

## LGBT Domestic Violence & Honour Based Violence Project Stonewall Housing

### What is Forced Marriage?

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage, and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice, and is recognized in the UK as form of violence against men and women, domestic abuse, child abuse, and is a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example when someone is made to feel like they are bringing shame on their family).

Are you experiencing threats of forced marriage and honour based violence?

If you are experiencing forced marriage or think that your family might be putting you at risk of forced marriage you might be considering your housing options.

#### If you are under 18...

If you are under 18, the local housing department and social services working together, have a duty to accommodate you safely and away from your family. They will not contact your family until you are staying somewhere safe, unless you give your consent for this to happen. You can apply to any local authority and do not have to remain near your home town. If you would like to speak to someone, about your situation, call Childline on 0800 1111 (at anytime).

#### If you are over 18...

Any local authority has a duty to offer advice, and in some circumstances, housing. To arrange this, it is always best to seek advice from the organisations listed at the back of this leaflet.

If it has got to the point where you are living in fear and there are no other housing alternatives available, the last safety net would be to apply for emergency accommodation via a local authority. Approaching a local authority as an emergency can be exhausting, intrusive and time consuming. It should only be considered as a last resort when personal safety is at risk.

You might also be able to find refuge accommodation where workers will be able to guide you through the re-housing process. To find this, call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0800 2000 247. If you do not speak English, they will provide an interpreter. This service is predominantly for women. If you are male or want to speak to a service that specialises in lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans support, contact the organisations listed on [www.lgbtdaf.org](http://www.lgbtdaf.org)

If you fear you maybe removed from the UK against your will, or are being taken on holiday and think you might not be able to return, contact the forced marriage unit.

Leaving your family home is a big step and can feel overwhelming. Sometimes time away from relatives is the safest option. It also gives you time to think about your future. You have the right to live a safe life as a lesbian, gay man, bisexual or transgender person, and to live with people and partners who respect your life.

### Safety planning

Staying safe is really important.

1. Start preparing to leave over time
2. Arrange with a friend or someone you can trust to keep some of your essential documents like your passport, medication, ID, bank card and details, emergency money and clothing.
3. If you have children, take them with you and do not tell them before hand that you are leaving.
4. Talk to an advisor at Women's Aid, an LGBT agency, or the Forced Marriage Unit about your next steps
5. Do not tell anyone, or write down your plans, including facebook or social media, as these may give your location away.

### Get Help or Make a Referral

Stonewall Housing's Domestic Abuse Advocacy services -  
02073595767 / [info@Stonewallhousing.org](mailto:info@Stonewallhousing.org) accepts referrals across London.  
The Forced Marriage Unit / +44 (0) 20 70080151 / [fm@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk)



HM Government  
Forced Marriage Unit

