

## Anti-female genital mutilation training – handout

**The facts:** Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the cutting or removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. FGM has no health benefits and can be very harmful.

There are different terms for FGM, including ‘sunna’, ‘female circumcision’ and ‘female genital cutting’/‘cutting’.

There are 4 main types of FGM, as classified by the World Health Organization (see WHO website for more info on types). Type 1 and 2 are the most common. These usually include cutting the clitoris.

FGM can be carried out on a girl anytime between infancy and age 15, and occasionally on adult women, from FGM-affected communities.

FGM is usually carried out by a female elder, with no anaesthetic and basic tools such as knives or razor blades. However, in some countries, doctors perform FGM as an operation. This is called medicalisation and it is illegal in most counties as it is still extremely harmful.

### Types of harm that FGM can cause:

- Severe pain and blood loss
- Shock
- Difficulty passing urine
- Infections
- Back pain
- Infertility
- Risks during pregnancy and birth
- Psychological harm
- Death

### Reasons for FGM:

- To control female sexuality
- To maintain ‘virginity’ before marriage
- To prepare for marriage
- To be part of the group
- Pressure from family / community
- Rite of passage and maintaining ‘honour’
- Out of love

Communities who practice FGM live mainly in 30 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and in other countries such as the UK where people have migrated from these areas.

FGM is **not** a religious practice. It is practiced across all major religions and predates all of them!

More than 200 million girls and women alive today have experienced FGM and it is estimated that there are more than 137,000 survivors in the UK.

FGM is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to take a girl abroad to be cut. Anyone found guilty of an FGM offence – or of helping somebody commit one – faces up to 14 years in prison. Anyone found guilty of failing to protect a girl from the risk of FGM faces up to 7 years in prison.

There may be warning signs that FGM is planned / has been carried out on a girl. Please refer to the **National FGM Risk Assessment Tool**. This can be found on the Oxford Against Cutting website, under **resources > safeguarding**.

### Safeguarding

If you talk to a girl about FGM, please bear in mind the following:

- Find a private space
- Use independent translators (if needed)
- Avoid judgemental language
- Use the same terminology that the girl uses
- Maintain a record of your conversation
- Don’t promise not to share information

NB. Never approach the family (unless advised by Social Care).

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

If a girl tells you she has FGM or you see it, call 101 (national crime number). This is your **mandatory reporting duty** as a teacher.

If you are concerned that a girl may be at risk / has had FGM then you need to make a **report** to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)/Children’s Social Care

## Helpline numbers

**Police – 999**

**NSPCC** 0800 028 3550 (FGM Helpline) - a free 24hr service for advice, information or support.

Email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

**Childline** 0800 11 11 (this number will not show up on a phone bill)

**FORWARD** (Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development) 020 8960 4000

**Home Office** You can get information from the Home Office that might help you argue against FGM. You can obtain a small leaflet to carry with you about the UK law in various languages on tel. 0870 241 4680.

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office** +44 (0) 20 7008 1500 Call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if you are abroad and need help or advice.



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ProtectingGirls&Women

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