

## Female Genital Mutilation

FGM is illegal in the UK. For the purpose of the criminal law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, FGM is mutilation of the labia majora, labia minora or clitoris. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as: “all procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons” (WHO, 1996).

FGM is prevalent in 28 African countries as well as in parts of the Middle East and Asia. It is estimated that approximately 103,000 women aged 15-49 and approximately 24,000 women aged 50 and over who have migrated to England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM. In addition, approximately 10,000 girls aged under 15 who have migrated to England and Wales are likely to have undergone FGM.

FGM is practised by families for a variety of complex reasons but often in the belief that it is beneficial for the girl or woman.

FGM constitutes a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and has severe short term and long-term physical and psychological consequences.

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk.

Taken from [Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation \(Home Office/Department for Education, 2014\)](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines>

### Potential School Action

All staff should be aware of risk factors, warning signs and indicators of FGM as part of their duties around safeguarding. As of the 31st October, 2015, a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report ‘known’ cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police comes into force. Schools should also be aware of what to say (and what not to say) if a girl/young woman discloses that they are at risk of or have suffered FGM. Teachers, along with health and social care professionals, are required under a new mandatory duty in the Serious Crime Act (2015), to report any cases of known Female Genital Mutilation disclosed by anyone under the age of 18yrs to the police.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

Where Female Genital Mutilation is **known** either through **disclosure** or the **observation of physical signs** (through normal day to day practice e.g. nappy changing, personal care etc., school staff should:

- follow their school's child protection policy and report any case of known Female Genital Mutilation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, ensuring a written record of the concern or disclosure
- the teacher should immediately make a report to the police (orally or in writing – recommended route: call 101) providing the following information:
  1. explain that you are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty
  2. your details:
    - name
    - contact details (work telephone number and e-mail address) and times when you will be available to be called back
    - role
    - place of work
  3. details of your organisation's designated safeguarding lead:
    - name
    - contact details (work telephone number and e-mail address)
    - place of work
  4. the girl's details:
    - name
    - age/date of birth
    - address
- the report should be logged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead on the school child protection file or record, ensuring police notification is logged including the case reference number.

Where FGM is **suspected** or recognised as a **risk**, school staff should:

- follow their school's child protection policy and report any case of known Female Genital Mutilation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, ensuring a written record of the concern or disclosure
- refer the case to the Solihull Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The referral should be of good quality clearly stating all known facts. All Female Genital Mutilation cases entering MASH go straight to a strategy discussion, police are informed as part of the multi-agency discussion who update their information and investigate as appropriate.

The [Solihull LSCB](#) webpages provide comprehensive guidance and advice for frontline professionals and their managers, individual's in Solihull's local communities and community groups such as faith and leisure groups on:

- Identifying when a child may be at risk of being subjected to FGM and responding appropriately to protect the child;
- Identifying when a child has been subjected to FGM and responding appropriately to support the child; and
- Measures which can be implemented to prevent and ultimately eliminate the practice of FGM.

[http://solihullscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_fem\\_gen.html#intro](http://solihullscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fem_gen.html#intro)

### **Additional sources of information and advice (awareness raising with staff)**

- The statement available from the weblink below opposing female genital mutilation (FGM) can be taken abroad to explain the criminal status of FGM in the UK. It outlines what FGM is, the legislation and penalties involved and the help and support available.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-opposing-female-genital-mutilation>

- The NHS Choices website gives detailed information about FGM including awareness raising leaflets in a range of languages.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/female-genital-mutilation/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

- The [West Midlands Police](#) website contains help and advice on FGM including links to Home Office factsheets on the issue. <http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/advice-centre/help-and-advice/honour-abuse/female-genital-mutilation/>
- The [NSPCC](#) have an FGM helpline and a range of resources including what to look out for and advice on how to keep children safe. <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>
- The PSHE Association have produced a [FGM PowerPoint](#) presentation which aims to raise awareness amongst school staff to help identify girls at greatest risk of FGM. <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/content.aspx?CategoryID=1193>
- Schools may wish to provide parents/carers with information about FGM including its prevalence, legal status and where to access support. Workshops addressing how to keep their children safe aimed at parents may also be helpful.

