

1 Definition

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) involves all procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK, it is also a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of female genital mutilation abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

FGM is sometimes known as 'female genital cutting' or female circumcision. Communities tend to use local names, for referring to this practice, including 'sunna'.

2 Background

FGM is practised in 28 countries in Africa and some in the Middle East and Asia. FGM is also found in the UK amongst members of migrant communities. It is estimated that approximately 60,000 girls aged 0-14 were born in England and Wales to mothers who had undergone FGM.

UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyan, Somali, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian and Eritrean. Non-African communities that practise FGM include Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani.

3 Why it Matters

FGM constitutes physical and emotional abuse and is a form of violence against women and girls which has immediate and long-term health consequences, including severe pain, blood loss, shock, mental health problems, complications in childbirth and/or death. However, the issue is complex, and despite its very severe health consequences, some parents and others who want their daughters to undergo this procedure do not intend it, or regard it, as an act of abuse.

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Risks and Signs

- The family comes from a community known to practise FGM
- Any female child born to a woman who has been subjected to FGM or has a relative that has undergone FGM must be considered at risk, as must other female children in the extended family
- Preparations being made for an extended period abroad or absence from school
- Mention of a special procedure/ceremony that is going to take place

7 Further Reading

[Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Procedures](#)

Home Office FGM Unit
FGMEnquiries@home
office.gov.uk

NSPCC FGM Helpline
0800 028 3550



7 Minute Briefing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)



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What to do

The [FGM mandatory reporting duty](#) is a legal duty requiring regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the Police where they:

- Are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observe physical signs which appear to show an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18, for non-medical reasons

Any information or concern that a female is at immediate risk of, or has undergone FGM should result in Police notification and a safeguarding referral to the Local Authority

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FGM Act (2003)

- Provides lifelong anonymity for victims of FGM
- Introduces FGM Protection Orders to protect victims or potential victims of FGM
- Provides mandatory reporting duty for regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales
- Anyone who commits FGM faces up to 14 years in prison, a fine, or both