



# Briefing: The Forced Marriage Unit's 2022 Statistics.

**On 20 June 2023 the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) published its statistics for 2022. The headline fact is that the FMU handled 35 fewer cases in 2022 than in 2021. In this short briefing, we look at other key points to note, comparing the statistics to those from 2021. It is not possible to compare data before 2021, as the FMU radically changed how it recorded cases in 2021.**

## Key findings:

- Calls to the FMU do not correlate to the school year, highlighting both that it is not *only* school-age children who are at risk of forced marriage (FM) and that education providers account for relatively few referrals to the FMU (9% in 2022).
- Although over 50% of victims were aged under 21, half of those victims (i.e. 26% of the total) were aged 18-21. This is potentially a group of victims who are overlooked by stakeholders – for instance, children's social services and education providers are unlikely to be monitoring this age group for signs of risk.
- Between them, London, the West Midlands, the North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber accounted for two-thirds of all cases in 2022. This may mean that people in these areas are more at

risk, or that stakeholders in these areas are more alert to risk, and likely to contact the FMU (which is based in London). Data from the recent 2021 census might help us understand causes of risk in these areas.

- Only around a quarter of referrals come from victims themselves, their friends, family, partners or colleagues. This raises questions of whether private individuals are unable (perhaps forcibly prevented) from seeking help, or whether they feel less comfortable contacting a government agency than professionals (e.g. police, social workers, teachers) do.
- A quarter of referrals come from social services, which may account for school-age victims being the most common age group in cases handled by the FMU (though *adult* social services may also be responsible for referring cases where victims have a disability, who tend to be older).
- Pakistan was the “focus country” in almost 50% of cases. This tells us something about who is reporting cases to the FMU, and what kinds of risk of FM they perceive. It probably does not tell us much about risk or prevalence across the UK.
- Three quarters of victims were British (including dual nationality). This shows that FM is not just a problem which affects people from overseas.
- In almost half of cases, victims were in the UK and had not yet been forced to marry. This shows that, at least in cases involving the FMU, good work is being done by stakeholders to prevent FM (though not necessarily to manage to prevent the abuse which may be experienced as part of efforts to force someone to marry). However, many people are still being taken abroad (despite the efforts of stakeholders including UK Borders and Immigration), and far more than ought to be the case have been forced to marry before the FMU is alerted to their case.



## Background

The FMU was set up in 2005 “to support British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assist anyone in the UK, regardless of nationality, faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage”.<sup>1</sup> It has regularly published statistics since 2012.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, it radically changed how it counted cases, including in its statistics only “case[s] in which advice and support is given”, “where the FMU is provided with details of a specific individual at risk of, or affected by, forced marriage (or FGM), and actively provides advice and support for as long as required”.<sup>3</sup>

FM was made a civil offence in the UK in 2007 as part of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act<sup>4</sup>, and criminalised in 2014 as part of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act<sup>5</sup>. The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022<sup>6</sup> changed the law about FM from 27 February 2023. We will not see the impact of this law on cases until data for 2023 is released.

According to UK law, “a forced marriage is one where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage.”<sup>7</sup> In England and Wales, it is also “when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse”. In Scotland, people aged 16-18 can still marry, and in Northern Ireland they can marry so long as they have their parents’ or guardians’ consent.

The kind of pressure brought to bear on people to force them to marry may include: physical (e.g. threats, violence and/or sexual violence); emotional and psychological (e.g. making someone feel like they are bringing “shame” on their family); and/or financial (e.g. taking someone’s wages).<sup>8</sup> FM is a recognised human rights abuse, and a form of both Honour-Based Abuse (HBA) and Domestic Abuse. In some jurisdictions, and by the International Labour Organization (ILO), it is also recognised as a form of modern slavery and/or human trafficking.

Data is collected on FM by the FMU, by charities such as Karma Nirvana, who run the national helpline for victims of FM and HBA, by the police, by the Crown Prosecution Service and by local authorities (e.g. by children’s social services).<sup>9</sup> There is currently no estimate of the prevalence of FM in the UK.<sup>10</sup> (Globally, the ILO and Walk Free estimate that 22 million people were living in FM on any given day in 2021.<sup>11</sup>) Little of this data is publicly available<sup>12</sup>, making the FMU’s annual statistics a vital source of information on FM in the UK.

## General Findings from the 2022 FMU Statistics

Here are some key findings from the FMU’s statistics for 2022.

### Total Cases:

In 2022, the FMU handled 302 “advice and support” cases, compared to 337 in 2021. This is quite a significant drop (of almost 10%). Given the substantial increase in FM globally charted by the ILO and Walk Free between 2016 and 2021, we might also expect that cases would be on the increase in the UK, as the causes pushing global growth have been experienced here, or by people who might have connections to the UK (e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic, increased costs of living and poverty, violence, and displacement). Because of a lack of prevalence data, it is impossible to know whether this decrease in cases handled by the FMU reflects a decrease in cases across the UK. A concern is that it only shows a decrease in the number of people willing and/or able to reach out to the FMU for help.

### Monthly Calls:

As in years before the pandemic (and change in counting cases by the FMU), there is no real discernible pattern in when the FMU is likely to be contacted about FM. This somewhat challenges the prevailing idea that there are more cases (and people should be more vigilant) in the lead-up to school holidays, and especially the summer holiday. As Figure 1 shows, although there was a spike in



calls to the FMU in July 2021, calls were generally declining in 2022 from May until October.

