

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)– 7 Minute Briefing

1. Background

FGM involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is **prevalent in 30 countries** mainly concentrated in the Western, Eastern, and North-Eastern regions of Africa, some countries in the Middle East and Asia, as well as among migrants from these areas. FGM may happen to girls in the UK as well as overseas FGM is therefore a global concern.

2. Why it matters

More than 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut. FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls. It has no health benefits but rather immediate and long term physical and psychological consequences. The procedure may be carried out soon after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy. Girls may be taken to their country of origin during school, holidays. FGM can be linked to forced marriage and honour based violence. The practice is not required by any religion

3. The Law

FGM is illegal in the UK and can result in 14 years imprisonment. It is an offence for someone to perform FGM or assist a girl to carry FGM out on herself both in the UK or abroad. As amended by the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) the [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#) now provides lifelong anonymity for victims, FGM Protection Orders and a professional mandatory reporting duty of known cases under 18 years to police

4. Risk Indicators

- Mother has undergone FGM
- Girl discusses special occasion/ceremony to 'become a woman' /prepare for marriage
- Long holiday abroad/ going 'home' visiting family
- Unexpected absence from school and is from a practicing community
- Relative/ cutter visiting from abroad
- Female relative being cut
- Avoids exercise
- Spends longer in bathroom
- Recurrent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Travel vaccine request for country prevalent for FGM
- Difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- Reluctant to undergo routine medical examinations

5. Key Guidance

- Home Office co-ordinates efforts and offers outreach support to local areas.
- [Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM](#) (Home Office, April 2016)
- [Mandatory Reporting Guidance](#) (Home office 2016)
- Further documents and resources for professionals are available [here](#)
- Greater Manchester FGM strategy and action plan

6. What to do

- Follow the [Greater Manchester FGM protocol](#)
- Follow Salford's supporting [local FGM pathway](#)

If you think a child is in immediate danger don't delay - call the police on 999

Training

- [Recognising and Preventing FGM](#) (Home Office)
- [SSCB FGM seminar](#)

Support

[Guardian Project](#) are available to provide specialist support for girls and young women

Tel: 077449 651677

Email guardian.project@outlook.com

7. Questions

- Have you undertaken any training round FGM
- Do you routinely consider FGM?
- Do you know what FGM is and how to spot the signs?
- Do you use independent interpreters?
- Do you know what to do/ where to refer if you suspect/find FGM?
- Do you know who your FGM agency lead is?