



THE **source**

The Source Academy Safeguarding Newsletter

June 2017

According to the NSPCC, there are an estimated 137,000 women and girls affected by FGM in England and Wales. **FGM is illegal**, we need to be vigilant and be aware of the signs and effects of FGM. **FGM is abuse.**

What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.

It's also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting", and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse.

It's very painful and can seriously harm the health of women and girls. It can also cause long-term problems with sex, childbirth and mental health.

There are four main types of FGM:

- **Type 1 (clitoridectomy)** – removing part or all of the clitoris.
- **Type 2 (excision)** – removing part or all of the clitoris and the inner labia (lips that surround the vagina), with or without removal of the labia majora (larger outer lips).
- **Type 3 (infibulation)** – narrowing of the vaginal opening by creating a seal, formed by cutting and repositioning the labia.
- **Other harmful procedures** to the female genitals, including pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping or burning the area.

FGM is often performed by traditional circumcisers or cutters who do not have any medical training. However, in some countries it may be done by a medical professional.

- Anesthetics and antiseptics aren't generally used, and FGM is often carried out using knives, scissors, and scalpels, pieces of glass or razor blades.
- FGM often happens against a girl's will without her consent and girls may have to be forcibly restrained.

For more information:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

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

<http://www.sycf.org.uk/sheffield-female-genital-mutilation-fgm-partnership-awareness-raising-event/>

Effects of FGM

There are no health benefits to FGM and it can cause serious harm, including:

- constant pain
- pain and/or difficulty having sex
- repeated infections, which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- problems passing urine or incontinence
- depression, flashbacks and self-harm
- problems during labour and childbirth, can be life-threatening for mother and baby
- Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure.

The Signs of FGM

A girl at immediate risk of FGM may not know what's going to happen. But she might talk about or you may become aware of:

- a long holiday abroad or going 'home' to visit family
- relative or cutter visiting from abroad
- a special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman' or get ready for marriage
- a female relative being cut – a sister, cousin, or an older female relative such as a mother or aunt.

A girl or woman who's had female genital mutilation (FGM) may:

- have difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- spend longer in the bathroom or toilet
- appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear

Sources - <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/female-genital-mutilation/Pages/Introduction.aspx> and <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/signs-symptoms-and-effects/>

The Law and FGM

FGM is illegal in the UK. It is an offence to:

- perform FGM (including taking a child abroad for FGM)
- help a girl perform FGM on herself in or outside the UK
- help anyone perform FGM in the UK
- help anyone perform FGM outside the UK on a UK national or resident
- fail to protect a girl for whom you are responsible from FGM

Anyone who performs FGM can face up to 14 years in prison. *Anyone found guilty of failing to protect a girl from FGM can face up to seven years in prison.*

If you have any concerns about a learner please follow the safeguarding reporting procedure found on the I drive / Safeguarding and speak to the Safeguarding Officers:

- **Andy Womble on 0114 263 5638 / 075843981447**
- **Helen Lee on 0114 263 5619 / 078278552504**

However, if you think it's about to happen, don't delay - call the police on 999 or the NSPCC on 0800 028 3550 straight away