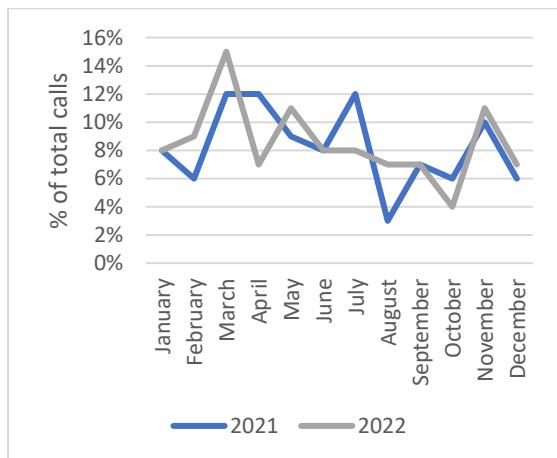


Figure 1: Monthly Calls to the FMU, 2021 and 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics)

This may be a sign that some stakeholders contact other agencies than the FMU. For instance, education providers might contact their local authority (e.g. children's social services). Police forces are perhaps likely to deal with cases via their own resources (and Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs)) rather than reach out to the FMU for help.

The FMU received a high percentage of calls in both 2021 and 2022 in March and in November. These do not particularly coincide with dates in the school year and suggest something other than a long period of time when children will not be expected to be in school is driving calls to the FMU.

## Sex of Victims

As in other years, the vast majority of victims in cases where the FMU offered "advice and support" were female (78% in 2021). This is a slight increase from 2021 (where 74% of victims were female). It fits a global pattern of FM being a very gendered issue (one reason why some treat FM as a form of violence against women and girls). On the other hand, this also highlights that men are at risk of FM, and ought not to be overlooked as potential victims.

## Sexual Orientation of Victims

Only 5 victims (2% of the total) identified as being LGBT.<sup>13</sup> Although in line with other years (e.g. 6 people, which made 2% of cases in 2021), this is probably a dramatic under-representation both of the victims who did approach the FMU and of victims more generally. There are, however, many reasons why people at risk of FM might not want to report their sexuality to the FMU (or anyone).

## Age of Victims

As in 2021, over 50% of victims in cases handled by the FMU were under the age of 21 (53% in 2021 and 56% in 2022). One notable thing about the 2022 statistics is the decrease in cases (from 2021) of victims aged 15 and under (41 cases (22%) compared to 75 (22%) in 2021), and the increase in cases of 18-21 year olds (79 cases (26%) in 2022 compared to 62 (18%) in 2021).

Since the FMU started publishing its statistics, cases in the age range "15 and under" have been a steadily increasing percentage of the total (from 10% in 2011 to 22% in 2021), so this decrease is particularly notable. (Though, as noted, it is hard to compare data from before 2020 to data after it because of a change in how cases were recorded.)

Cases involving 18-21 year-olds have fluctuated both in raw numbers (a high of 446 in 2012, and a low of 214 in 2018 - 33% of total cases where the age was known in 2013, and 17% in 2014). Still, the increase from 2021 is significant (even with the caveat that the only directly comparable data is from 2021).

This highlights the need for stakeholders to be aware of the risks facing people from this age group (for instance, higher education providers, employers, and colleagues). These risks will not be picked up by children's social services, or schools. Moreover, even where people may have been deemed at risk at a younger age it is not clear whether data-sharing between agencies (e.g. local authorities and police services) would allow for those at risk to be adequately protected once they achieve adulthood. This is of particular concern with



the change in the law regarding the age of marriage in 2023: people who might have been forced to

marry aged 16-17 before the change to the law may be particularly at risk as they turn 18.

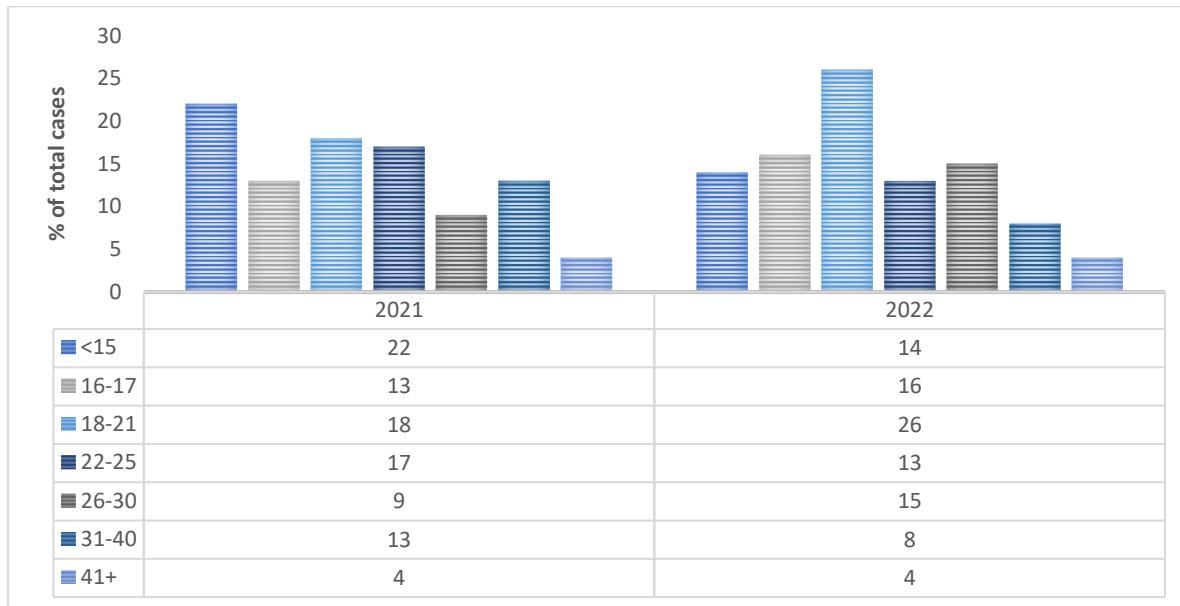


Figure 2 - Age of victims in cases handled the FMU 2021 and 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics)

