

# Integrated Impact Assessment – Summary Report

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Each of the numbered sections below must be completed  
Please state if the IIA is interim or final

## Final IIA

### 1. Title of proposal

Annual update of the City of Edinburgh Council's Forced Marriage Policy. The original policy was written in 2015 and reviewed for the first time in 2022. This is the second review of the Policy.

### 2. What will change as a result of this proposal?

The Forced Marriage Policy will be updated based on the adoption of the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the new National Guidance on Child Protection and updated academic research. New evidence has also been provided by specialist organisations and services supporting survivors and people at risk of forced marriage in Edinburgh.

### 3. Briefly describe public involvement in this proposal to date and planned

There was no direct involvement with the public in this process, however the review of the policy involved consulting with services and organisations directly supporting people affected by forced marriage.

### 4. Is the proposal considered strategic under the Fairer Scotland Duty?

Yes

### 5. Date of IIA: Tuesday 9 April 2024

### 6. Who was present at the IIA? Identify facilitator, lead officer, report writer and any employee representative present and main stakeholder (e.g. Council, NHS)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Date of IIA training</b>
Angela Voulgari (facilitator)	Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee Lead Officer, City of Edinburgh Council	18 May 2022
Claire Ryan-Heatley	Trauma Lead Officer, City of Edinburgh Council	
Kyle Stewart	DAIU, E Division, Police Scotland	
Trishna Singh	Director, Sikh Sanjog	
Girijamba Polubothu	CEO, Shakti Women's Aid	
Reese Lee	Project Worker, Bright Choices, Multicultural Family Base	
Angie Manske	Project Worker, Bright Choices, Multicultural Family Base	
Suzan Ross	Equality Diversity and Rights Advisor for Children's and Justice Services	
Jana Ridegova	Project Worker, Bright Choices, Multicultural Family Base	
Sara Gray	East of Scotland Area Manager, Victim Support Scotland	

## 7. Evidence available at the time of the IIA

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
Data on populations in need	<p><a href="#">Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2022</a> (latest)</p> <p><a href="#">World Population Review</a></p> <p><a href="#">Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: preventing and responding to</a></p>	<p>In 2022, out of all the cases dealt with by the Forced Marriage Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 78% involved female victims and 22% involved male victims</li> <li>- 26% of victims were aged 18-21; 30% were under the age of 17; 28% were aged 26-40; and 16% were over the age of 41.</li> <li>- 74% of victims were British (including dual) nationals</li> <li>- 49% of the cases focused on Pakistan, 14% on Bangladesh, 7% on India.</li> <li>- 21% of cases involved victims whose mental capacity to consent to marriage was in doubt. Of those, 52% were male and 48% were female.</li> </ul> <p>Unfortunately, there is no official data available on Forced Marriage that is specific to Edinburgh. However, extrapolating from data available through the FMU and the World Population review, similar communities are likely to be affected in Edinburgh. The largest BAME communities in Edinburgh are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese (1.7%)</li> <li>- Indian (1.4%)</li> <li>- Pakistani (1.2%)</li> <li>- Bangladeshi (0.3%)</li> </ul> <p>While 2.6% of the population follows Islam, the second largest religious group in the city.</p> <p>Younger women experience a higher risk of coercion into a marriage.</p>

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	<a href="#">forced Marriage – update 2014</a>	Self-harm and suicide rates due to forced marriage higher among South Asian Women
Data on service uptake/access	Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee Annual Report to COSLA and the Improvement Service	Specialist VAWG services in Edinburgh reported that 49 people sought support for forced marriage between 2022-2023. Of those: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 15 were under the age of 15</li> <li>- 15 were aged 16-25</li> <li>- 17 were over the age of 26 and</li> <li>- 2 were age not recorded.</li> </ul>
Data on socio-economic disadvantage e.g. low income, low wealth, material deprivation, area deprivation.	<a href="#">Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: preventing and responding to forced marriage – update 2014</a>	<p>Forced Marriage cuts across socio-economic categories and groups. Impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isolation</li> <li>- Pressure from multiple sources within family/community</li> <li>- Strain on family/community relationships</li> <li>- Depression, self-harm, increased risk of suicide</li> <li>- Impaired health, social development</li> <li>- Limited educational/ career opportunities</li> <li>- Financial dependence</li> <li>- Lifestyle restrictions</li> </ul> <p>Forced marriage frequently linked to other forms of VAWG: domestic abuse, rape, in-law abuse, daily violence and humiliation. Some women live under conditions of domestic slavery.</p> <p>Forced marriage has a detrimental effect on children (who are forced into a marriage or who are born to a forced marriage): repeated trauma leads to undermined capacity to meet daily life demands. Behaviour, mental health and educational performance are affected, with some being withdrawn from education.</p>



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	<p><a href="#">Forced Marriage in the UK: Religious, Cultural, Economic or State Violence? (2009)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Practitioner responses to children and young people involved in forced marriage</a></p> <p><a href="#">Understanding Forced Marriage Protection orders in the UK</a></p>	<p>marriage and presents example of good practice.</p> <p>Discusses forced marriage as defined in law in contrast to the understanding and experiences of victims/ survivors who also emphasis the importance of ability to exit a marriage. The study illustrates the interplay between culture, religion, poverty and state practices including immigration practices which points to the need for a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of forced marriage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective practice responses to FM require clearer national and local policy and guidance</li> <li>- Knowledgeable, confident and proactive staff enable good quality risk assessments and service responses</li> <li>- Practitioner training and development should include enhancing cultural competence and confidence when working with marginalised/BME families</li> <li>- FM is a nuanced, complex and diverse issue affected by high levels of vulnerability in children and young people.</li> </ul> <p>This article examines the use of Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs) in England and Wales to determine which framing narratives affect the outcomes of FMPO cases. The study makes a number of recommendations to ensure that FMPOs can function effectively, such as providing training for judges and legal personnel and offering greater witness support.</p>

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		<p>In England &amp; Wales, disclosures were first made to family and friends / partners who subsequently reached out to specialist support services (usually for women 18+). Most 16-17 year olds tended to report to school or health services. Direct report to specialist services was less common.</p> <p>Where FMPOs were considered, there were challenges in Police/Local Authorities obtaining consent from the person at risk. Often the FMPO was taken out without the person’s consent. Children often stayed in the family home or in foster care, with additional safeguarding and risk assessments, including an FMPO as a possible measure. Where the person at risk is already out of the UK, a family member/friend had to be in the UK to report the concern and obtain a FMPO but risks to them also needed to be assessed.</p> <p>Fear of the family’s reaction, concern about ‘burning the bridges’, worry that their parents would get arrested, concern about the shame this situation would bring upon the family, fear that the rest of the family would turn against them, a desire to return to the fold of the family, the pull of affective relationships with particular family members and the need to feel safe from the threat of a forced marriage were all factors which shaped the decision making of victims/survivors as they went through the process of disclosure, help-seeking and applying for an FMPO.</p> <p>While FMPOs played a central role in preventing a forced marriage and protecting the victims/ survivors from</p>

