

Marriage customs

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In the Pakistani community in the UK, parents often choose the partner for a daughter or son to marry.

Sirma, 23, from Leicester, has a positive view of this tradition:

'First of all, fewer people get divorced in this type of marriage than in other marriages. In our tradition, you get married when you've just met the person. So, because you haven't been in a serious relationship with them yet, there is a lot to discover about them, which is great.'

'In 'Western' marriages, maybe you have already known the person for ages, so marriage becomes a bit boring. We don't choose our mother and father, but we still love them deeply – so why can't it be the same for a husband or wife?'



2



Everyday objects have played a part in marriage ceremonies for centuries. In the UK, it's traditional for the bride to wear 'something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue' on the day of her wedding. Brides have continued this tradition since the 1800s.

'Something old' represents continuity. This can be an important family possession such as a piece of jewellery from an older member of the family.

'Something new' represents good luck for the future. This is often the wedding ring or the dress.

'Something borrowed' represents support from friends and family. This can be a relative or friend's necklace or earrings.

'Something blue' represents fidelity. This can be anything the bride has or is given that is blue!





Josie is 17 and Billy is 19. They are getting married even though they have known each other for only five months. Josie hasn't had a boyfriend before. Before the wedding, the couple don't spend time alone together without a chaperone, because in this community it ruins the girl's reputation.

'You have to be decent in everyone's eyes,' Josie says. After they marry, Josie expects her husband to work and provide for them, while she cooks, cleans and looks after the children. In lots of ways, marriage traditions in this community are very old-fashioned and haven't changed for years.