Cases of 16–17-year-olds showed a slight increase. There were 43 in 2021 and 47 in 2022. (It is worth noting that in 2022 there were, overall, around 90% of the number of cases seen in 2021 – if the proportion of cases in this age range had stayed exactly the same, we would expect around 40 cases in 2022). Again, it will be interesting to see if there is a significant change for this group in 2023. One concern about the increase in cases in this age group compared to 2021 is that people were being forced to marry at 16 or 17, *before* the law was changed, in the knowledge that this would soon be illegal.

Cases involving people aged over 40 have been around 4% of cases since 2017. There were considerably fewer cases involving people aged 22–25 in 2022 than in 2021 (40 compared to 58) and people aged 31–40 (24 compared to 43), and more involving people aged 26–30 (46 compared to 31). These numbers cannot tell us too much, but they do serve as a reminder that people of all ages are at risk of FM in the UK.

## Location of Victims

Most cases in 2022 involved victims living in London, followed by the West Midlands, North West and Yorkshire and The Humber. Indeed, these four regions account for two-thirds of all cases handled by the FMU in 2022. This is somewhat different to 2021, where a lower percentage of cases came from the West Midlands, and a higher from the North West, but overall the proportion is similar: the four regions made up 65% of all cases 2021.

As we have no data about the actual prevalence of FM in the UK, this does necessarily not mean that people living in these four regions are more at risk. Instead, all we can say for sure is that stakeholders from these regions call the FMU more than those from other regions.

Interestingly, the most populous region of the UK according to the most recent census (2021) was the South East, which accounted for only 7% of cases handled by the FMU in both 2021 and 2022. It is not



simply, then, that more populous areas see more cases or make more contacts with the FMU.

The figure from London represents 0.0007% of the total population (8.8 million), as does the figure from the North West (7.4 million people) and from Yorkshire and the Humber (5.5 million people). In the West Midlands, the 51 recorded cases represent 0.0009% of the population (6 million). Again, this cannot tell us much about actual prevalence (and risk) across the UK, because we have no underlying prevalence data. However, it does show that the West Midlands accounts for

proportionally more calls to the FMU (compared to its population) than other regions responsible for high volumes of calls. Also, it was responsible for the second-highest number of calls in 2022, despite being only the 5<sup>th</sup> most populous region of the UK, again showing that calls to the FMU do not simply correlate with population. Further information from the census, and from stakeholders in these regions, might reveal factors which account for the high volume of calls from these regions.

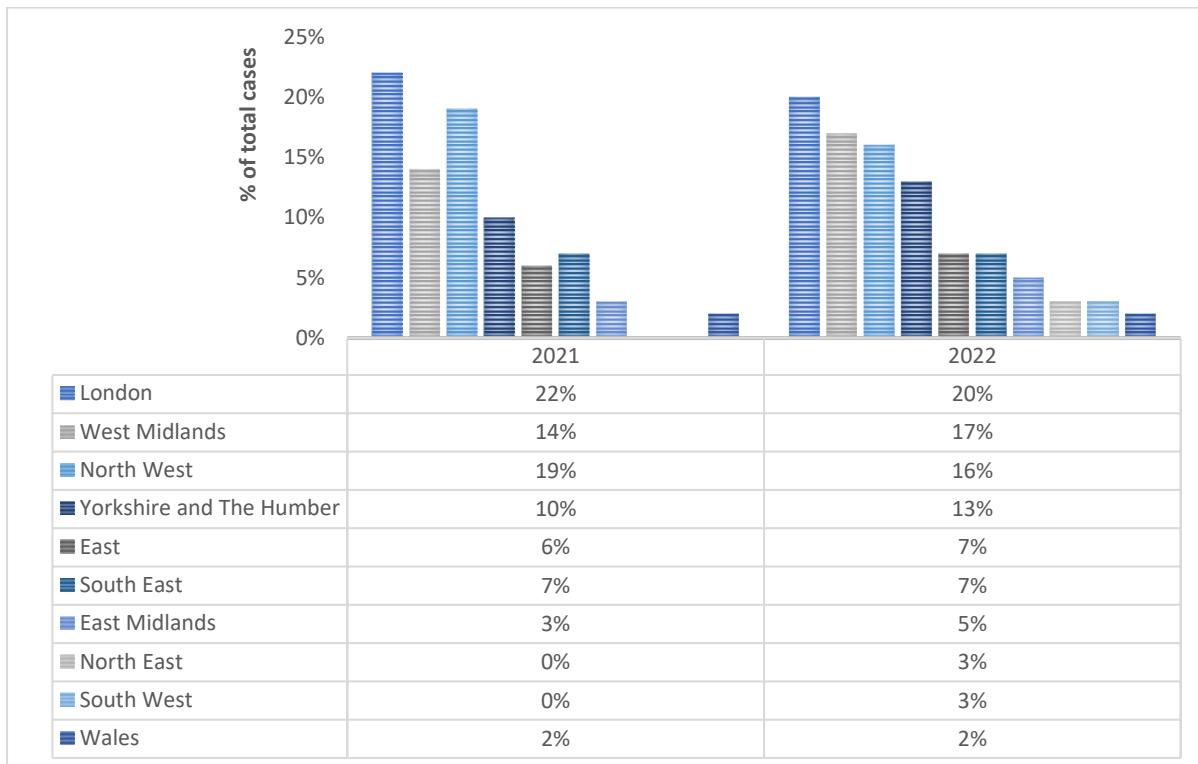


Figure 3 - Location of Victims 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics)

