



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Home Office

Welcome Workshops

Cultural Orientation Programme

Your rights, responsibilities, and the law

Welcome

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With thanks to other government departments and local authorities for their help in producing this pack

A safe space to talk and listen

We want this to be a safe space for you to:

- Learn
- Share your views
- Ask questions

Please be respectful and listen to others – even if you disagree with them

Learning objectives

To understand:

1. Your rights and responsibilities – including equality and children’s rights
2. Marriage Laws – including arranged, forced marriage and honour-based abuse
3. Unacceptable behaviour towards women and girls, and domestic violence
4. The police, how to contact them and other organisations that can help



Is there anything you want to ask before we begin?



Facilitator to check if people understand what the session will cover. Feedback suggests that people often want to relay back their own understanding which may be different according to their backgrounds and previous knowledge on the law and how it worked in their home countries.

Session 1

- LAWS IN THE UK
- YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- EQUAL RIGHTS
- CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

UK laws cover important things, including...

Marriage and divorce	Employment	Consumer rights (for things you buy)	Housing
Discrimination	Violence	Racist and religious hate crime	Harassment
Sex	Drugs/Alcohol/Smoking	Driving	Weapons



Laws in the UK

UK law is not based on religion – it is established by passing legislation through Parliament, which is directly elected by the public

- Some things which are be allowed in other countries may not be legal or acceptable in the UK
- Some things that are not allowed in other countries may be acceptable or legal in the UK
- We all have to follow the laws of the country in which we live in, so that we respect the customs and traditions

If you are new to the UK, some of this information might be different to the country you come from

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The facilitator may want to have a discussion about possible things – asking the audience about what they have noticed in the time they have been in the UK. It could include things such as certain foods, alcohol, litter on streets etc.

The facilitator could emphasise that unlike Afghanistan, UK law is not based on religious customs and beliefs.

What are your rights?



- A right is something you are entitled to. In UK **every man, woman and child** is protected **by the law** to:
 - Have the **same human rights and freedoms** as other people
 - Be treated **fairly and equally** by everyone – at home, in work or by the public
 - Practice **your religion** – however, you cannot use religion to hurt or harm others or destroy someone’s property as that is against the law

It is your **responsibility** to respect the rights of others and do what is expected of you and follow the law

Equal rights for everyone



We are a multicultural society people come from different backgrounds, cultures and races.

If someone treats you badly because of your race or ethnic background, it is called **racism**.

People with different races, religions, disabilities, sexual orientation and transgender identities are protected by the law.

It is our responsibility to treat everyone with the same respect.

Some examples of what you cannot do:

- Injure, harass or verbally abuse any other person because of their race
- Say disrespectful things about somebody else's race or religion
- Damage any other person's property because of their race, religion or background

The facilitator will want to make the point that it is illegal to treat anyone differently because of their gender, race, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation

Equal rights for men and women



In the UK, both men and women must be treated **equally** in:

- ✓ **Work** – for example, if a man and woman are doing the same job, they must get the same pay. They have to be treated in the same way by their employer and by other people working there.
- ✓ **Marriage** –partners in a marriage are equals and they treat each other with respect, consider each other's needs, and support one another.
- ✓ **All aspects of private and public life** – men and women should expect to be treated fairly and equally wherever they are, in their homes and outside such as in restaurants.

Transgender people have equal rights too. Transgender people have a gender identity that differs from the sex that they were assigned at birth.

Supporting children and their rights



- The UK has strict laws to help protect children.
- If you are a parent or responsible for children, **you are legally responsible** for their protection, care and well-being. This includes making sure they go to school and not leaving young children alone.
- If you **harm or do not look after your children**, the government can take action. In Scotland, all forms of physical punishment of children are against the law. This will be the same for Wales from 21 March 2022.
- **Social Services** is a government-led organisation that protects the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults, and in serious cases they have the authority to take your child away to make sure they are safe.
- If you are worried about your child's development or wellbeing and you think they need extra support, speak to their GP or teacher first.
- If you are worried about your child or another child you can contact the [National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children \(NSPCC\)](#) on [0808 800 5000](#).
- Your child can also call [Childline](#) on [0800 1111](#) if they need help or someone to talk to.



