



MAKING A REFERRAL TO FREEDOM FROM TORTURE FOR THERAPY AND PRACTICAL HELP

Freedom from Torture, (formerly the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture) is a human rights organization. We provide rehabilitation services to torture survivors experiencing high levels of psychological distress, within a human rights framework: we provide therapeutic services, advocate for improvements in survivors' social conditions, assist survivors to integrate into society and seek protection for survivors of torture from overseas through our Medico Legal Report service, (please note this service is called the Medical Foundation Medico Legal Report service). We also campaign for an end to torture globally.

As a charity with limited resources, we need to prioritise our services to ensure we assist those survivors of torture most in need of our assistance. This document explains the process we use to decide whether to accept someone who has been referred to us.

When someone is referred to us for psychological therapy, we ask ourselves the following questions when deciding whether to assess them or not:

1. Has the person been tortured or subjected to organised violence, within the meaning of the Freedom from Torture remit?

The Freedom from Torture remit is described below:

“Freedom from Torture’s remit is to provide services to persons who have been tortured, where that term means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity or a member of a defined group with a common political, ideological or religious purpose or ethnic identity and exercising effective power.



Commentary

- 1. The Remit is based on the Committee Against Torture (CAT) definition in Article 1 but with an addition so as not to restrict potential clients eligible for Freedom from Torture services only to those who have been tortured by state agents.*
- 2. It is recognised that the nature of torture is being refined continuously through judicial and other interpretation and Freedom from Torture will consider the definition of torture in its Remit as it evolves.*
- 3. We endeavour to refer victims of domestic violence, female genital mutilation and trafficking to specialist organisations as appropriate.*
- 4. It is not within our Remit to consider violence perpetrated by groups in pursuit of purely criminal gain.*
- 5. The Remit may also include those who have been traumatised by observing torture or related violence on others close to them in relationship or proximity, particularly at a young age. We recognise that a person's chronological age may be different from their mental age and this will be taken into consideration during the intake process.*
- 6. The Remit covers both the Medico-Legal Report Service and clinical treatment services and is to be used for all clients, adults, young people, children and families.*
- 7. The use of "him" and "he" in the remit comes from the language of the original UN Convention which we wish to maintain though it is to be understood internally as referring to "her or him" or "she or he" as appropriate.*

Please contact us if you are unsure about and wish to discuss remit.

2. Is the person experiencing psychological distress as a result of torture or organized violence?
3. Does the person's psychological distress affect their ability to function socially or their relationships?
4. Does the person present a risk to themselves or other people?
5. Is there a risk that the person's psychological health could deteriorate?
6. Is the person experiencing difficulties in the asylum process?
7. Does the person experience difficulties in adjusting to life in the UK as a result of being tortured or subjected to organized violence?



8. Does the person have a social support network in the UK?
9. Have the person's relationships with significant others been affected by their experiences of torture or organized violence?
10. Is the person currently accessing external services which are able to meet any or all of their needs?
11. Are there any services the person could potentially access in the future?

For each of these questions, we consider the degree of difficulty, risk or distress experienced by the person concerned.

When completing the referral form, please give us as much information as possible, especially with regard to these questions.

We recognize that torture affects the partners and families of survivors and can have particularly severe impacts on the well-being of children and young people, who may also have been affected directly. We welcome referrals of children, young people and families affected by torture at all of our centres, excluding the West Midlands.

When deciding whether to assess a child, young person or family, we apply the above criteria and also consider the impact of traumatic experiences on the family or child or young person's development and well-being.

We also offer consultation, training and clinical supervision to other professionals working with survivors of torture and you may like to consider accessing one of these forms of support as an alternative to making a direct referral.