There was no data given from Scotland or Northern Ireland in 2022. This reflects a general trend for low numbers of cases from these countries handled by the FMU, as does the low figure of cases from Wales, the South West, the North East and the East Midlands. Again, this does not mean that FM is not an issue in these regions, but only that stakeholders in these regions are not as likely to contact the FMU as stakeholders in other regions.

### Focus Country

The FMU defines a “focus country” as “the country to which the risk of forced marriage relates. This could be the country where the forced marriage is due to take place, the country where it has taken place, and/or the country where the spouse is currently residing”.<sup>14</sup> In 2021, 11 cases had the UK as the “focus country”: in 2022, this was 8. In both



years, this amounted to 3% of cases. In 2022, the FMU handled cases associated with 25 different “focus countries”: in 2021, this was 33 different countries. As in other years, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, India and Iraq were associated with a significant number of cases, with Pakistan being the “focus country” in almost 50% of cases in both 2021 and 2022.

We should be wary, though, of thinking this shows that FM is a peculiarly “Pakistani”, South Asian or Muslim problem. All it shows is that almost 50% of cases handled by the FMU have Pakistan as a

“focus country” – we do not know what proportion of total cases this represents, or whether there might be reasons for the high representation of cases with Pakistan as the “focus country” in this data, for instance, specific outreach and training with Pakistani communities by the FMU, or a bias among stakeholders towards thinking FM is specially associated with Pakistan (and communities with Pakistani heritage) which means people at risk in these communities are spotted (and helped) more frequently than in other communities.

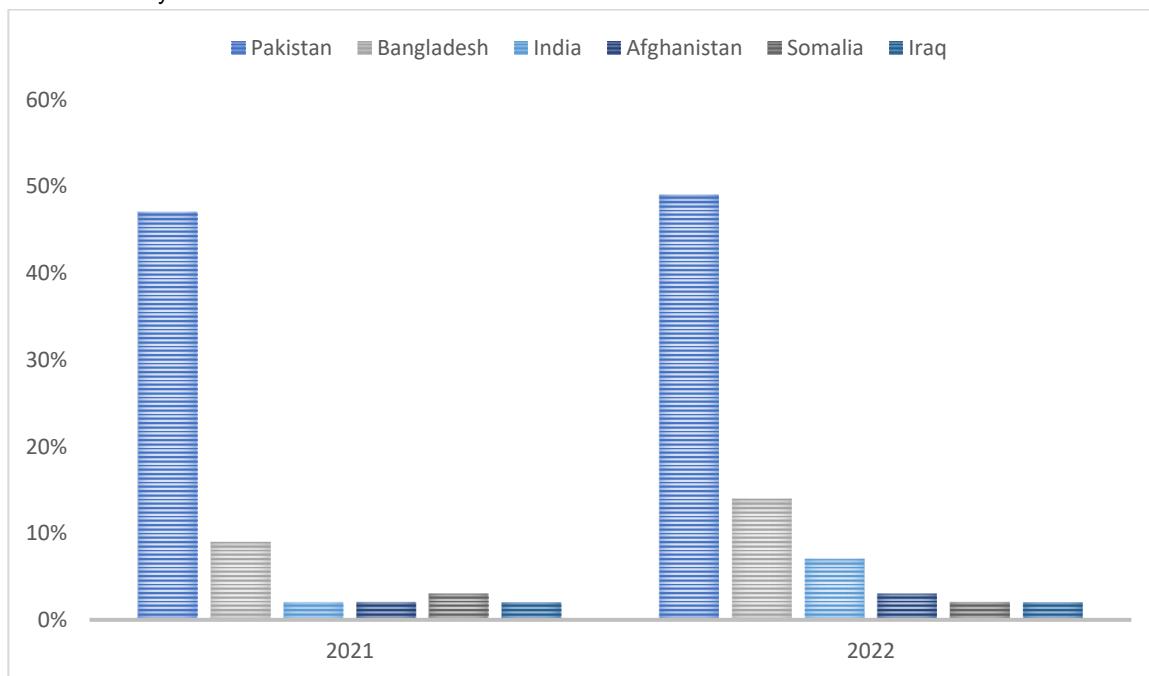


Figure 4- Focus Countries 2021 and 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics)

## Marriage Status

In 2022, 49% of cases given “advice and support” by the FMU involved victims who were in the UK when they made contact with the FMU, and who had not yet been forced to marry (i.e. a service or ceremony had not been performed). This is an increase of 10% compared with the proportion in 2021 (39%) and represents an increase of nearly 20 individuals (148 people in 2022 and 131 in 2021). Fewer people were helped before an FM whilst overseas (13% in 2022 compared to 21% in 2021),

but a similar percentage were helped overseas after being forced to marry (3% in 2021, and 4% in 2022). This suggests that more people are being helped by the FMU before they are either taken abroad to marry, or forced to marry in the UK, which is positive (but we should remember that this only applies to cases where help is sought from the FMU, and there is no way of knowing what proportion of total cases this represents).