Session 2

- MARRIAGE LAWS
- DIVORCE
- HONOUR BASED ABUSE

Marriage Laws

- You can only get married after you are **16 years old**. If you are aged **16 or 17, you need permission** to get married from your parents or guardian (in England, Wales or Northern Ireland). *The law may change to **age 18** in England and Wales soon.*
- It is illegal to marry more than one person in the UK.
- You cannot marry a **close relative**, like a brother, sister or cousin.
- If you got married to someone **under the age of 16** before coming to the UK – the marriage may be **not be recognised** by UK law. For example, you will not be housed together.
- **It is illegal to have sex** with someone aged **under 16**.
- In the UK, both partners must be willing to have sex, even if you are married. This is called '**consent**' – setting your boundaries and what you are comfortable with.



Men can marry men



Women can marry women

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- The current legal minimum age to marry in the UK is **16**.
- **Same-sex marriage is also legal, so men can marry men and women can marry women.**
- A marriage should have the **full and free consent of both people involved**. Consent means that we have given your full, free, and informed agreement to marry our intended partner and to the timing of the marriage.
- Religious marriages are not recognised unless they are registered by the state. If the religious marriage is not recognised, couples must have a civil marriage as well.
- It is **illegal to have sex with anyone aged under 16**, with or without their consent in the UK. You could go to prison for this.
- It is also **illegal to have sex without consent** with your partner after marriage. This is known as marital rape and you could go to prison for it.

Arranged and forced marriages

Arranged marriages

When marriages are assisted or arranged, there needs to be **full and free agreement** from the two people getting married and they must understand the meaning of marriage. This type of arranged marriage is acceptable in the UK.

Forced marriages

- Forcing another person to marry is **not acceptable** and is against the law in the UK. This is where one or both people getting married **do not give their acceptance** to get married.
- Parents cannot force their children to marry.
- It is also against the law to take someone to another country to force them to marry.
- If someone was forced to marry, then the marriage would **not be recognised** under law.
- If you feel you are being forced to get married, please call [Karma Nirvana](#) which is a free charity who can offer confidential support: call **0800 5999 247** or for the forced marriage unit call **020 7008 0151**
- In Wales, click on this website [Honour-based violence and forced marriage | GOV.WALES](#) if you need advice or support or call **0808 80 10 800**

Religious marriages

A **religious marriage** is getting married in the eyes of **God** (or according to your belief), **whereas a civil ceremony** is about being married in the eyes of the **law**.

Religious marriages **will not be recognised** unless you also have a civil marriage (a marriage performed and recognised by a government official).

Please look at the guidance on both religious and civil marriages, for where you live, in the websites below:

- <https://www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships> if you live in England and Wales
- <https://www.mygov.scot/getting-married> if you live in Scotland
- <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/government-citizens-and-rights/births-deaths-marriages-and-civil-partnerships> if you live in Northern Ireland



Divorce

- It is **legal to get divorced** in the UK and it is **very common**.
- When divorcing, it may be possible to agree outside the court what to do on bringing up any children and how to deal with any shared money and property.
- You can get divorced for any reason, such as:
 - Adultery – if they cheat on you
 - Unreasonable behaviour - which includes, physical abuse, verbal abuse, such as insults or threats, drunkenness or drug-taking, refusing to pay towards shared living expenses.
 - If someone leaves you for two years or more.
- Both parents are responsible for children after a separation or divorce.
- [Citizen's Advice](#) are an independent organisation which can offer help with this.
- More information about divorce laws can be found on this website: <https://www.gov.uk/divorce>

