

Useful Contacts

Centre for Development and Community Welfare
[CEDCOW]

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Unit 13 Canning Town Business Centre,
85 Tarling Road,
London E16 1HN
tel: **020 7366 6343**
email: info@cedcow.org
web: www.cedcow.org

Foundation for Women's Health Research and
Development [FORWARD]
web: www.forward.org.uk

Metropolitan Police
Child abuse Investigation Command / Project Azure
tel: **020 7161 2888**

London Safeguarding Children
web: www.londonscb.gov.uk/fgm_resources

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
tel: **020 7008 1500**
web: www.fco.gov.uk/fgm

Childline
tel: **0800 11 11** (24hr free helpline for children)
web: www.childline.org.uk

Child Protection Helpline
tel: **0808 800 5000** (advice for adults worried about
a child)

Together lets say **NO** to Female Genital Mutilation

It is illegal for anyone to circumcise women or children for cultural or non-medical reason. Each year 3 million girls worldwide undergo FGM and hundreds of young girls and women are believed to be genitically mutilated in the UK each year.

CEDCOW believes that this practice violates sexual and reproductive rights of women and creates unnecessary suffering.

No religious doctrine supports FGM

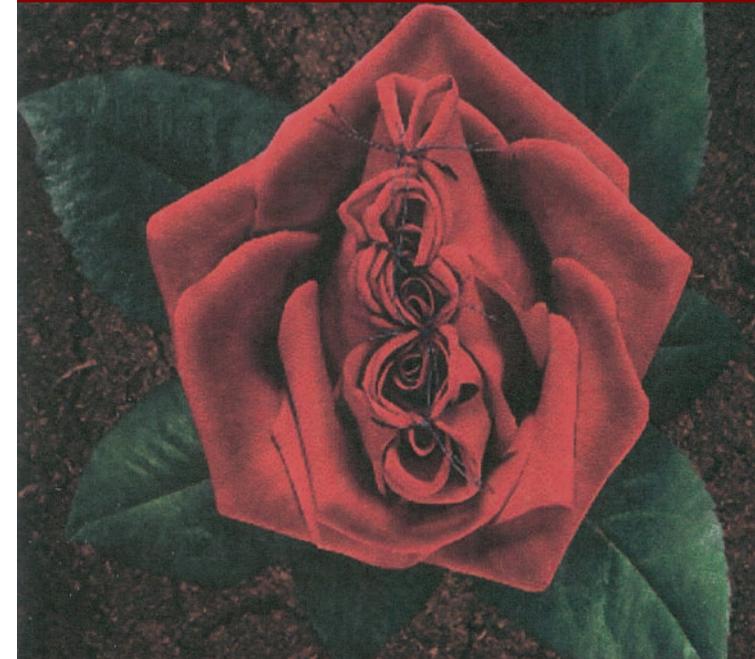
Please be informed, be aware and be ready to flag a concern



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A project supported through the Faith and Action
programme administered by the CDF for the Department
for Communities and Local Government

Female Genital Mutilation



Contact **CEDCOW** for

COMMUNITY SUPPORT & INFORMATION

What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

Female Genital Mutilation is any procedure which involves the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is a tradition practised in 28 African countries and parts of Asia and Latin America. Justifications for FGM include custom, cleanliness, religion (no religious advocates FGM), preservation of virginity and social acceptance especially for marriage. Many women believe that FGM is necessary to ensure acceptance by their community; they are unaware that FGM is not practiced in most of the world.

Who is at risk?

School-age girls in the UK from ethnic minorities especially Somali, Sudanese and Ethiopian where up to 98% of women have been circumcised. A study by FORWARD estimated that about 66,000 women living in England and Wales have been circumcised before leaving their country of origin. Recent findings estimated that 24,000 girls are at risk of being subjected to FGM in Britain. Women who have undergone FGM may also need medical attention or support such as counselling.

What are the warning signs?

Summer holidays are key time when some adults take their daughters on holidays with the intention of subjecting them to FGM.

Elders are also flown into the UK to perform FGM on many girls together. If any girls in a family have undergone FGM then this increases the risk for other girls in the family.

It is important to note that FGM is not an act of hate by parents. Uninformed girls may look forward to this rite of passage into womanhood as it signifies their status in the community and is often accompanied by parties and giving of presents.

Types of FGM

FGM Type 1

Sunna - removal of the hood of the clitoris

FGM Type 3

Infibulation - removal of the clitoris and labia minora with narrowing by stitching of the vaginal opening

FGM Type 2

Excision - removal of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora

FGM Type 4

All other types of harmful traditional practices that mutilate the female genitalia, including pricking, cutting, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterisation

Warning signs continued...

Girls who have undergone FGM may have a long absence from school. When they return they might spend a long time in the toilet, they could be in pain and may exhibit symptoms of abuse and/or a change in behaviour.

What can you do?

If you are concerned that a girl is at risk of FGM, this is a child protection issue and must be shared with other agencies and/or the police Child Protection team (see over for contact details).

If you work in a school ensure that parents are aware that FGM is illegal in the UK regardless of the country in which it is performed. Give parents a copy of the FGM Community Support & Information leaflets developed by CEDCOW. Note that the community terminology is circumcision or cutting rather than FGM. Find out more through FGM workshop, training and events, please contact CEDCOW or relevant agencies overleaf.

People from all walks of life have a moral & legal responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM.

FGM and the Law

All types of FGM have been illegal in the UK since the 1985 Female Circumcision Prohibition Act. The new Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) updates and extends the original act.

It is now an offence to take UK nationals and those with permanent UK residency overseas for the purpose of circumcision, to aid and abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM. It is illegal for anyone to circumcise women or children for cultural or non medical reasons.

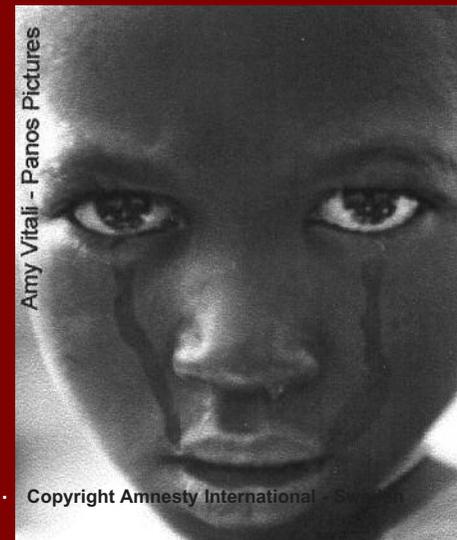
A person convicted of an offence under the FGM Act 2003 is liable to imprisonment for up to 14 years.

Health Implications

Short term health implications include: severe pain and shock; broken limbs from being held down; infection; increased risk of HIV and AIDS; urine retention; injury to adjacent tissues and immediate fatal haemorrhaging.

Long term health implications include: uterus, vaginal and pelvic infections; cysts and neuromas; infertility; increased risk of fistula; complications in pregnancy and child birth; sexual dysfunction; difficulties in menstruation; considerable psycho-sexual psychological and social consequences; trauma; flashbacks and depression.

An estimated 10% of victims die from short-term effects and 25% from recurrent problems.



Amy Vitaji - Panos Pictures