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		<p>the aftermath of a forced marriage that had already taken place, there were also a range of challenges associated with obtaining and managing the order. These issues were observed in the police case files in relation to the conditions attached to the order, the mandatory vs protective elements in the order and the decisions related to accepting an undertaking or issuing and serving an order. Obtaining an FMPO was the outcome of a long and often complex process. However, the experiences of victims/survivors indicate that obtaining an FMPO should be commonly perceived as the starting point for a renewed process of safeguarding rather than the culmination of the threat of forced marriage. FMPOs may manage, minimise, postpone or even end the threat of a forced marriage but they commonly led to a continuation of or sometimes even an escalation of retaliatory HBV for disclosing ‘private’ matters to ‘outsiders’ and ongoing emotional pressure. In several cases, the threat of forced marriage resumed after the expiry of the FMPOs. This was particularly the case when victims/survivors continued to live in the family home. These were also contexts where there was a withdrawal of support for any intervention and/or contradictory and changing statements to the police and other services. It was in the context of the complex constellation of coercive pressures and affective ties with family members that the vast majority of the victims/survivors did not support a criminal prosecution against their family. The existence of the prospect of criminal prosecution may offer the possibility of redress for those who wish to do</p>

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	<p data-bbox="555 824 794 1003"><a href="#">Early and Forced Marriages, Child Brides (Yagmur, 2023)</a></p> <p data-bbox="555 1518 786 1843"><a href="#">The Right to Leave: Dissolution of Child, Early and Forced Marriages and Unions (Ricker, Earn, Das &amp; Greene, 2023)</a></p>	<p data-bbox="825 380 1362 488">pursue this option, but safety was the most desired outcome for the vast majority.</p> <p data-bbox="825 528 1370 779">When a request for a FMPO reaches the court, retractions and changing statements need to be conceptualised as the norm, not as an exception. We also need to understand consent and coercion by examining the ‘total coercive burden’.</p> <p data-bbox="825 819 1382 1480">Child marriage is a global problem, affecting up to ten million girls every year. This means that a girl is forced to marry approximately every 3 seconds. This is a human rights violation. Key factors precipitating forced and child marriages are poverty, gender inequality, conflicts, disasters, emergencies and non-implementation of laws and protective measures. Chronic poverty can lead to the view that girls are an economic burden on the family. In many countries that have legislated against forced marriage, families may not even be aware that they are breaking the law by forcing a child to marry, while often, legal enforcement is inadequate.</p> <p data-bbox="825 1520 1388 2024">The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:  (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.  (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.  (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and</p>

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		<p>is entitled to protection by society and the State.</p> <p>The failure to include a right to leave marriage in international human rights instruments is made all the more glaring when recognizing that marriage itself can also for many be a violation of human rights. Marriage, as currently practiced and regulated contributes to and reinforces social, legal, and economic gender discrimination. The inequalities in marriage and family life reflect gender inequalities outside the home, which are reinforced by ideology, culture, and tradition. Women and girls are often viewed as family assets, to be traded, bought, or sold in marriage when it benefits other members of the family, regardless of the potential for harm to the woman or girl herself. In many cultures, women are not afforded full equal rights in a marriage; they lack equal rights to property brought into or acquired during a marriage, to their own earnings, or even to their own children. While women of all ages may face gendered power hierarchies in a marriage, the youngest women are least likely to possess decision-making power within the household, are more likely to face physical or emotional violence from their partners or families, more likely to experience forced or coerced sex or marital rape, and to be more isolated from their communities, families, and peers.</p> <p>As many as 90 countries still legally allow girls to marry before the age of 18; some have established minimum ages at marriage under 18, and others</p>

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		<p>include exceptions that allow for marriages to occur with parental or judicial consent. It should be the duty of the state and law enforcement, including the police, judiciary and prosecutors, to ensure that these unions, once discovered, are easily dissolved or invalidated, and to protect and integrate the children who have been subject to them back into their families and communities. Having children complicates a woman’s ability to leave a marriage at any age. Dowry and bride price systems create a poverty trap for young women looking to leave marriages. Customary and family laws generally require that bride prices or dowries be repaid as a condition of granting a marital dissolution. Women and girls who leave marriages are not only legally and economically vulnerable, but also face social rejection, discrimination, and violence. These social norms that support child marriage and exert pressure to stay in a marriage are invoked by family, community, and leaders who use culture and religion as fundamental rationales against which there is no argument to be made. Like many other social practices, CEFMU is still largely driven by social and gender norms that prioritize family honor and girls’ roles as mothers and homemakers above the individual aspirations and experiences of girls themselves.</p> <p>Economic empowerment and support are essential to make divorce or dissolution a possibility. the gender norms that push girls and sometimes boys into early marriage are the same as those that prevent them from taking steps</p>

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	<p><a href="#">Legal Dilemma on the Criminalisation of Forced Marriage (Lireza &amp;Bozheku, 2023)</a></p>	<p>toward divorce, even when dissolution would be best for them</p> <p>The European Union has addressed the problem of forced marriage both a form of human trafficking and as a manifestation of gender-based violence. Since forced marriage mainly affects vulnerable social groups, women and minors should be taken into primary consideration.</p> <p>Once married, in accordance with the procedures provided by the law, individuals enjoy the right to request the dissolution of marriage. Defining forced marriage as a criminal offense, provided for in a penal provision, means that it can be punished separately and, if elements of another criminal offense are present, punishments can be combined. Defining it legally as a separate crime shall have a deterrent effect.</p> <p>Supporters of such criminalization believe that providing for it as a criminal offense shall lead to a better recognition of the victims of this crime and would ensure the prosecution of responsible people.</p> <p>On the other hand, the opponents of criminalizing forced marriage are controversial. They consider it quite difficult ensuring sufficient evidence to meet the burden of proof required to prosecute a person in order to prove that marriage was entered into by force. Such criminalization would prevent victims of forced marriages from seeking assistance or enforcing civil reparations since their families would be prosecuted and/or because of the criminal</p>

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		<p>case failure. Criminalizing forced marriage may result in the victims being forced to enter into a forced marriage at a much younger age, in order to avoid the risk of criminal prosecution against their family members.</p> <p>In conclusion, although there is a clear obligation to criminalize forced marriages as a result of the Istanbul Convention, this does not necessarily mean that a separate criminal offense should be provided for. Forced marriages occur both against women and men, but the number of female victims is disproportionately higher, since it is estimated that around 85 per cent of victims of forced marriages are women and girls. The fact that a forced marriage mainly affects vulnerable social groups such as women and minors shall be taken into primary consideration, and, as a result, it can also be defined as violence against women and children. Individuals under the age of 18 may be forced to enter into a marriage without their free will in order to avoid criminal prosecution against their family members. They cannot denounce and bring to justice their parents for victimizing them even if they want to for they may be excluded from their tight communities.</p>
Public/patient/client experience information	<a href="#">Understanding Forced Marriage in Scotland</a>	Women described many missed opportunities when seeking out support (interviewees were living in England at the time, prior to 2011). Almost all the help received which was perceived as successful was from third sector women’s organisations, although there are also some positive examples of statutory service involvement. (p.46)

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	The City of Edinburgh Council	<p>Mixed reports were received of interactions with statutory services. Some survivors were not aware of any help at the time of their forced marriage as these were up to 20 years ago and support was minimal. (p. 47)</p> <p>Positive reports of NHS care following mental health crisis. However, there were some breaches of confidentiality when information was shared with victims'/ survivors' families. There are reports of varying success through engagement with statutory services.</p> <p>The Council funds services supporting women affected by domestic abuse as well as HBA and forced marriage. Statistical information is routinely collected on the Council's ECCO system. Quarterly reports include SU feedback. Contracts: outline the Council's complaint procedure and each service has to adhere to this procedure when a complaint is received.</p>
Evidence of inclusive engagement of people who use the service and involvement findings	The City of Edinburgh Council	<p>All services request feedback from people upon exiting the service. This is available to view by the Council, although this is not information collected or held by the Council.</p> <p>All contracts are competitively tendered and this includes co-production with service users and stakeholders. The frequency of this exercise depends on the length of each individual contract.</p> <p>ESEC will link in with new 'Authentic Voice: Embedding Lived Experience in Scotland' project by SafeLives, Improvement Service and Resilience Learning Partnership (launching 3</p>