Honour based abuse



- It is illegal to abuse or harm anyone for cultural reasons or reasons of family honour.
- For example, if you are being punished for getting married to someone your family does not like, that would be honour based abuse.
- If you are worried about honour based abuse you can speak to the **police**: 101 or 999 if urgent.
- You can get advice in private from [Karma Nirvana](https://karmanirvana.org.uk/) which is a national charity supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage. You can call their free number on [0800 5 999 247](tel:08005999247) and find further information <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/>
- In Scotland – you can privately contact the charity [Shakti Women's Aid](https://shaktiedinburgh.co.uk/) on [0131 475 2399](tel:01314752399) and find further information <https://shaktiedinburgh.co.uk/>
- In Wales go to this website [Honour-based violence and forced marriage | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/government/department/department-for-justice/anti-social-behaviour-and-crime/anti-social-behaviour-and-crime-2019-2020/honour-based-violence-and-forced-marriage) if you need advice or support or call [0808 80 10 800](tel:08088010800).

For Scotland - Link for Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline (SDFMH) [Home - Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline \(sdafmh.org.uk\)](https://sdafmh.org.uk) and number 0800 027 1234. There are also 17 rape crisis centres across Scotland available to offer support, and Scotland's National Rape Crisis Helpline can offer support from 6pm to midnight 7 days a week on 08088 01 03 02.



- Is there anything more you would like to know about the marriage laws in the UK?
- How are they different to the laws in the country you come from?

Session 3

- UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR
- DOMESTIC ABUSE

Unacceptable behaviour towards women and girls in person, online, emails, texts or phone calls



It is unacceptable in the UK to:

- **Touch someone** against their will
- Be **abusive** such as hitting or shouting at someone
- Spread **untrue and negative rumours** or gossip about someone
- **Follow someone**, physically or with texts or emails or on social media
- **Show someone your** private body parts in order to scare or upset someone
- **Have sex** with someone **without their agreement** - including your wife, this is called 'consent'

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Facilitator to explain Consent: **If someone seems unsure, stays quiet, moves away or doesn't respond, they are not agreeing to sexual activity.**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 says that someone consents to sexual activity if they:

- Agree by choice and
- Have both the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

If someone says 'no' to any kind of sexual activity, they are not agreeing to it.

Domestic abuse



It is **not acceptable under law** for a family member or husband/wife to:

- **be violent** – for example, if they hit you or pull your hair or threaten to hurt or kill you
- use **emotional blackmail** – saying things like '*you will no longer be my wife/daughter/husband/son*' or '*I will make you grandmother/friend suffer*' if you don't do what they want you to do
- **try and control** who you can speak to or where you can or cannot go
- **try and control** what you wear or control access to money and belongings

Anyone who abuses their partner, ex-partner or any family member can be reported to the police (call [999](tel:999) in emergency) and face a serious punishment.

This NHS website provides useful information: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/>

How to report domestic abuse



- Anyone, including neighbours, can report domestic abuse and violence
- Reporting domestic abuse **does not impact on your immigration status**
- If you suffer domestic abuse, you should **report it to the police**: call **101** or **999** in an emergency.
- You can also phone the **24-hour National Domestic Abuse Freephone Helpline: 0808 2000 247**
- Children can call **Childline** on **0800 1111**
- In Wales go to this website [Domestic abuse | GOV.WALES](#) if you need advice or support or call **0808 80 10 80**

Conviction of a crime related to domestic abuse **can negatively affect your UK immigration status**

Session 4

- THE POLICE AND HOW TO CONTACT THEM
- HATE CRIME
- OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP

The police and their duties

The police in the UK treat everyone fairly and will:

- Protect life and property
- Prevent disturbances
- Prevent and detect crime.

You can complain if you are not satisfied with the service you have received from the police

- The best way to make a complaint is to **contact your local police force**. Your local police force website will tell you how to complain.
- More details can be found in this [leaflet](#) from the *Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC)*

You should not be scared to approach the police if you are the victim of a crime, see a crime happening, or for general assistance for example if you get lost.