## Nationality of Victim

Since 2020, the FMU has given some basic details about the nationality of victims – that is, were they a British national, a non-British national, or is their nationality unknown. In 2022, almost three quarters (74%) of victims were British nationals (including dual nationals). Of these, 37% were helped before being forced to marry, and 20% after in the UK, and 11% were helped overseas before being forced to marry, with 2% helped overseas after being forced to marry. The overall proportion is similar to 2021, where 76% of victims were British nationals (including dual nationals), but in 2021 only 27% of cases in the UK were supported before being forced to marry, with 26% being supported after being forced to marry. 18% were supported overseas before being forced to marry, and 2% overseas after being forced to marry.

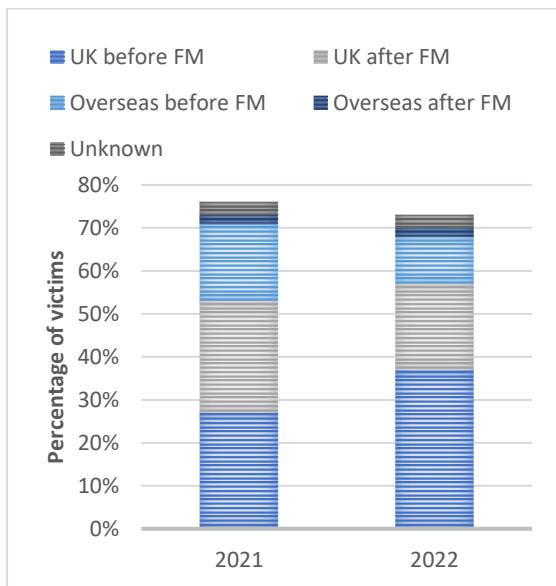


Figure 5 Nationality of Victims (Source: FMU Statistics)

This data shows that a significant number of people helped by the FMU are British nationals (or dual nationals). This is helpful in highlighting that many British nationals are at risk, but there is also a concern that (as we have no clear prevalence data) non-British nationals at risk may not be being spotted by stakeholders, and/or they are not turning to the FMU for help. The FMU are not the only agency competent to support and advice victims, but in some cases (e.g. where there is a need to

help someone abroad) they may well be the best-placed.

## Source of Referrals

A relatively small number of referrals come to the FMU from victims themselves (56 in 2021, making 17% of referrals and only 37 in 2022, making 12% of referrals). This drop in real numbers is somewhat worrying, as it may represent either victims not feeling confident, or not being able, to reach out to the FMU. (Had there been a uniform decline, we would expect around 50 victims to have contacted the FMU in 2022.) 2022 also saw declines in referrals from family and friends, with the same proportion (and number) of colleagues, and a slight increase in referrals from partners (from no reports in the 2021 statistics to 5 (2%) in 2022). This suggests relatively few private individuals reach out to the FMU: instead, most of their referrals come from professionals.

Indeed, almost a quarter (24%) of referrals in both 2021 and 2022 came from social services (though this was ten fewer cases in 2022 than 2021, because of the overall drop in cases). This is the most common source of referrals to the FMU, and this may correlate with the most common ages of victims in cases handled by the FMU (though “social services” may cover both children’s and adult social services). Next highest are referrals from other parts of the Home Office, most usually UK Visas and Immigration, which represent victims picked up either as they are about to leave the country, or on arrival. In 2022 this was 16% of cases (49 individuals), and in 2021 19% (64 individuals).

On the one hand, this shows that UK Visas and Immigration do pick up cases, and may show the success of their partnership with Karma Nirvana (“a spoonful of hope”) and related training for officers. And it is easy to see why one area of the Home Office would report to a joint Unit between the Home Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office when staff working for it came across a case of FM. On the other hand, this also highlights how few other agencies are reaching out to the FMU. Although this might be because they have their own processes (e.g. police may go directly to court for an FMPO), it highlights the



extent to which FMU statistics cannot give us a sense of the real prevalence of FM in the UK.

Interestingly, Education accounts for only 9% of referrals in 2022 (up from 3% in 2021). This is in line with the proportion pre-pandemic (with 2021 something of an outlier), though, as noted, cases were counted in a different way before 2021. This may account for no strong correlation between school holidays and calls to the FMU helpline about “advice and support” cases (though other

stakeholders might be aware of young people at risk of being taken abroad in the school holidays). A question for further research is where schools and other education providers *do* turn for help (as it seems unlikely that *only* 9% of *all* cases of FM in the UK are spotted, and victims supported, by education providers): perhaps bringing cases (via social services or other child protection officers) to their local multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) instead, perhaps turning directly to the police (who may, in turn, take a case to a MARAC).