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		March 2022) to further improve in this area.
Evidence of unmet need	<p data-bbox="555 495 738 600"><a href="#">Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee</a></p> <p data-bbox="555 640 703 745">City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p data-bbox="555 1850 798 1955"><a href="#">Understanding Forced Marriage in Scotland</a></p>	<p data-bbox="825 495 1358 600">The key agencies supporting victims/ survivors and people at risk of forced marriage are members of ESEC.</p> <p data-bbox="825 640 1358 786">The City of Edinburgh Council Funds VAWG services who support victims/ survivors and people at risk of forced marriage.</p> <p data-bbox="825 826 1369 1149">Although the services commissioned by the Council provide support to women and children, there is only one service available to support men. Additionally, although women and children affected by Forced Marriage can access specialist refuge accommodation, this is not something currently available to men.</p> <p data-bbox="825 1189 1374 1368">Forced marriage is included in inter-agency training sessions on Child Protection (levels 2, 3 and 4), Adult Protection, as well as in the new Level 1 Public Protection training.</p> <p data-bbox="825 1408 1390 1626">Specialist awareness-raising training is provided by Shakti Women’s Aid on domestic abuse and BAME women, children and young people; this training also covers forced marriage and other forms of HBA.</p> <p data-bbox="825 1666 1390 1812">Specialist inter-agency training is provided by Sacro twice a year on HBA and forced marriage and twice a year on FGM.</p> <p data-bbox="825 1852 1366 1998">A number of victims/ survivors of forced marriage do not have recourse to public funds (NRPF). This affects their ability to seek support and to</p>

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	<a href="#">Unequal, Unheard, Unjust: But not Hidden Anymore: Women with Learning Disabilities' experience of gender-based violence in Scotland.</a>	<p>access services like health, housing, education and benefits.</p> <p>Women with learning disabilities faced additional barriers to accessing support for forced marriage, especially around navigating the legal system and accessing justice. Service providers stated that current legislative and policy measures do not appear to be effective for women with learning disabilities. Many women with learning disabilities feared disclosing experiences of GBV for fear of being placed on the Adult Support and Protection and/or Child Protection Register.</p>
Good practice guidelines	<a href="#">Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines (2014)</a>	<p>There is general consensus that although the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines provide good practice examples and guidance on how to respond to (the risk of) forced marriage, this document is now in need of review. The review has been delayed due to Covid 19 but the intention to review the document has been alluded to by statutory partners nationally. The 2014 update of the guidance highlights the following elements for good practice:</p> <p>All practitioners need to remember the 'one chance' rule. That is, you may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim and, therefore, only one chance to save a life. This means that all practitioners need to be aware of their responsibilities to possible victims of forced marriage. If the victim leaves without you offering support, that one chance might be wasted.</p> <p>Victims of forced marriage are often entrapped by the abusive behaviour</p>

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		<p>and actions of perpetrators - literally, and because of fear and threats. This is all the more intense because of the weight of cultural expectations, the woman's own cultural beliefs, fear of bringing dishonour to the family, along with social ostracism, harassment and actual violence. This makes it very difficult for victims to come forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start from the position of accepting what women say to you</li> <li>• Do everything you can to keep women safe</li> <li>• Get advice if you are not sure what to do</li> <li>• Ensure an independent translator is available if necessary</li> <li>• Be aware a woman might not be allowed or willing to speak to a male worker alone</li> </ul> <p>It is a huge step for women to take action or follow through as there is so much at stake. Your role is to explain options clearly, help her plan for safety and reassure her that she can come back to you at any time.</p> <p>Many victims of forced marriage do not fit within adult support and protection or child protection criteria. A victim may be at risk as a result of forced marriage and domestic abuse but not meet the particular criteria defined by legislation. It is important to make sure that any victim, whatever their age or circumstances, who is in or at risk of a forced marriage, is supported through effective multi-agency working, and that you take action to ensure her safety.</p>

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	<a href="#">Understanding Protection and Prevention Responses to Forced Marriage in England and Wales (Sundari &amp; Gill, 2023)</a>	<p><b>General recommendations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop training to enable professionals to better recognise the nature and forms of coercion, including indirect forms of coercion.</li> <li>2. Provide regular research-informed training to help practitioners understand any changes in the forms of coercion, such as institutional incarceration.</li> <li>3. Develop protocols for taking statements to develop trust with victims/survivors and obtain relevant information for effective safeguarding and prosecution measures.</li> <li>4. Clearly justify any decision to obtain an undertaking rather than an FMPO, in light of the lower threshold of protection this measure offers.</li> <li>5. Offer safeguarding training on forced marriage risk management, multi-agency protocols, and inter-agency collaboration and collaborative case management.</li> <li>6. Develop strong relationships with ‘by and for’ domestic violence services, which have specialist knowledge of forced marriage and the skills to meet the needs of its victims/survivors.</li> <li>7. Strengthen professionals’ understanding of the complex contexts shaping victim retraction, thus enabling delivery of effective protection and prevention responses to forced marriage.</li> <li>8. Respond to dual victim needs of protection and prosecution.</li> <li>9. Develop protocols to effectively manage victim risk when obtaining and serving FMPOs and thereafter.</li> </ol>

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		<p>10. Develop mechanisms to flag up the expiry of an FMPO.</p> <p>11. Improve data recording practices currently in place within the criminal justice system, such as recording age, gender and ethnicity for forced marriage victims.</p> <p>12. Improve support from all relevant professionals (i.e., services, police, etc.) for vulnerable witnesses.</p> <p><b><i>Recommendations on risk assessment and information sharing among agencies</i></b></p> <p>1. Forced marriage cases cannot be dealt with uniformly—rather, they must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. This means that cases must be reported across multiple agencies, allowing staff to exercise their professional judgement about the presence of a significant risk of harm and appropriate safeguarding responses.</p> <p>2. Recognising that domestic violence, forced marriage, HBV and child abuse in the context of family violence frequently co-exist, together with recognising the harmful effects of exposure to such intersecting forms of family violence on children, requires an urgent need for improved collaboration between statutory safeguarding services and specialist VAWG services.</p> <p><b><i>Recommendations for criminal justice agencies</i></b></p> <p>1. Police and legal professionals must gather evidence with the dual aims of both protecting the</p>

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		<p>victim via an FMPO and imposing criminal justice sanctions on the perpetrator(s), as victim protection is a crucial aspect of policing—and from the perspective of victims/survivors, it may often be the key aim of reporting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Criminal justice professionals must continue to consider victim preferences, the evidence available, the prospect of conviction and the public interest when deciding whether to prosecute. However, they should also be prepared to respond accordingly, even if the victim preferences change quite late in the process.</li> <li>3. There is a need to monitor reasons on the part of CJS professionals behind decisions not to prosecute so that any differences in attrition rates can be analysed to determine if these rates vary depending on the type of VAWG perpetrated.</li> <li>4. Criminal justice professionals must be apprised of the health consequences of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and HBV. This knowledge must be passed on to relevant services and is critical to recognising the impact of trauma when gathering statements.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>Recommendations for health services</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invest in follow-up services for vulnerable adults (e.g., intergenerational trauma, PTSD counselling).</li> <li>2. Understand the effects of violence in the context of complex and multiple traumas that have long-</li> </ol>

