

## Further Information:

[FGM Flowchart](#)

[Rotherham Safeguarding Girls and Women at Risk of abuse through FGM and Breast Ironing](#)

[HM Government Safeguarding Women and Children at Risk of FGM Guidance](#)

[FGM Home Office Campaign](#)

## Context

The medical histories of this group of children may be extensive by the time suspected abuse is identified.

International research findings suggest that up to 10% of these children die and about 50% experience long-term consequent morbidity. One study found that 6% of these children died as a direct result of abuse. A further 12% required intensive care and an additional 35% suffered major physical illness, again as a result of abuse.

## Signs

Suspicious may arise in a number of ways that a child is being prepared for FGM to take place abroad

Signs that a girl or young woman may be at risk include: The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM; mother has been subjected to FGM; Family not well integrated into UK society; parents have poor access to information on the harmful impact of FGM; Parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period; a child may confide to a professional that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to Attend a special occasion.

## Law

Under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 it is an offence for anyone (regardless of their nationality and residence status) to:

- ◆ perform FGM in the UK
- ◆ assist the carrying out of FGM in the UK
- ◆ assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in the UK
- ◆ assist from the UK a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a UK national or permanent UK resident.

## What is it?

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

FGM is commonly believed to be a way of ensuring virginity and chastity.

The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy.

The practice is not required by any religion.

## Why it matters

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls which has immediate and long term health consequences including severe pain and blood loss, shock, mental health problems, complications in childbirth, and/or death.

## Demographics

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are an estimated 130 million women and girls living with FGM worldwide. Most of these women are located in 29 African countries.

In the UK, FGM is increasingly identified amongst migrants from FGM-practising countries.

**There are an estimated 137 000 women in the UK affected by FGM.**