



FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits.

FGM involves the removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue, and hence interferes with the natural function of girls' and women's bodies.

The practice causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth also causing dangers to the child.

NB:

- Could be referred to as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) / Female Circumcision (FC) / Female Genital Cutting (FGC)
- Although FGM is practiced by followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism **no Holy Book** advocates it.
- FGM is strongly linked to chastity and virginity and the practice of cutting will often be performed by a woman on other females.

Legal aspects of FGM in the UK

Under the 2003 Female Genital Mutilation Act it is an offence for any person (regardless of nationality or residence status) to:

- Perform FGM in England, Wales & N. Ireland
- Assist the carrying out of FGM in England, Wales & N. Ireland
- Assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales & N. Ireland
- Assist a non-UK person in England, Wales & N. Ireland to carry out FGM outside the UK on a UK national or permanent UK resident.

Prevalence of FGM in the UK

It is estimated that:

- 60,000 girls aged 0-14 were born in England and Wales to mothers who had undergone FGM.
- 103,000 women, aged 15-49, and 24,000 women, aged 50+, who have migrated to England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM.
- 10,000 girls aged under 15 who have migrated to England and Wales are likely to have undergone FGM.

It is believed that FGM may happen to girls in the UK as well as overseas - A young woman from Wolverhampton is the first person in the UK to have been issued joint forced marriage and FGM protection orders. (June 2016)

Possible 'at-risk' factors:

- A girl confides to a professional that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'
- A girl talks about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent
- Parents state that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- A parent or family member expresses concern that FGM may be carried out on

FGM is illegal.

It is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child **abuse and violence** against women and girls.

Statutory Duty:

A **mandatory reporting duty** which requires specified professionals to report known cases of FGM in under 18s to the police. Concerns should be made immediately after a case is discovered.

Additionally, report your concerns to the DSL Team

In their absence your concerns should be passed to the Principal and the local MASH

Annexe: 2016

- FGM is classified as a crime under 'honour based' violence; along with forced marriage and breast ironing.
- Since October 2015, there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases (through MASH) where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.