, Luton
(Telephone Counselling, Support)

Chinese Information and Advice Centre
- Tel: 0207 692 3471
53 New Oxford Street, London
(Advice, Support in various subjects including Domestic Violence in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.)

Dawson Cornwall - Tel: 0207 539 4831
16 Red Lion Square Anne Hutchinson
e-mail hutchinson@dawsoncornwall.co.uk

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Community Liaison Unit, Room G55, Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2PA
Tel: 0207 008 8706 - India
Tel: 0207 008 0135 - Bangladesh
Tel: 0207 008 0230 - Pakistan
(Telephone Advice on Legal Help re Forced Marriage Issues, Advice on Practical Actions and Precautions, on Government Assistance Overseas)