

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

What is FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons (partial or total). It is also known as female circumcision, cutting or Sunna and is a criminal offence within the UK. FGM is often carried out by someone who has no medical training using a variety of sharp objects such as knives, glass, scissors or razor blades. Anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment is rarely used and children are often forcibly restrained.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health. FGM can happen at any time in a girl or woman's life:

- When a baby is new born
- During childhood or as a teenager
- Just before marriage
- During pregnancy

In the UK, girls from the Somali, Kenyan, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian, Eritrean, Yemeni, Kurdish and Indonesian communities are most at risk of FGM.

If you think that a child may be at risk of FGM or if you suspect that FGM has already occurred, you must seek help and advice – even if the FGM didn't happen recently.

Call the dedicated FGM helpline on 0800 028 3550
or e-mail fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Any concerns should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead. It is essential that you take action without delay and make a referral to ICRT. If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.

Under Section 5 of the Criminal Law (Northern Ireland) Act 1967 it is an offence to fail to report a 'relevant offence' to the police. This includes:

- knowing or believing that an offence has been committed
- having information which could lead to the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of an offender.

What may cause you to have concerns about FGM?

- The female may have difficulty walking, sitting or standing; they may find it difficult to sit still and/or look uncomfortable
- You may notice physical changes to a child when nappy changing or supporting them with intimate care
- If toilet trained, they may spend longer than normal in the bathroom
- You may notice unusual behaviour after they have been absent from the setting for a period of time e.g on return from a holiday abroad
- They ask for help or tell you they are in pain
- Bladder problems/repeated urinary tract infections
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Disclosure

Safeguarding

In case of an immediate referral contact Integrated Contact Referral team (ICRT)

Children's Safeguarding	8.30am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 4.45pm Friday	0191 561 7007
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The Out of Hours Team	Available Monday-Thursday 5.15-8.30am and from Friday 4.45pm - until Monday 8.30am. 24 hours Saturday and Sunday	0191 520 5552
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A written referral must be sent within one working day to
safeguarding.children@togetherforchildren.org.uk

In the case of an Allegation

Designated Officer (LADO)	lado@togetherforchildren.org.uk	0191 561 3901
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Early Help

Early Help Advice and Allocations Team	Early Help Together for Children	0191 561 4084
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For more information

SSCP Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership - Home Page
(safeguardingchildrensunderland.com)

NSPCC nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm

Free FGM Training Online | Recognising & Preventing FGM Free Course | Virtual College
(virtual-college.co.uk)

FGM – the facts leaflet (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information - GOV.UK](#)
(www.gov.uk)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Brought to you by the Childcare Team:

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