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		<p>lasting emotional and psychological consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and substance misuse, and offering the appropriate advocacy, support and referral to health services in light of this knowledge.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Professionals must probe for abuse, including forced marriage, when a young person presents with mental health issues.</li> <li>4. Safety planning should address both internal and external circumstances—for example, the state of a victim’s mental health and the psychological burden of the coercion. Holistic responses, such as body therapy and group work, should be provided to address the effects of trauma on the body.</li> <li>5. The needs of gendered violence survivors are best met via services that are survivor-centred, gender-specific and trauma-informed and that give victims decision-making autonomy. A trauma-informed perspective means practitioners are alert to the power dynamics of the nexus between forced marriage and family abuse in a particular relationship and context, the impact this has on victims and those victims may have coped with it.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>Recommendations for 'by and for' domestic violence services</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that victims who have disclosed forced marriage can make informed decisions about reporting this form of abuse to the police and that they receive ongoing specialist support to</li> </ol>

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		<p>improve their experience of disclosure and help-seeking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Offer independent support through qualified and specialist case workers. This is critical to improving survivors’ awareness of their rights and options, increasing their confidence in the criminal justice system and criminal justice processes (including the role of statutory agencies), improving their immediate and long-term safety, and ensuring that they are given the means to access all the support they require.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>Recommendations for domestic violence, children and adult social services teams and teachers</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise awareness of the dynamics of forced marriage and effects of this violence.</li> <li>2. Identify and remove barriers to forced marriage–specific service provision, including lack of funding; lack of training and awareness by service providers; lack of appropriate support to meet the needs of young people experiencing coercive control in relation to forced marriage.</li> <li>3. Offer training about accessing appropriate resources for victims.</li> <li>4. Implement more robust investigation of older siblings’ previous forced marriage experiences and whether an FMPO was secured in these instances, given the clear patterns of repeat victimisation and low reporting rates</li> </ol> <p>Improve practitioner vigilance, particularly over the coming two years, to enable disclosures of forced marriage and to support victims</p>

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		(especially those who were aged 16-18 during the pandemic) who have been deprived of their usual routes to disclosure and help-seeking through their schools.
Carbon emissions generated/reduced data	Not applicable	
Environmental data	Not applicable	
Risk from cumulative impacts	Not applicable	
Other (please specify)	Not applicable	
Additional evidence required	Not applicable	

**8. In summary, what impacts were identified and which groups will they affect?**

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p><u>Eliminating discrimination and harassment</u></p> <p>This policy helps to raise awareness of the intersectionality of characteristics that can increase vulnerability to forced marriage. It is particularly helpful to see the inclusion of LGBT+ people, including how ‘honour’ can impact them regardless of background; and asylum seekers and refugees who might require support in a different language or from specialist services, and who might request asylum due to ‘honour’ abuse or LGBT+ identity.</p> <p>It further highlights that preventing, identifying and responding to forced marriage is everyone’s responsibility, including links to discrimination and harassment as part of the grooming process ahead of a forced marriage. This helps to move away from the ‘normalisation’ of this practice and raising it as an issue for everyone’s attention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women (including trans women)</li> <li>• Men (including trans men)</li> <li>• Non-binary people</li> <li>• Children and young people</li> <li>• People in their middle and older years</li> <li>• People from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Gypsy/</li> </ul>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>It emphasises the importance of safeguarding, including contextual safeguarding for children, young people and adults vulnerable to forced marriage. This includes their support needs prior to entering the marriage, as well as in the process of leaving. Preventing Forced Marriage is equal to preventing domestic abuse, rape and often, domestic servitude and human trafficking. Lastly, it explains the role of the business community as key in preventing/reporting forced marriage, but also as complicit in the commission of this crime.</p> <p><u>Advancing equality of opportunity (eg. Improving access/quality of services/digital access)</u></p> <p>This policy highlights the protected characteristics that can increase people’s vulnerability to forced marriage, and how these can intersect. It raises awareness of the challenges people face when trying to avoid/escape a forced marriage, and highlights the complex support needs they present with. These needs and barriers include grooming, potential human trafficking, intergenerational trauma, no recourse to public funds, homelessness, poverty, immigration and physical and mental health.</p> <p>These needs are going to overlap but also differ based on the backgrounds of different communities, their location and their awareness of, and ability to access services. To respond to these needs, the policy highlights that forced marriage is everyone’s responsibility – preventing it equates to preventing domestic abuse, rape and domestic servitude. Poverty can also impact entry into, or escaping a forced marriage and this needs to be considered in any intervention offered. Safeguarding and particularly contextual safeguarding is crucial, especially for children and young people; this includes people who are in care, or who have a care experienced background.</p> <p><u>Foster good relations within and between people who share protected characteristics</u></p> <p>The policy raises awareness of the support needs of survivors and people at risk, including their safety, wellbeing, practical and mental health needs. It supports the building of positive relationships between</p>	<p>Travellers, migrant workers, BAME people, non-English speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• People with disabilities, long term conditions and mental health problems</li> <li>• People with different religions/ beliefs</li> <li>• Unmarried/married people and people in civil partnerships (including people who have been married religiously but not civilly)</li> <li>• Care experienced children and young people</li> <li>• People at risk of/who have experienced human trafficking/ modern slavery</li> <li>• People at risk of falling into poverty</li> <li>• People from backgrounds with high level of material deprivation (in the UK or overseas)</li> <li>• People with No Recourse to Public Funds</li> </ul>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>people affected by forced marriage and a range of services, and highlights how those can provide support when needed. It further emphasises the importance of culturally competent and sensitive interventions.</p> <p><u>Enable people to have more control of their social/work environment</u></p> <p>Escaping a forced marriage is a long and difficult journey; however, when the right support is offered at the right time, this can help people to develop independence skills, to overcome barriers around immigration, unemployment and homelessness and to start to take control over their lives and their opportunities.</p> <p>Contextual safeguarding and support means that people can be kept safer and have the right support structures around them to stay safe and to recover from trauma. Forced marriage entails cultural and domestic abuse, often religious/faith-based abuse, sexual abuse, and potentially child abuse, human trafficking and domestic servitude. Accurate understanding, identification, prevention and support can help people to stay safe and in better control of their lives.</p> <p><u>Reduce differences in status between different groups of people</u></p> <p>Forced marriage also involves some level of abuse of power and/or exploitation. The policy highlights how grooming, abuse and violence is part of the process of forcing someone into a marriage and also a potential aftermath of escaping.</p> <p>By offering the right support at the right time, people can be kept safe and feel more empowered in their independence, thus redressing to some degree the power imbalance that rendered them vulnerable to forced marriage.</p> <p>Many people affected by forced marriage embody a range of protected characteristics and the policy has gone to great detail to explain and analyse those vulnerabilities and how to respond.</p> <p><u>Promote participation, inclusion, dignity and control over decisions</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people in care</li> <li>• Care experienced people</li> <li>• People experiencing/ at risk of homelessness</li> <li>• Students and international students</li> <li>• People experiencing challenges with substance use</li> <li>• Urban Communities</li> <li>• Rural and semi-rural communities</li> <li>• Coastal community</li> <li>• Business community</li> <li>• People in full/part-time/ shift-based employment</li> <li>• Staff with protected characteristics</li> <li>• Carers</li> </ul>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>The policy highlights the range of characteristics and vulnerabilities that might increase susceptibility to forced marriage and other forms of abuse. Supporting people to build their confidence, mental health, decision-making and life skills helps to increase their independence and recover from trauma. It also renders them less vulnerable to abuse, harassment and grooming from their family/community or extended family. By highlighting forced marriage as everyone's responsibility to identify and respond, people can feel more included in services, more confident in asking and receiving support and more in control of their options and choices.</p> <p><u>Build family support networks, resilience and community capacity</u></p> <p>Raising awareness of the internal and external challenges people face when seeking to escape a forced marriage (family/community/social pressures, abuse, ostracism, immigration, recourse to public funds, housing, education, etc.) will highlight the complexity of the issues and increase people's and professionals' understanding of survivors' support needs.</p> <p>It highlights the role families and communities have to play in perpetuating forced marriage but also the role wider society and services can play in preventing it and in supporting and protecting survivors.</p> <p><u>Reduce crime and fear of crime including hate crime</u></p> <p>This policy highlights the importance of contextual safeguarding against a crime for which perpetrators are usually family and community members. By emphasising that prevention is everyone's responsibility, it encourages crime prevention – including crimes like grooming, harassment, stalking, domestic, physical, sexual abuse and grooming. Preventing a forced marriage is equal to preventing domestic abuse, rape and often, domestic servitude.</p> <p><u>Protect vulnerable children and adults</u></p> <p>The policy highlights the multitude of challenges people face when seeking to escape a forced marriage. These include family/community/social pressures, abuse,</p>	