The presenter may want to print out a copy of the Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC)

How to contact the police

If you need the police because of a crime then you can call:

999 – This is the number to call for an **emergency**, for example if you are the victim of an assault or see a crime taking place. When you call, ask for 'police', as this is also the number to call an ambulance or if there is a fire.

101 – This is the number to call for **less urgent situations**, for example if your property has been damaged, to give police information about a crime, or any general enquiries.

If you can't speak English, an interpreter will be provided for us by the police.



Hate crime and how to report it

- Hate Crime is a when a person is targeted because of their race or ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.
- If you suffer hate crime, or receive a serious threat against you, please report it to the police, either by [calling 101 \(or 999 in an emergency\)](#). You can also report hate crime online:
- In England, you can use [True Vision](#): www.report-it.org.uk
- In Northern Ireland, you can use: www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime
- In Wales, you can use – www.gov.wales/hate-hurts-wales
- In Scotland, you can use - www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/hate-crime or a Third Party Reporting Centre <https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/third-party-reporting-centres/>

True Vision: You can select Pashto or Dari/Farsi (Persian) by clicking on select language here ↓



Victim Support – can provide support in Pashto or Dari languages



- Victim Support is a charity which gives free and confidential help **24 hours a day** for people affected by crime, including hate crime.
- They offer immediate and longer term emotional/practical help.
- Victim Supportline can be reached on **0808 168 9111** or directly from their website www.victimsupport.org.uk.
- In Scotland, **Victim Support Scotland** can be called on **0800 160 1985** or directly from their website www.victimsupport.scot/
- In Wales, Victim Support can be called on 08 085 16 89 111 or directly from their website [Wales - Victim Support](#)
- Victim Support is not the same as the Police. You can call the police on **101** or **999** if urgent.

Anti Muslim Hate Crime Service

Tell MAMA – ‘Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks’ is a safe and reliable service that allows people anywhere in the UK to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse. <https://tellmamauk.org>



It is not meant to be a replacement for the Police Service. In an emergency, please call **999**

Organisations to contact if you need help, or to support someone you are worried about

Name of organisation	What they help with	Contact details
Citizens Advice	Offer free confidential advice on all issues – useful for help with legal and money problems but can help with anything you are worried about.	Adviceline England: 0800 144 8848 Wales: 0800 702 2020 Click these links for England , Scotland , Wales and Northern Ireland
Muslim Community Helpline	provide a confidential listening and emotional support service for the UK Muslim community.	0208 904 8193 or 0208 908 6715 Email: ess4m@btinternet.com Website: https://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk/
Women's Aid	Help for all aspects of domestic abuse, such as women's housing, safety planning, dealing with police.	https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/
National Stalking Helpline	Practical information, support, and advice on risk, safety planning and legislation to victims of stalking, their friends, family. If someone tracks and follows you (in person or online/phone) without your permission	0808 802 0300 Website: National Stalking Helpline
Muslim Women's Helpline	Support on anything you are worried about. You do not have to be a woman or a Muslim. They help everyone.	0800 999 5786 Website: Muslim Women's Helpline

Please don't be afraid to report a crime

**YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS
IN THE UK WILL NOT CHANGE
IF YOU REPORT A CRIME**



Is there anything more you would like to know about the police and how to contact them?

Is there anything you want to know about other organisations and how they can help you?

Thank you and any final thoughts...



Is there anything more you would like to know about anything we have talked about today?

How did you find the session?

Facilitator to engage and feedback



Materials for this presentation were taken from various official websites, including from this guide published by the UK government:

- [Welcome – A guide for new refugees](#) (English version)

The guide has been translated into other languages, including Dari and Pashto:

- [Welcome: a guide for new refugees \(Dari/English\)](#)
- [Welcome: a guide for new refugees \(Pashto/English\)](#)

The guide is also published in other languages – these can be found on this government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-new-refugees>