



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Consular Directorate

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 0059-17

Thank you for your email of 16 January 2017 and your subsequent refinement, (see attached), in which you ask for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 about the repatriation of victims of forced marriage.

Outcome of Search

We have now completed our search and consultation process and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request.

- 1) The FCO assisted with the repatriation of 21 victims / alleged victims of forced marriage from Pakistan in 2016; six of whom were provided with loans.
- 2) The FCO does not hold information on the total repatriation costs for victims / alleged victims of forced marriage. In most cases family members or others covered these costs and are not required to inform us of the costs. The six loans we provided totalled £2,984.
- 3) As of 31 January 2017, £1,513 of these six loans has been repaid.

Disclosure

The UK is a world-leader in tackling forced marriage, with our dedicated Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) leading efforts to combat it both at home and abroad. Assistance provided ranges from safety advice through to, in extreme circumstances, rescues victims held against their will overseas. The FMU also runs a public helpline, providing advice and support to victims, as well as to professionals dealing with cases. As set out in our public guide "Support for British Nationals Abroad: a Guide" we can try to help a victim of forced marriage return to the UK, if that is what they want. If possible, we may also try to find them temporary accommodation in the country they are in.



However, the FCO is not funded to provide financial assistance and we cannot pay bills, including for repatriation. We may be able to provide an emergency loan from public funds to help someone return home, but this is discretionary and will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances, and only if all other methods of getting funds have been exhausted. If a British national is eligible, they will have to sign an 'undertaking to repay' agreement, where they agree to repay the loan. We are reviewing our policy on issuing emergency loans in early 2017, including the age at which emergency loans are given to British nationals. This is to ensure the arrangements are working effectively for vulnerable British nationals and are also making appropriate use of public funds.

While FMU can support any resident in the UK, overseas the FCO provides consular support to [British nationals](#) only. Our data includes all those to whom we provide support overseas, which could be broader than just British Citizens.

Other information

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) provides a range of support and assistance to both women and men who are at risk of forced marriage. The statistics on Forced Marriage collected by FMU are also available on gov.uk; the link is:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage#statistics-on-forced-marriage-collected-by-fmu>