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>ostracism, immigration, recourse to public funds, housing, education, poverty, grooming and risk of human trafficking. It emphasises the importance of safeguarding, particularly safeguarding children and young people, and including contextual safeguarding.</p> <p>By publicising this policy, it is hoped that professionals will become more aware of the factors that increase people’s vulnerability to forced marriage, and better equipped in responding and providing the necessary support to survivors. This includes support to prevent a forced marriage (which entails domestic abuse and sexual violence) and understanding the wider forces at play when there is risk of forced marriage.</p> <p>The policy further highlights forced marriage as an issue for people with a number characteristics, including people of different age groups, sexual orientations, genders, faiths, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, and who might have differential access to, and awareness of, services (for example, rural and semi-rural communities).</p> <p><u>Promote healthier lifestyles (including diet and nutrition, sexual health, difficulties with substance use, physical activity, life skills, wellbeing and mental health)</u></p> <p>The policy highlights the multitude of barriers and complex support needs people affected by forced marriage experience. By raising awareness of this, services will be able to better respond to the needs of survivors in preventing or escaping a forced marriage.</p> <p>Through improving professionals’ understanding of forced marriage, they can provide better support to people at risk of, or escaping a forced marriage. This can include physical and mental health needs, life and decision-making skills, poverty and deprivation, safeguarding, literacy, numeracy, and English language skills.</p> <p>The need for trauma support is particularly prevalent, and those affected by forced marriage will require mental health services, as will likely their children.</p> <p>Preventing a forced marriage can give people more control, and children and young people especially can prolong their time in education, thus improving their independence, career options and life skills.</p>	

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p><u>Eliminating discrimination and harassment</u></p> <p>The policy highlights that seeking support can trigger or increase harassment and abuse from the family or community, the spouse or the spouse’s family. Although mediation might be requested, the policy highlights the risks around this and actively discourages its consideration. Seeking support outside of the family is likely to increase/escalate the risk of abuse, harassment, grooming or other forms of ‘honour’ abuse, and lead to a rupture in family/community support or relationships.</p> <p>At times, addressing/raising awareness of forced marriage can lead to ostracism from the family/community and loss of support networks and structures. Care experienced young people in particular, can still be vulnerable to community and extended family pressure to marry or to stay in a marriage.</p> <p><u>Advancing equality of opportunity (eg. Improving access/quality of services/digital access)</u></p> <p>There are ongoing challenges for people at risk of/affected by forced marriage to access services. Often, services are seen as ‘interfering’ with cultural practices and might have been ‘demonised’ so that people who need them the most might actively avoid them. This makes it extremely challenging to provide support. On the other hand, when awareness is raised within a family or community, homogeneity of culture/ethnicity/religion, etc. does not guarantee success either, as people can be termed ‘troublemakers’ or ‘shameful’ for discouraging long-standing traditional practices.</p> <p>Escaping a forced marriage can have devastating consequences- (young) people might experience abuse or ostracism from their families and communities; they may experience poverty, homelessness and deprivation; migrants might be at risk of deportation; while many might find themselves de-skilled and unprepared for independent living. Leaving a forced marriage and seeking support is a long and arduous journey with strong potential for retraumatisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women (including trans women)</li> <li>• Men (including trans men)</li> <li>• Non-binary people</li> <li>• Children and young people</li> <li>• People in their middle and older years</li> <li>• People from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Gypsy/ Travellers, migrant workers, BAME people, non-English speakers</li> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• People with disabilities, long term conditions and mental health problems</li> <li>• People with different religions/ beliefs</li> <li>• Unmarried/married people and people in civil partnerships (including people who have been married religiously but not civilly)</li> </ul>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>There are limited specialist support services, while universal services often struggle to provide the intensive support survivors require to recover from their experience. There continues to be a lack of understanding or knowledge about forced marriage in many agencies, including how to inquire, respond to disclosures or provide support regarding forced marriage. Leaving a forced marriage means that someone with a disability might lose their long-term carer; while some victims have no property, bank accounts, recourse to public funds or state benefits in their name. Many victims have had their official documents removed. There is also a lack of data as to how many people are affected by homelessness after escaping forced marriage, and no service provision for children aged 16-17 to live independently. These risks often make people reluctant to seek support.</p> <p>Rural and semi-rural communities are facing challenges in terms of service availability and the requirement to travel in order to access support. There is also often a lack of awareness that forced marriage is illegal, that there are support services available and that they can access them.</p> <p><u>Foster good relations within and between people who share protected characteristics</u></p> <p>Seeking support can trigger or increase harassment and abuse from the family, community, spouse or their family, and lead to a rupture in family/community support or relationships.</p> <p>Fostering good relations between services and people/communities at risk of forced marriage can be challenging as services can be seen as interfering or being 'racist'. When awareness is raised within a family or community, homogeneity of culture/ethnicity/religion, etc. does not guarantee success, as it can lead to ostracism from the family/community and loss of support networks and structures.</p> <p><u>Enable people to have more control of their social/work environment</u></p> <p>Escaping or leaving a forced marriage can damage family and community relationships and leave people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care experienced children and young people</li> <li>• People at risk of/who have experienced human trafficking/modern slavery</li> <li>• People at risk of falling into poverty</li> <li>• People from backgrounds with high level of material deprivation (in the UK or overseas)</li> <li>• People with No Recourse to Public Funds</li> <li>• Children and young people in care</li> <li>• Care experienced people</li> <li>• People experiencing/at risk of homelessness</li> <li>• Students and international students</li> <li>• People experiencing challenges with substance use</li> <li>• Urban Communities</li> <li>• Rural and semi-rural communities</li> <li>• Coastal community</li> <li>• Business community</li> </ul>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>vulnerable to further abuse and exploitation. People can be left destitute and homeless, with a number of women disappearing, or turning to alcohol, drugs or selling sex to survive. There is high risk of re-traumatisation and a lack of mental health services with the availability or expertise to respond to this need.</p> <p>Awareness of forced marriage is not as widespread as it should be and there is a need for raising awareness of this policy to enable services to respond appropriately to the needs of people affected. Both entering and leaving a forced marriage can have detrimental impacts on physical and mental health and overall social wellbeing. Many people are not well-equipped for independent living, while in many cultures forced marriage and human trafficking are accepted and normalised to a certain degree.</p> <p>Escaping a forced marriage can often mean losing the only support structures people are familiar with and this makes them reluctant to reach out to services. Destitution and poverty are often sadly the outcome of a forced marriage, as well as the motivation behind a forced marriage. Care experienced young people in particular, can still be vulnerable to community and extended family pressure to marry or to stay in a marriage.</p> <p>When people from deprived backgrounds are forced into a marriage, sometimes this is their way out of extreme poverty. As a result they sometimes feel lucky to have material goods they would not otherwise have, and this makes them reluctant to leave, report or seek support. Younger women might face additional barriers to leaving a forced marriage as they often find themselves without official documentation proving their identity and/or immigration status – and consequently their entitlement to housing or public funds.</p> <p><u>Reduce differences in status between different groups of people</u></p> <p>There is a question whether fostering of good relations is achievable when raising awareness/ enquiring/ responding to forced marriage. If this is done by professionals, sometimes there can be animosity or it can be perceived as interference. When it is done within a family or community, homogeneity of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People in full/part-time/ shift-based employment</li> <li>• Staff with protected characteristics</li> <li>• Carers</li> </ul>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>culture/ethnicity/religion, etc. does not guarantee success, as addressing/raising awareness of forced marriage can lead to ostracism from the family/community and loss of support networks and structures.</p> <p>Older people and people with disabilities and long-term conditions are less likely to seek support to escape a forced marriage as they may rely on their spouse for support and care. However, both they and possibly their spouse need to be recognised as victims of forced marriage in those circumstances. Care experienced young people in particular, can still be vulnerable to community and extended family pressure to marry or to stay in a marriage.</p> <p><u>Promote participation, inclusion, dignity and control over decisions</u></p> <p>Supporting people to escape/prevent a forced marriage can lead to further victimisation and abuse from their family and community, thus limiting their capacity to be included and exert control over their lives and decisions.</p> <p>Leaving a forced marriage is a long journey which can be strongly retraumatising. People can be faced with the risk of destitution, homelessness, poverty and/or deportation. There are limited services available to provide the specialist long-term support required, which means that recovery can take a very long time for survivors.</p> <p>Due to the grooming that takes place ahead of a forced marriage, people are often left without the necessary decision-making and life skills required to make independent decisions and to exert control over their lives. This is a direct result of the trauma involved in the forced marriage process.</p> <p>For many people and women who want to escape a forced marriage, they risk destitution as often, state benefits and any property is in the spouse's name. This leaves victims with no property or income in their name.</p> <p>Older people and people with disabilities and long-term conditions are less likely to seek support to escape a forced marriage as they may rely on their spouse for support and care. However, both they and possibly</p>	

