



Home Office



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2015

8 March 2016

Contents

Key Points	3
1 Introduction	4
1.1 Overview	4
2 Forced Marriage Unit Statistics	6
2.1 Sex.....	7
2.2 Age.....	7
2.3 UK region	8
2.4 Focus country.....	9
2.5 Sexual orientation.....	9
2.6 Disability.....	10

Key Points

In 2015, the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) gave advice or support relating to a possible forced marriage in 1,220 cases. The FMU also received approximately 350 calls per month in total. These figures include contact that has been made to the FMU through the public helpline or by email in relation to a new case. Of the cases that FMU provided support to:

- 329 (27%) involved victims below 18 years of age; and
- 427 (35%) involved victims aged 18-25.

In 2015, the majority of cases 980 (80%) involved female victims, and 240 cases (20%) involved male victims.

Forced marriage is not a problem specific to one country or culture: since it was established in 2005, the FMU has handled cases relating to over 90 countries across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

In 2015, the FMU handled cases involving 67 'focus' countries which a victim was at risk of, or had already, been taken to in connection with a forced marriage. The five highest volume countries in 2015 were:

- Pakistan - 539 cases (44%).
- Bangladesh - 89 cases (7%).
- India - 75 cases (6%).
- Somalia - 34 cases (3%).
- Afghanistan - 21 cases (2%).

In 2015, 175 (14%) of the cases handled by the FMU had no overseas element, with the forced marriage activity taking place entirely within the UK.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

In 2014, the Government made forced marriage a criminal offence. A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities or mental incapacity, cannot) consent to the marriage and violence, threats or any other form of coercion is involved. Coercion may include emotional force, physical force or the threat of physical force and financial pressure. In an arranged marriage, both parties have consented to the union and can refuse to marry if they choose to.

This publication provides information on the number of cases reported to the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) via its public helpline and email inbox from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015. All calls and emails are registered on the FMU's case logging tool to ensure accuracy and reliability of records. Main categories of data that are captured by the FMU case log includes:

- details of the caller/source of information;
- focus country;
- UK region;
- gender and age of person at risk;
- disability (physical, learning or both); and
- sexual orientation.

This publication does not provide a breakdown of FMU cases by religion; no major faith in the UK advocates forced marriage. It is also important to note that freely given consent is a prerequisite of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages everywhere.

The FMU is a joint Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) Unit. It was set up in 2005 to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. The Unit operates both inside the UK, where support is provided to any individual, and overseas, where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals.

The FMU helpline is available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. An out of hours service is provided by the FCO's Global Response Centre, which is based in the UK. The FMU may receive information about a forced marriage from either a person at risk, a friend or relative, or from professionals within agencies charged with responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Information on forced marriage is becoming more widely available and can be accessed in a range of ways, for example, through social media or smart phone apps. There are also other help lines available through charities which can offer advice on forced marriage.

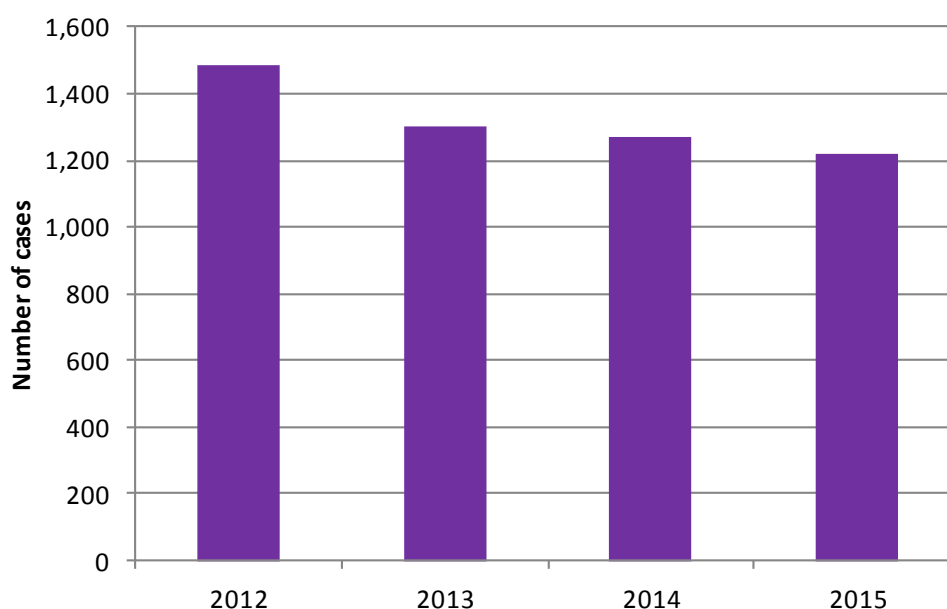
Further information about forced marriage and the work of the FMU is available on GOV.uk or by emailing fmu@fco.gov.uk or writing to:

Forced Marriage Unit
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Consular Directorate
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

2 Forced Marriage Unit Statistics

In 2015, the FMU gave advice or support relating to a possible forced marriage in 1,220 cases via its public helpline and email inbox. This represents a fall of 3% (47 cases) compared with the previous year. This fall continues the general downward trend seen since 2009 (Figure 2.1). It is important to note that information on forced marriage has become more widely available, and advice on forced marriage is also provided by charities and non-governmental organisations as well as the FMU. Since it was established in 2005, the FMU has worked with a range of organisations and professionals to increase their ability to support to victims and potential victims. The fall in calls to the FMU in recent years may reflect this.