### **Curriculum (universal provision through planned PSHE and Science)**

It is up to schools, colleges and universities to decide exactly how they address FGM, taking account of the numbers of pupils from relevant communities. They can, however, create an 'open' and supportive environment by raising awareness through learning in sex and relationship education within PSHE. Listed below are some helpful resources and information about FGM for teachers.

- [Female genital mutilation: resource pack, DfE, 2014](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>

- Infant and primary schools: effective sex and relationship education within PSHE can help pupils keep themselves safe from harm through building their confidence to ask for help, learning that their body belongs to them and giving them the language to describe private parts of their body. The Sex Education Forum and [PSHE Association](#) have advice and guidance on effective teaching and learning in sex and relationship education and PSHE. <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/default.aspx>

- [Key Stage 3 \(Y7\) lesson plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276541/KS3_FGM_lesson_plan.pdf) produced by Islington Council to raise awareness of the practice of FGM and provide information on how and where young people can get help.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/276541/KS3\\_FGM\\_lesson\\_plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276541/KS3_FGM_lesson_plan.pdf)
- The [FGM Fact File - Interactive Teaching Resource](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276899/FGM_game_overview.pdf) is a teaching resource by the Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD) - see 'Training' section below - for use in secondary schools (Y9-11) as part of personal, social and health education. It aims to raise young people's awareness of FGM, help them realise that it is a form of abuse, and make them aware of who and where they can go to for help. There is also a [teachers pack](#) to support the resource.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/276899/FGM\\_game\\_overview.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276899/FGM_game_overview.pdf)
- The film '[Best of British](#)' by Values vs Violence looks at personal choices and values and community cohesion issues, and is aimed at sixth form and university students.  
<http://vvvuk.com/watch-over-me/series-4/>
- A DVD for secondary school staff on how to tackle FGM issues is available from [Integrate Bristol](#), a charity that works towards equality and integration.  
<http://integratebristol.org.uk/2015/03/23/watch-new-films-and-behind-the-scenes-footage-from-integrate-bristol/>

### **Involving other agencies and signposting**

- Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid Helpline: 0808 800 0028 (free from most mobiles and landlines)  
Web: <http://bswaid.org/>  
FGM Project: 0121 685 8687 (ask for Khadija Jaamac)
- NSPCC FGM Helpline: 0800 028 3550 and emails sent to [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk) (a resource for both community and professionals).
- FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development) 020 8960 4000 - [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk)
- Daughters of Eve 07983030488 - [www.dofeve.org/stopping-fgm.html](http://www.dofeve.org/stopping-fgm.html) Daughters of Eve is a non profit organisation that works to protect girls and young women who are at risk from female genital mutilation (FGM).
- African Well Woman's Service (Birmingham Heartlands Hospital) Alison Hughes 0781 7534274  
Weekly clinic Friday mornings
- African Well Women's Service (Birmingham Women's hospital) Alison Hughes 07738 741614  
Weekly clinic Thursday mornings.

## Information for parents

- FGM Factsheet from the Home Office: <http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/docs/advice-centre/help-and-advice/honour-abuse/FGM-Home-Office-leaflet.pdf>
- Statement opposing FGM for parents to take abroad if travelling to high risk countries: <http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/docs/advice-centre/help-and-advice/honour-abuse/A-Statement-Opposing-FGM.pdf>
- NHS Patient Information leaflet on FGM (available in different languages): <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/sexual-health-services/Documents/2903740%20DH%20FGM%20Leaflet%20Acessible%20-%20English.pdf>

## Information for young people

- Information and advice from ChildLine for young people about FGM including what to do if it has happened to you.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/AbuseSafety/Pages/female-circumcision-fgm-and-cutting.aspx>

- The Petals web app has been developed to provide young people with information about FGM.

<http://petals.coventry.ac.uk/>