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>their spouse need to be recognised as victims of forced marriage in those circumstances. Care experienced young people in particular, can still be vulnerable to community and extended family pressure to marry or to stay in a marriage.</p> <p><u>Build family support networks, resilience and community capacity</u></p> <p>Seeking support can trigger or increase harassment and abuse from the family, community, spouse or their family. When awareness is raised within communities by external (particularly statutory agencies) sometimes there can be animosity or it can be perceived as interference. When it is done within a family or community, homogeneity of culture/ethnicity/religion, etc. does not guarantee success. At times, addressing/raising awareness of forced marriage can lead to ostracism from the family/community and loss of support networks and structures.</p> <p>The community can also act as a risk against children in care and care experienced people, as they may still continue to exert pressure to enter or stay in a forced marriage even outside the family environment.</p> <p><u>Reduce crime and fear of crime including hate crime</u></p> <p>Seeking support can trigger or increase harassment and abuse from the family, community, spouse or their family. It can also leave people struggling to look after themselves as the grooming process might have left them without life skills or decision-making skills. This renders them vulnerable to further exploitations such as human trafficking which are also 'normalised' in some cultures. Women have been reported to resort to drugs, alcohol and selling sex due to the trauma of escaping a forced marriage.</p> <p>Some industries/businesses (particularly the care industry) is staffed more prevalently by people from communities that are more likely to be affected by forced marriage. Greater awareness needs to be raised within those industries to respond to the needs of people from those communities.</p>	

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p><u>Protect vulnerable children and adults</u></p> <p>Professionals working with children and vulnerable adults need to be aware of the intergenerational nature of forced marriage and how to ensure that their intervention is not increasing the risk to vulnerable people which can often be the case. Seeking support outside of the family/community can lead to a rupture in family/community support or relationships and escalate the risk of different forms of abuse.</p> <p>Sometimes, in providing the right support to victims and survivors there can be unintended consequences such as an escalation in violence, abuse, harassment, ostracism, disappearance, deportation, self-harm, suicide or disappearance. The trauma can push people towards using substances and render them vulnerable to other forms of exploitation.</p> <p>The grooming process before a forced marriage can be extremely subtle and difficult to identify, as it is part of the 'cultural conditioning' of many people. However, people are often de-skilled as part of the process, and left struggling to cope with the demands of independent living, and vulnerable to external influences, abuse and exploitation.</p> <p>When people from deprived backgrounds are forced into a marriage, sometimes this is their way out of extreme poverty. As a result they sometimes feel lucky to have material goods they would not otherwise have, and this makes them reluctant to leave, report or seek support. Other people see entering a marriage they do not want as 'paying back their debt to their parents/family/community, or they may not know they have the right to say no or to leave a forced marriage.</p> <p><u>Promote healthier lifestyles (including diet and nutrition, sexual health, difficulties with substance use, physical activity, life skills, wellbeing and mental health)</u></p> <p>Leaving a forced marriage and seeking support is a long and arduous journey with strong potential for re-traumatisation. There are limited specialist support services, while universal services often struggle to provide the intensive support survivors require to recover from their experience and to develop the skills necessary to rebuild their lives.</p>	

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>There continues to be a lack of understanding or knowledge about forced marriage in many agencies, including how to inquire, respond to disclosures or provide support regarding forced marriage. Both entering and leaving a forced marriage can have detrimental impacts on mental health, particularly as a result of trauma. Sometimes, when people have the option to escape a forced marriage, they disappear. No longer in contact with family, friends or services and this is extremely concerning as this can be the most vulnerable time when they can be at risk of a range of forms of exploitation. There is no knowledge/ estimation of how many people this has happened to but it is ongoing.</p> <p>After leaving a forced marriage, many people, especially women, turn to selling sex or using substances in order to cope. As a result it then becomes impossible for services to be able to offer support. Care experienced young people in particular, can still be vulnerable to community and extended family pressure to marry or to stay in a marriage.</p>	

Environment and Sustainability including climate change emissions and impacts	Affected populations
<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>

Economic	Affected populations
<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p><u>Eliminating discrimination and harassment</u></p> <p>People who are employed have a wider social environment and therefore more sources of support and opportunities for safeguarding. Their place of employment can also offer resources and support to keep them safe from harm and put measures in place to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women (including trans women)</li> <li>• Men (including trans men)</li> <li>• Non-binary people</li> </ul>