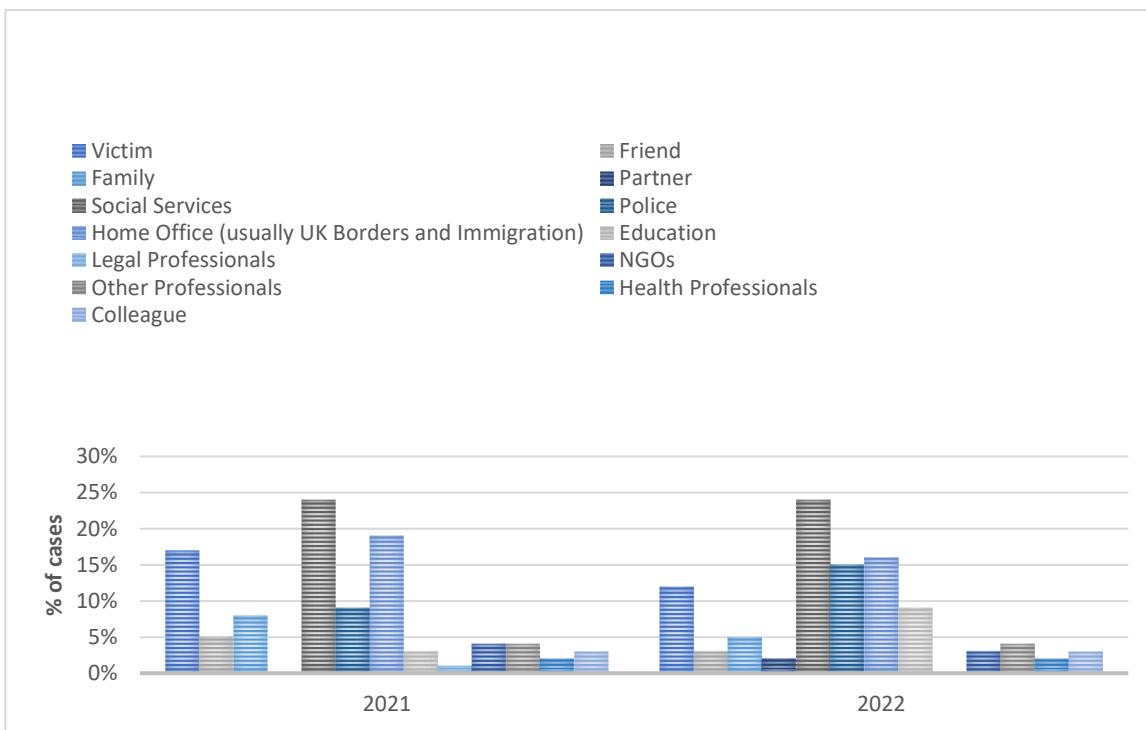


Figure 6 Source of Referrals to the FMU (Source: FMU Statistics)

## Fidings Regarding Cases with Disabilities

Cases involving victims with disabilities, and particularly those who lack the mental capacity to consent (in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005) are a specific subset of FM cases. In these cases, victims are more likely to be men (52% of cases in 2022, 57% in 2021), and there are more victims in the older age ranges than for all cases. (This said, victims with disabilities do not account for all older victims – e.g. in 2022 there were 13 victims in total aged over 41, 5 of whom were victims with disabilities.)

Cases involving victims with a disability accounted for 21% of all cases in 2022 (62 individuals). This is a significant increase on 2021, where there were 53 victims, which accounted for 16% of cases.

In 2022, we can extrapolate from the FMU's published data that there were 13 cases involving victims under the age of 18. (There are 49 cases where the ages are given, and “[x]” is given for the other two age brackets as well as for “unknown”, suggesting fewer than five cases were recorded for each.) The vast majority, then, involved adults. In 2021, there were 5 cases for under 15's, and numbers were not given for 16–17-year-olds and for



unknown (but there are four more cases in total than those for which age ranges were given). Again, the vast majority of victims were adults.

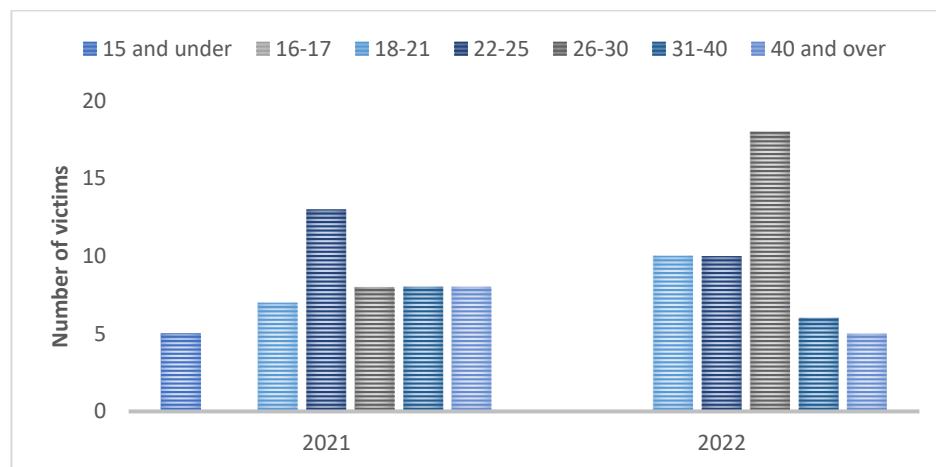


Figure 7 – Age of victims with disabilities, 2021 and 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics).

As Figure 7 shows, the clearest difference is that there were fewer cases with victims aged 22-5 in 2022 than 2021, and many more with victims aged 26-30.

Numbers for cases were only provided for four regions in 2021 and 2022, though victims must have come from other regions (as there were 62 victims with disabilities, and only 46 recorded in specific regions). Again, any region with fewer than 5 victims will have been reported as “[x]” in the statistics. These four regions were: the West Midlands, the North West, London and Yorkshire and the Humber, which were (as noted above) the regions accounting for most cases of FM overall. The West Midlands accounted for most victims with disabilities (26%), followed by London (19%), the North West (18%), and Yorkshire and the Humber (11%). This is slightly different to 2021, when the North West accounted for a higher proportion of cases than London (23% compared to 13%). As with the more general statistics, this does not necessarily mean that people with disabilities are more at risk of FM in these regions than those elsewhere – just that where people are at risk in these regions, stakeholders are more likely to reach out to the FMU for advice and support.

