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**Context:** A 16-year-old young female person was taken out of the country to be married; this was by definition a Forced Marriage. Once married, the young person was victim of sexual abuse over a period of weeks from the adult male to whom she had been married before eventually, being allowed to return to the UK.

Prior to leaving the UK, the young person's younger siblings had stated to their schools and friends that their older sister was going to be married in another country when they 'went on holiday'. Following one of these statements, a safeguarding referral was made by the youngest sibling's school. A visit was undertaken by Children's Social Care to the mother, father and the young person. The child's mother denied that they would take her away to be married, and that it was a misunderstanding by their younger child because another family had recently got married. The decision was taken that there were no grounds for a Forced Marriage Prevention Order and the contact was closed.

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**What to do:**

- Contact your safeguarding lead /Manager
- Refer to Oldham MASH /IDVA Team/ specialist HBVA IDVA
- Force Marriage Unit (FMU) contact details 02070080151 email [FMU@FCDO.GOV.UK](mailto:FMU@FCDO.GOV.UK)
- If there is immediate risk – call 999 or 101(non-emergency)
- Seek advice and consider legal protection orders.



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**What is Forced Marriage:**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be: physical: for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence and / or emotional and psychological: for example, making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family.

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In this context, the Forced Marriage was reflective of So-Called Honour Based Violence and Abuse which can manifest in different ways for each family and community. Take the opportunities available Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership SCHBVA Training to build your knowledge and understanding of the issues. [oscptraining@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:oscptraining@oldham.gov.uk)

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**Who to consult with:**

In Oldham there is a Specialist Honour Based Violence IDVA who can be consulted with if you have any concerns that you would like to discuss.

**General Duty Line: 0161 770 1572**

[IDAA.SERVICE@OLDHAM.GOV.UK](mailto:IDAA.SERVICE@OLDHAM.GOV.UK)



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**Professionally exercising respectful uncertainty in practice:**

It is understandable that the young person's parents would deny the plans for marriage if they were aware of the concern it would raise. The young person herself denied it, but it is possible she also was not fully aware of the plan. A more reflective consideration of the possible motivations for the denial, and of the comments made by the siblings of the young person, could professionals have sought more information or advice.

Government guidelines states No mediation with family as this can put young people at more risk and act on the 'one chance rule'

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**Forced Marriage Prevention Orders:**

A Forced Marriage Prevention Order can be sought, free of cost, by any individual who might be at risk. Professionals can seek to apply on someone's behalf using a Leave to Apply form. More details are available at [Forced marriage protection orders - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) If a child is under 18 government guidelines recommends that the responsibility falls on the Children Social Services to obtain FMPO if local authority do not feel the need then other agencies should apply.