



WATSON ESAM Solicitors

**PRESS
RELEASE**

NO MORE FORCED MARRIAGES

November 25 is White Ribbon Day – when people will be seen wearing white ribbons to show that they don't condone violence towards women. It is also the day that the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 comes into force. From this day, family courts will be able to stop forced marriages taking place and stop anyone from forcing another person into marriage. The courts will also be able to make an order to help remove a person who has already been forced into a marriage from their situation in order to protect them.

Unlike arranged marriages, forced marriages are those where one or both people have not consented to the marriage. More than 400 forced marriages were reported in Britain last year, and more that went unreported. The reality of forced marriage is that they often go hand in hand with violence, harassment and coercion.

The new law has created a forced marriage protection order (FMPO). Unlike a non – molestation or occupation order, where only the victim can make an application, an FMPO can be applied for by the victim, or other parties, such as the police, NSPCC or local authorities, and the order can be made against a wide range of people who for example aid, abet, encourage or assist another person to force or attempt to force a person into marriage. Such people can have various orders placed upon them, for example to:- prevent them from forcing a marriage; hand over passports; stop intimidation and violence; reveal the whereabouts of a person; prevent them from taking someone abroad; prevent them from contacting the victim; change a name.

Orders can relate to conduct in UK or overseas and can have a power of arrest attached to them if violence is involved. This allows the police to arrest someone who has breached an order, without a warrant. If there is no power of arrest attached, the victim or other relevant person can ask the court to issue one.

For further information contact Kate Fitzpatrick at Watson Esam Solicitors, telephone 0114 275 3350 or email kate.fitzpatrick@watson-esam.co.uk

Further information: Watson Esam is one of the oldest established legal firms in Sheffield practising from its offices in Paradise Square. A

medium sized firm with approximately 40 staff, it is well known for delivering first class services to clients in South Yorkshire.

Kate Fitzpatrick is the managing partner and leads the firm's care team. She specialises in children law with a particular interest in public law children work including High Court and child abductions.

She is a member of the Law Society Children's panel.

Kate works for both children and their parents in contentious care proceedings throughout South Yorkshire.

Some of her recent high profile cases have included the restraint of forced marriages and Hague Convention matters.

Kate is a Solicitor-Advocate having been granted Rights of Audience in the Higher Courts (Civil Proceedings). This means that she has the right to present cases as an Advocate in the Higher Courts in all civil proceedings - including family.

The firm's family department won the Yorkshire Lawyer Private Client Award in 2007 and is listed as recommended in The Legal 500.

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immediate