As in 2021, Pakistan was the most common focus country for these cases, accounting for 50% of cases (in 2021 this was 49%). Bangladesh was the second focus country in both years (with 19% of cases having it as the focus country in 2022 and 17% in 2021). India was the focus country in enough cases pre-pandemic to be noted, but has not been noted since 2020. This may be due to the change in how cases are recorded by the FMU. The UK and “other” probably had fewer than 5 cases, and in 18% of cases in 2022 the focus country was “unknown” (this was 21% in 2021). Again, this does not show that this issue is peculiarly, and even more strongly, associated with Pakistani, South Asian or Muslim communities, just that the cases where the FMU is approached for advice and support are predominantly from these communities.

Overall, the FM of people who lack of the capacity to consent is evidently an issue in the UK, with at least 62 people are risk in 2022. Causal and contributing factors in these cases, however, may be different than for other cases of FM, and a very specific set of people are at risk.



## Specific Findings about some “Focus Countries”

The FMU also gives more in-depth information about some of the more common focus countries. Here we look at what the data from 2022 tells us about each.

### Pakistan

147 cases had Pakistan as the focus country in 2022, a decrease from 159 in 2021 (but one roughly in line with the general decline in cases – Pakistan was the focus country in 47% of cases in 2021, and 49% in 2022)

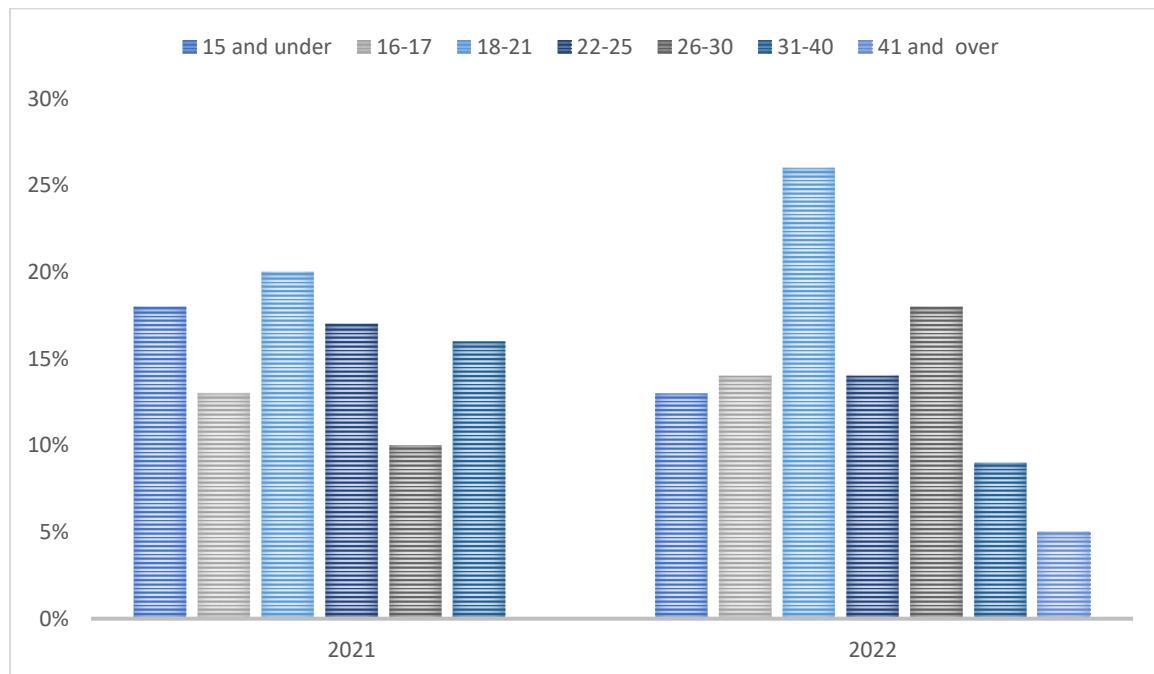


Figure 8 – Age of Victims in cases where Pakistan was the focus country, 2021 and 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics)

Looking at the age of victims in these cases, we can see that people of all ages are at risk. (In 2021 there were fewer than 5 cases, represented as 0 in Figure 8, as a bar chart cannot show “fewer than 5.”) In 2021 no one age was particularly more at risk than any other, under the age of 40. In 2021, far more cases involved victims aged 18-21 than both in 2021 and any other age group in 2022. This should go some way to tackling the widespread myth that those at risk of FM are girls of Pakistani heritage, aged around 16. This is not to say girls of that age and heritage are not at risk, just to highlight that they are not the only people at risk (and certainly not those of the highest risk) even in communities of Pakistani heritage.

As with cases more generally, there were more female victims than male (76% versus 24% in 2022). This is quite a significant shift from 2021 (65% female victims, 35% male), but then 2021 was something of an outlier when it comes to the sex of victims.

Victims were reported in the statistics as being from Yorkshire and Humberside (22%); the West Midlands (21%); the North West (19%); London (8%); the South East (5%) and the East Midlands (6). Fewer than five victims may also have been referred to the FMU from other regions of England and Wales, but the actual figures would not be given to preserve victims' anonymity.



