

Implementation of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022

News story

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 received Royal Assent in April this year. It is planned to come into effect on Monday 27 February 2023.



The Act will raise the age of marriage and civil partnership to 18 in England and Wales to protect children from the scourge of forced marriage.

This means that 16 to 17-year-olds will no longer be able to marry or enter a civil partnership under any circumstances, including with parental or judicial consent from 26 February 2023. It will not be possible for anyone under 18 to marry or enter a civil partnership after this date.

Currently forced marriage is only an offence if the person uses a type of coercion, for example threats, to cause someone to marry, or if the person lacks capacity to consent to marry under the Mental Capacity Act. The Act will therefore also expand the criminal offence of forced marriage in England and Wales to make it an offence in all circumstances to do anything intended to cause a child to marry before they turn 18. It will therefore now be an offence to cause a child under the age of 18 to enter a marriage in any circumstances, without the need to prove that a form of coercion was used. The forced marriage offence will continue to include ceremonies of marriage which are not legally binding, for example in community or traditional settings.

For full details of the provisions of this Act, see [Marriage And Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/12). This early announcement will help provide sufficient time for arrangements to be made where necessary.

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