Economic	Affected populations
<p>prevent harassment and abuse, including liaising with Police.</p> <p><u>Advancing equality of opportunity (eg. Improving access/quality of services/digital access)</u></p> <p>The policy highlights ways to identify and respond to the risk of forced marriage while a child/young person is in education. By responding to these needs early, young people can prolong their time in education or training, thus advancing their future opportunities and outcomes.</p> <p>Similarly, supporting adults to avoid/escape a forced marriage also involves assisting them with their mental health, education, training and other needs to support them to improve their future prospects.</p> <p><u>Foster good relations within and between people who share protected characteristics</u></p> <p>Preventing or escaping forced marriage involves support being provided to people at risk or to people affected by forced marriage – either from within the family/community or by universal services and specialist support services. This helps to break down barriers between people with different protected characteristics and can encourage people to enter the job market in professions they would otherwise not have considered.</p> <p><u>Enable people to have more control of their social/work environment</u></p> <p>Supporting people to stay in education/employment means that they have a greater likelihood of being more independent and to have more agency in their lives. By preventing/escaping a forced marriage, people of all ages can receive the support necessary to help them to access education and employment opportunities and to make free and informed decisions and choices.</p> <p>By preventing/escaping a forced marriage, people can access resources to help them to stay safe and to safeguard those around them. They can also choose a career path to help them to live independently and safely while being financially independent and contributing to the economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people</li> <li>• People in their middle and older years</li> <li>• People from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Gypsy/ Travellers, migrant workers, BAME people, non-English speakers</li> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• People with disabilities, long term conditions and mental health problems</li> <li>• People with different religions/ beliefs</li> <li>• Unmarried/married people and people in civil partnerships (including people who have been married religiously but not civilly)</li> <li>• Care experienced children and young people</li> <li>• People at risk of/who have experienced human trafficking/ modern slavery</li> <li>• People at risk of falling into poverty</li> </ul>

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
<p><u>Reduce differences in status between different groups of people</u></p> <p>The policy highlights that there are always power imbalances when people are at risk of or experiencing forced marriage. With the right support to escape a forced marriage and access employment, people can become more empowered and able to safeguard themselves while also contributing economically to their own families, communities and society. This will likely reduce differences in status and thus reduce the risk of further victimisation.</p> <p><u>Promote participation, inclusion, dignity and control over decisions</u></p> <p>By escaping a forced marriage, people are supported to develop the skills they need to access employment and education. In turn, this means that they are able to develop skills they may not otherwise have had, including literacy, numeracy, and English language competence, where this is needed. This enables them to join the job market and contribute socially, economically, culturally and politically.</p> <p><u>Build family support networks, resilience and community capacity</u></p> <p>The policy highlights the importance of preventing children and young people from leaving education to enter a forced marriage, and supporting adults to develop the skills required for independent living. This will likely involve entering the job market and earning an independent living. As a result, people will be more able to support their own families and contribute financially to their family and community.</p> <p><u>Reduce crime and fear of crime including hate crime</u></p> <p>The policy emphasises the types of support people require to escape a forced marriage, many of which involve the development of independent living skills, including the capacity to enter employment. By entering employment, having an income and living independently, people are less likely to be vulnerable to criminal exploitation or to become involved in the use of drugs or in commercial sexual exploitation in order to survive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People from backgrounds with high level of material deprivation (in the UK or overseas)</li> <li>• People with No Recourse to Public Funds</li> <li>• Children and young people in care</li> <li>• Care experienced people</li> <li>• People experiencing/ at risk of homelessness</li> <li>• Students and international students</li> <li>• People experiencing challenges with substance use</li> <li>• Urban Communities</li> <li>• Rural and semi-rural communities</li> <li>• Coastal community</li> <li>• Business community</li> <li>• People in full/part-time/ shift-based employment</li> <li>• Staff with protected characteristics</li> <li>• Carers</li> </ul>

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
<p><u>Protect vulnerable children and adults</u></p> <p>The policy explains how professionals can safeguard people at all stages of life to escape being forced into a marriage. The support required is holistic, including developing skills and competencies to live independently and support oneself and one's family. People who are economically independent are better able to safeguard themselves and to access resources to support them to stay safe and to keep their loved ones safe from forced marriage. By accessing employment, people also have additional sources of safeguarding and support when needed, as well as contributing economically to their family, community and society at large. They are also more likely to encourage others in their family and community to develop similar employability skills.</p> <p><u>Promote healthier lifestyles (including diet and nutrition, sexual health, difficulties with substance use, physical activity, life skills, wellbeing and mental health)</u></p> <p>The policy highlights the need for services to support people at risk of or experiencing forced marriage to develop the skills they need to live independently and to access education and employment. In this way they can be financially independent, exercise agency and make healthier decisions about their own and their families' lifestyles. Poverty can be both a motive behind a forced marriage as well as the outcome. By supporting people to be better informed about their options and choices, about how to stay safe and well and being independent, they can access more resources to support them to adopt healthier lifestyles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are employed (full time, part time or shift work)</li> <li>• People who are unemployed</li> <li>• The business community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p><u>Eliminating discrimination and harassment and advancing equality of opportunity (eg. Improving access/quality of services/digital access)</u></p> <p>The policy offers valuable guidance on supporting people experiencing forced marriage to become economically independent and to access opportunities for training and education. This can be a cause for further harassment within communities affected by forced marriage as, particularly for women, financial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women (including trans women)</li> <li>• Men (including trans men)</li> <li>• Non-binary people</li> <li>• Children and young people</li> </ul>

Economic	Affected populations
<p>independence is seen as a 'western' trait that goes against traditional values and gender roles. As a result this can give rise to abuse, harassment and ostracism.</p> <p><u>Foster good relations within and between people who share protected characteristics</u></p> <p>Women and girls who escape a forced marriage and work towards economic independence might also experience further harassment or abuse by their family or community as this might be considered 'contrary' to traditional gender roles expecting women to be homemakers and dependent on their husbands.</p> <p><u>Enable people to have more control of their social/work environment</u></p> <p>Some people who are supported to escape/prevent a forced marriage might struggle to become economically independent. Many leave a forced marriage without any income, as any benefits, property or income from employment may go directly to their spouse or their family. Others might experience such high levels of trauma that it may not be able to enter education or employment for a very long time or ever.</p> <p>People who were forced into a marriage because of a disability or long-term condition might not be able to work and in escaping a forced marriage, might have lost care provided by their family or spouse. As a result, they may feel they have lost any sense of financial independence they may have previously had.</p> <p><u>Reduce differences in status between different groups of people</u></p> <p>Escaping a forced marriage and becoming financially independent might increase status differences between some groups of people. In communities where there are traditional gender roles expecting women to be financially dependent on their husbands, women's financial independence might be seen as 'shameful' or as digressing from cultural norms and expectations, therefore increasing differences in status between women from the same community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People in their middle and older years</li> <li>• People from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Gypsy/ Travellers, migrant workers, BAME people, non-English speakers</li> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• People with disabilities, long term conditions and mental health problems</li> <li>• People with different religions/ beliefs</li> <li>• Unmarried/married people and people in civil partnerships (including people who have been married religiously but not civilly)</li> <li>• Care experienced children and young people</li> <li>• People at risk of/who have experienced human trafficking/ modern slavery</li> <li>• People at risk of falling into poverty</li> <li>• People from backgrounds with</li> </ul>