72% of victims (106 people) were in the UK when they were referred to the FMU in a case where Pakistan was the focus country – 27% (39 people) were overseas (probably, but not necessarily, in Pakistan – that is, they might have been in another overseas country, but their intended spouse was in Pakistan, which would potentially have linked Pakistan as a “focus country” to their case). This is in line with 2021, where 71% of cases were in the UK, and 28% overseas.

### Bangladesh

41 cases had Bangladesh as their focus country in 2022, compared to 32 in 2021. This is a relatively significant increase (of 9 individuals), but the FMU always note that when it comes to fairly small numbers of people, the actions of relatively few people (perhaps even just one or two families) can have a significant impact on the statistics.

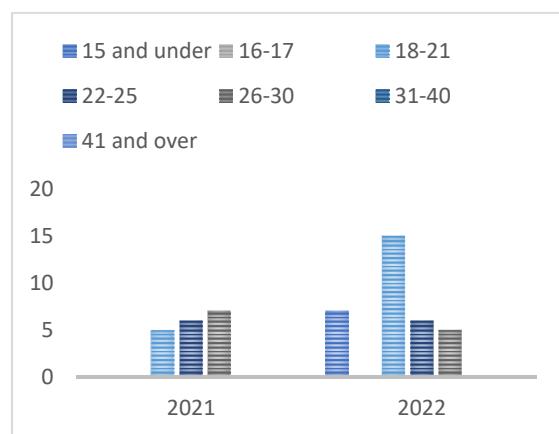


Figure 9 – Age of Victims in cases where Bangladesh was the focus country, 2021 and 2022 (Source: FMU Statistics).

Again, as numbers as so small there may not be much to be gleaned from the differences between 2021 and 2022. In terms of the more general trends since cases were counted in a different way, we can see (as with Pakistan) that very few cases have to do with people aged under 18: between seven and 14 (i.e. seven in 2022 plus a potential maximum of four in 2021, for which only “[x]” meaning “fewer than five” is recorded) cumulatively. Instead, more than five victims are regularly recorded in ages 18-30. Fewer than ten victims in both years combined have been 31 or over (that is, in both years, for the

age ranges 31-40 and 41 and over, “[x]” is recorded in the published data). Again this emphasises that it is not just girls at risk of FM, but women too. However, it also raises a question of where people are turning to for help for child victims, as this small number reported to the FMU is probably not representative of the country at large.

The regions with the highest number of cases were London (39%, 16 individuals), the East (22%, 9 individuals) and the West Midlands (12%, 5 individuals). It is hard to compare with 2021, as only London had enough victims for the raw data to be given (44% of cases, or 14 individuals).

As with Pakistan, victims were mainly in the UK. (There may, or may not, have been a plan to take them out of the UK, as a “focus country” also applies to the country an intended spouse is residing in, and the plan may have been for them to travel to the UK for the FM.) 85% of victims were in the UK in 2022, and 81% in 2021 – in both years 6 individuals were overseas (probably in Bangladesh).

### India

20 cases had India as their focus country in 2022. There was no data provided for India in 2021, so we cannot make comparisons between the two countries. The small number of victims also means there is very little further detail. 75% of victims were female (in line with more general cases), and 90% were in the UK when they were referred to the FMU.

### Conclusions

FM remains a significant issue in the UK, even if cases reported to the FMU have declined between 2021 and 2022. Indeed, this may well not reflect a reduction of cases in the country at large, but a reduction in those being brought to the attention of the FMU (not the only agency with power and a duty to act in this space). Until there is good prevalence data for the whole UK, we cannot say whether the data from the FMU is in any way representative, though the gender split of victims reflects global statistics.

The FMU data does, however, challenge some prevailing myths: not only people aged under 18 are



at risk (for instance), instead victims can be of any age. And although the regions reporting the most cases are ethnically very diverse, victims may come from anywhere in the UK and it is not clear that someone's ethnicity is a driving factor in every case of FM. Further research into the findings of the recent census may show us more about these regions which could suggest contributing causes and potential risk factors for FM though, again, the FMU statistics are probably not representative of

<sup>1</sup> See [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/879927/Forced\\_Marriage\\_survivor\\_s\\_handbook.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879927/Forced_Marriage_survivor_s_handbook.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forced-marriage-unit-statistics-2021/forced-marriage-unit-statistics-2021>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/20/contents>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukssi/2023/88/contents/made>.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> For more information on data-collection, see Karma Nirvana's evidence to the Women and Equalities Select Committee, 31 January 2023, [https://s40641.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/HBA-Evidence\\_23-v3.pdf](https://s40641.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/HBA-Evidence_23-v3.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> As the FMU note, the Home Office has commissioned the University of Birmingham (and the University of Nottingham) to

the issue of FM as a whole across the UK. Certainly, we should be wary of reading these statistics as showing that FM is predominantly an issue for communities of Pakistani heritage and/or for those of South Asian and/or Muslim heritage.

## Author Information

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conduct a feasibility study on how accurate estimations of the prevalence of forced marriage and FGM in England and Wales might be made." (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forced-marriage-unit-statistics-2022/forced-marriage-unit-statistics-2022#focus-country-overview>). Helen McCabe is a Co-I on this project.

<sup>11</sup> See [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_854733.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Police data is returned in the Annual Police data return; Karma Nirvana's data was included in Office for National Statistics data regarding Domestic Abuse from 2022, but this is about all HBA, not just FM; data on Forced Marriage Protection Orders is available from Family Courts, but this is very limited (basically to whether the victim was under or over 18).

<sup>13</sup> LGBT is the terminology used by the FMU.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forced-marriage-unit-statistics-2022/forced-marriage-unit-statistics-2022>