

Useful contacts:

Police If you think that a young girl or woman is in danger of FGM and is still in the UK call **999** in an emergency or **101**.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office: If the girl has been taken abroad call **020 7008 1500** or **+44(0)20 7008 1500**.

NSPCC 24 hour FGM Helpline: **0800 028 3550**.

Sandwell Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **0121 569 3100**. You will be required to complete a Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF)

Sandwell Adult Social Care Contact Centre: **0121 569 2266** outside office hours, call: **0121 569 2355**

Black Country Women's Aid: **0121 553 0090**

Allies Network: **0121 647 1960**

Muslim Women's Network UK helpline:

0800 999 5786

Guidance:

Practice guidance on dealing with FGM for children's and adults workforces is available in the:

Sandwell Policy and Procedures to Address Female Genital Mutilation

available at: www.sandwell.gov.uk/fgm

To access details of FGM and other training in

Sandwell visit:

<http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse>

If you're a **health professional caring for a patient under 18 who has undergone FGM**, you have professional responsibilities to safeguard and protect her.

Specialist support:

If anyone has had FGM, help is available from a specialist NHS gynaecologist or FGM service – contact local GP, midwife or any other healthcare professional about services in your area. You can download a list of NHS FGM clinics (PDF, 430kb) here:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/fgmclinics



Sandwell Stopping Female Genital Mutilation



www.sandwell.gov.uk/fgm

[www.sandwell.gov.uk/
domesticabuse](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse)

What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

Female Genital Mutilation is any procedure which involves the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is a tradition practiced in more than 28 African countries, the Middle East and parts of Asia.

Justifications for FGM include custom, cleanliness, religion (no religion advocates FGM), preservation of virginity and social acceptance especially for marriage.

Many women believe that FGM is necessary to ensure acceptance by their community; they are unaware that FGM is not practiced in most of the world.

Who is at risk?

School-age girls from communities practicing FGM are most at risk. In the UK, the Home Office has identified girls from the Somali, Kenyan, Ethiopian, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian, Eritrean, Yemeni, Kurdish & Indonesian communities most at risk of FGM. Girls are also at risk if FGM has been carried out on their mother, sister or extended member of their family.

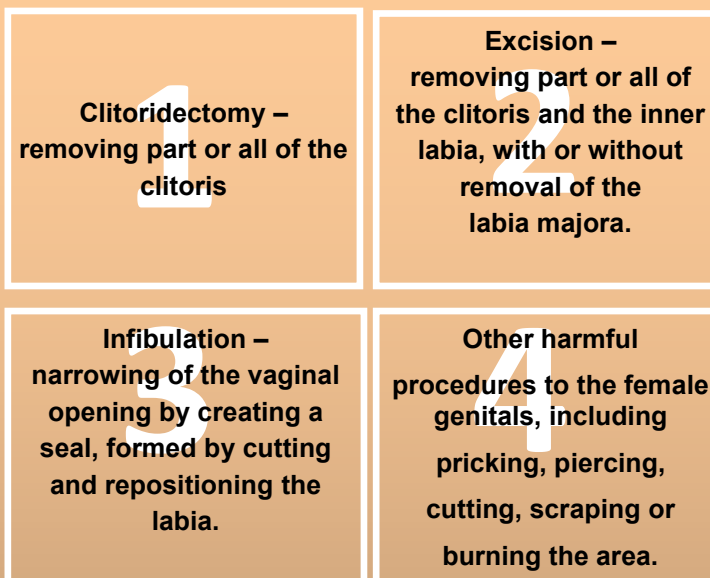
What are the warning signs?

Summer holidays are a key time when some adults take their daughters on 'holidays' with the intention of subjecting them to FGM.

Elders are also flown into the UK to perform FGM on many girls together. If any girls in a family have undergone FGM then this increases the risk for other girls in the family.

It is important to note that FGM is not an act of hate by parents. Some girls may look forward to this 'rite of passage' into womanhood as it signifies their status in the community and is often accompanied by parties and giving of presents.

Types of FGM



Girls who have undergone FGM may have a long absence from school. When they return they might spend a long time in the toilet, they could be in pain and may exhibit symptoms of abuse and/or a change in behaviour.

What can you do?

If you are concerned that a girl is at risk of FGM, this is a child protection issue and must be immediately shared with Children's Social Care, and / or the Police Child Protection team (see 'useful contacts' for contact details).

If you work in a school, ensure that parents are aware that FGM is illegal in the UK regardless of the country in which it is performed. Find out more through FGM awareness training for professionals (see over).

FGM and the Law

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation.

It is now 'an offence to take UK nationals and those with permanent UK residency overseas for the purpose of circumcision, to aid and abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM. It is illegal for anyone to circumcise women or children for cultural or non-medical reasons.'

A person convicted of an offence under the FGM Act 2003 is liable to imprisonment for up to 14 years.

Health Implications

There are no health benefits to FGM and it can cause serious harm, including:

- Constant pain
- Pain and/or difficulty having sex
- Repeated infections, which can lead to infertility
- Bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- Problems passing urine or incontinence
- Depression, flashbacks and self-harm
- Problems during labour and childbirth, which can be life-threatening for mother and baby

Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure.

(NHS Choices, Nov 2017)

Professionals and volunteers from all agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM.