



Female Genital Mutilation

With you every step of the way

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0800 040 7675
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What is FGM?

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence.

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.

How common is FGM?

FGM is a hidden crime, so we don't know exactly how common it is. Even partial removal or 'nipping' can risk serious health problems for girls and women.

FGM is usually performed by someone with no medical training. Girls are given no anaesthetic, no antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained. The cutting is made using instruments such as a knife, pair of scissors, scalpel, glass or razor blade.

There are an estimated 137,000 women and girls with FGM in England and Wales.

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What the law says

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. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

From July 2015 anyone can apply to the court for an FGM Protection Order if they are concerned that someone is at risk of FGM. Breaching an FGM Protection Order is a criminal offence with a maximum sentence of 5 years imprisonment.

From October 2015, the FGM Act 2003 (as amended by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) introduced a mandatory reporting duty for all regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales. Professionals must make a report to the police, if, in the course of their duties:

- they are informed by a girl under the age of 18 that she has undergone an act of FGM, or
- they observe physical signs that an act of FGM may have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

(Home Office, 2015)

Policy and guidance

Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation

This document gives health and social care professionals, teachers and the police information on their responsibilities under the female genital mutilation (FGM) mandatory reporting duty which came into force 31 October 2015. Covers: when and how to make a report; next steps following a report; and failure to comply with the duty.

What you should do if you suspect a child is at risk of FGM

If you suspect that FGM has happened, even if it's not recently, you must seek help and advice: call the FGM helpline on 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

For further information visit

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>



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