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
<p><u>Promote participation, inclusion, dignity and control over decisions</u></p> <p>Escaping a forced marriage and building economic independence can promote participation and control over decisions but it might promote exclusion between community members. This is particularly true in communities where women are expected to be dependent on their husbands or where children are expected to go directly from education into marriage rather than further education, training and employment. In such cases, people seen as ‘transgressing’ those cultural norms might be ostracised from their community and experience harassment and abuse.</p> <p><u>Build family support networks, resilience and community capacity</u></p> <p>Escaping a forced marriage and building economic independence can promote participation and control over decisions but it might promote exclusion between community members. This is particularly true in communities where women are expected to be dependent on their husbands or where children are expected to go directly from education into marriage rather than further education, training and employment. In such cases, people seen as ‘transgressing’ those cultural norms might be ostracised from their community and experience harassment and abuse.</p> <p><u>Reduce crime and fear of crime including hate crime</u></p> <p>The business community can sometimes play a key role in perpetuating forced marriage. There have been well documented cases where shops and businesses owned by community members can act to ‘police’ people vulnerable to forced marriage, particularly children and young people. The policy is unable to offer mitigating factors to this risk other than to highlight it.</p> <p><u>Protect vulnerable children and adults</u></p> <p>The type of support for survivors and people at risk of forced marriage promoted by this policy emphasises prevention and helping people to stay in education and employment. This helps them to build their confidence, life skills and future prospects. However, this might not be a protective factor in communities where children</p>	<p>high level of material deprivation (in the UK or overseas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with No Recourse to Public Funds</li> <li>• Children and young people in care</li> <li>• Care experienced people</li> <li>• People experiencing/ at risk of homelessness</li> <li>• Students and international students</li> <li>• People experiencing challenges with substance use</li> <li>• Urban Communities</li> <li>• Rural and semi-rural communities</li> <li>• Coastal community</li> <li>• Business community</li> <li>• People in full/part-time/ shift-based employment</li> <li>• Staff with protected characteristics</li> <li>• Carers</li> <li>• People who are employed (full time,</li> </ul>

Economic	Affected populations
<p>and young people are expected to go directly from primary/secondary education into a marriage rather than employment.</p> <p>This effect is particularly prevalent for girls and young women who are expected to be economically dependent on their husbands. Girls and young women in particular might be expected to marry and have children at a young age, therefore the decision to stay in education or employment might trigger abuse and harassment by the wider family or community. This also applies to children and young people with disabilities and long-term conditions who might be expected never to work or have economic independence.</p> <p><u>Promote healthier lifestyles (including diet and nutrition, sexual health, difficulties with substance use, physical activity, life skills, wellbeing and mental health)</u></p> <p>In many communities where forced marriage is practiced, the process and practice of forced marriage has intergenerational elements which have been normalised. This can include abusive practices leading up to a forced marriage or illegal activities such as human trafficking which are highly profitable, albeit illegal.</p> <p>Supporting people to prevent or escape a forced marriage is extremely challenging and retraumatising. There are times where, instead of achieving economic independence, trauma leads people to become more vulnerable and to be exploited for the financial benefit of others through the use of drugs, alcohol, human trafficking, modern slavery or commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Often, escaping a forced marriage means that people are faced with destitution as they have no property, income, employment or entitlement to benefits (particularly if they have no recourse to public funds), or deportation, if there is an overseas element. This prospect might lead them to choose to stay in the forced marriage as the prospect of leaving might be considerably worse.</p> <p>For some people, particularly women, forced marriage might be a way out of extreme poverty. When they feel that the prospects of economic independence are</p>	<p>part time or shift work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are unemployed</li> <li>• The business community</li> </ul>

Economic	Affected populations
extremely daunting, they may choose to stay in the marriage, as this provides them with a quality of life they had never thought possible previously. Further, the grooming process preceding a forced marriage might have been so traumatising that people lack essential life management and decision-making skills after leaving.	

**9. Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors and if so how will equality, human rights including children’s rights, environmental and sustainability issues be addressed?**

This policy applies to anyone carrying out work within Edinburgh with children and adults of all ages, and with any number of (intersecting) protected characteristics. The Council commissions services for women and children affected by domestic abuse and so-called ‘honour’- based abuse, and this policy applies to commissioned services as well. The Council has assurance that commissioned services address issues around equality, human rights, children’s rights, environmental and sustainability issues through the commissioning process, as well as quarterly and annual contract monitoring and reporting.

**10. Consider how you will communicate information about this policy/ service change to children and young people and those affected by sensory impairment, speech impairment, low level literacy or numeracy, learning difficulties or English as a second language? Please provide a summary of the communications plan.**

It is expected that this policy will be disseminated both within and throughout services delivered by the Council, and shared with and by partner organisations carrying out work with people at risk of, or affected by, forced marriage. Partners on the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee were key contributors in the creation of this policy and the associated Integrated Impact Assessment and many deliver services in key community languages throughout Edinburgh. Anyone who would like to access this policy in a different language or alternative format will be informed that they can do so upon request on the Council’s website where the Policy will be publicised.

**11. Is the plan, programme, strategy or policy likely to result in significant environmental effects, either positive or negative? If yes, it is likely that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be required and the impacts identified in the IIA should be included in this. See section 2.10 in the Guidance for further information.**

No environmental impacts have been identified as a result of the update of the Forced Marriage Policy.

**12. Additional Information and Evidence Required**

Not applicable.

**13. Specific to this IIA only, what recommended actions have been, or will be, undertaken and by when? (these should be drawn from 7 – 11 above) Please complete:**

<b>Specific actions (as a result of the IIA which may include financial implications, mitigating actions and risks of cumulative impacts)</b>	<b>Who will take them forward (name and job title)</b>	<b>Deadline for progressing</b>	<b>Review date</b>

**14. Are there any negative impacts in section 8 for which there are no identified mitigating actions?**

There are inherent risks in supporting people to prevent/avoid a forced marriage. Addressing any form of so called ‘honour’-based abuse comes with a number of inherent risk considerations including:

- Any form of control, coercion or abuse intensifying
- The date of a forced marriage being brought forward
- Ostracism, abuse or retribution from the wider family/community
- Possible destitution and deportation of victims/survivors
- Human trafficking or other forms of exploitation of vulnerability
- Severe mental health impacts including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), self-harm and/or suicide)

To mitigate those risks this policy relies on the provision of intensive follow-up support of victims/survivors by professionals and on robust inter-agency working to respond to the needs of those affected. Support will likely need to be long-term and involve all aspects of a person's life including physical and mental health, education, training, social support, language needs, immigration, education, training, employability, independence and life skills.

## **15. How will you monitor how this proposal affects different groups, including people with protected characteristics?**

The partners represented on the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee (ESEC) include both statutory and third sector services and organisations. The ESEC meets every 8 weeks and regular updates are requested from partners at each meeting. These regular inputs include updates on policy implementation and impact on practice, and they provide an excellent opportunity for the ESEC to monitor the effects of this policy on different groups and people with protected characteristics.

## **16. Sign off by Head of Service**

**Name**

**Date**

## **17. Publication**

Completed and signed IIAs should be sent to:  
[integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk) to be published on the Council website [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/impactassessments](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/impactassessments)  
**Edinburgh Integration Joint Board/Health and Social Care**  
[sarah.bryson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.bryson@edinburgh.gov.uk) to be published at  
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