Figure 2.1: Number of cases the FMU gave advice or support to, 2012 to 2015



Source: Forced Marriage Unit; Foreign & Commonwealth Office

The FMU also received approximately 350 telephone calls per month in 2015. However, this included repeat calls about cases and calls not about forced marriage (for example, queries about divorces, annulments, sham marriages etc). These statistics only represent the cases that have come to the Forced Marriage Unit. Forced marriage is a hidden practice and as a result, the figures may not reflect the full scale of the abuse.

The use of the term 'victim' includes people thought to be at potential risk of future forced marriage, those currently going through a forced marriage, and those who have already been forced to marry.

The majority of calls about cases (almost 80%) were from professionals and other third parties (e.g. non-governmental organisations, colleagues, friends, or family). The fact self-reports represent a smaller proportion of calls may reflect the hidden nature of forced marriage and that victims may fear reprisals from their family if they come forward.

In 2015, victims' ages ranged from very young children to people post-retirement age.

Cases involving very young children often involve the promise of a future marriage rather than an imminent marriage. In a small number of cases involving older victims, the forced marriage may have happened many years previously or where the victim has a learning disability.

Through the FMU, the Government delivers an outreach and training programme, providing professionals with the knowledge and skills required to handle forced marriage cases. This enables them to manage more cases independently, and without the need to seek advice from the FMU. There has been a decrease in the proportion of domestic cases (i.e. cases with no international element) from 14% in 2015 compared with 23% in 2014. This could indicate that more cases are being handled by UK non-governmental organisations and not being referred to the FMU.

The following sections provide information on the cases that the FMU has dealt with by certain characteristics.

2.1 Sex

In 2015, 980 cases (80%) involved female victims and 240 (20%) involved male victims. This highlights that men can also be forced into marriage.

2.2 Age

Where the age was known, 14% of cases involved victims below 16 years of age, and 27% involved under-18s. The largest proportion of cases (35%) involved 18-25 year olds (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Number of cases the FMU gave advice or support to, by age, 2015

Age	Numbers	Percentages
1-15	174	14
16-17	155	13
18-21	247	20
22-25	180	15
26-30	105	9
31-40	73	6
41+	25	2
Unknown Adult	248	20
Unknown Minor	13	1
Total	1,220	100

1. Source: Forced Marriage Unit; Foreign and Commonwealth Office

2. A minor refers to any child under the age of 18.

2.3 UK region,

As in previous years, in 2015 the UK region with the greatest number of cases was London (263 cases, 22%>).

Table 2.2: Number of cases the FMU gave advice or support to, by region, 2015

UK region	Numbers	Percentages
East of England	80	7
East Midlands	47	4
London	263	22
North East	18	1
North West	122	10
Northern Ireland	<5	+
Scotland	22	2
South East	107	9
South West	35	3
West Midlands	165	14
Wales	25	2
Yorkshire and the Humber	109	9
Unknown	225	18
Total	1,220	100

1. Source: Forced Marriage Unit; Foreign and Commonwealth Office

2. '+' indicates percentage not given due to small number of cases

2.4 Focus country

The 'focus country' is the country to which the forced marriage risk relates. This could be the country where the forced marriage is due to take place, or the country that the spouse is currently residing in (or both). Since it was established in 2005, the FMU has dealt with cases concerning over 90 countries. In 2015, the FMU handled cases relating to 67 countries to which a victim was at risk of, or had already, been taken to in connection with a forced marriage (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Number of cases the FMU gave advice or support to, by focus country, 2015

Focus country	Numbers	Percentages
Pakistan	539	44
Bangladesh	89	7
India	75	6
Somalia	34	3
Afghanistan	21	2
Iraq	17	1
Sudan	15	1
Saudi Arabia	12	1
Egypt	9	1
Sri Lanka	9	1
Morocco	8	1
Romania	8	1
Kenya	7	1
Turkey	7	1
Iran	6	0
52 other countries	109	9
UK (domestic only)	175	14
Unknown	80	7
Total	1,220	100

1. Source: Forced Marriage Unit; Foreign and Commonwealth Office

2.5 Sexual orientation

In 2015, 29 cases (2%) involved victims who identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

FMU statistics are based on the information that is volunteered to the Unit at first contact; victims are not routinely asked to disclose their sexual orientation.

2.6 Disability

In 2015, 141 cases (12%) involved victims who had either a physical or learning disability. Of these 141 cases, the gender and age of victims as well as the focus country is shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Number of cases relating to people with disabilities the Forced Marriage Unit gave advice or support to, 2015

Focus country	Numbers	Percentages
Gender		
Female	54	38
Male	87	62
Age		
1-17	8	6
18-21	25	18
22-25	46	33
26-30	18	13
31-40	21	15
41+	11	8
Unknown Adult	12	9
Focus country		
Pakistan	83	59
Bangladesh	18	13
India	10	7
Other	10	7
UK (domestic only)	16	11
Unknown	4	3
Total number of cases involving those with a disability	141	100

1. Source: Forced Marriage Unit; Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Note: the FMU will continue to review the arrangements for producing this annual statistics release to ensure that it fully captures the range of cases handled by the Unit.