



Inspiring Learning For A Positive Future

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Fact Sheet

**Female Genital Mutilation is Child Abuse and a current national and local safeguarding priority**

### The Law and FGM

- FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against women
- Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 will be liable to a maximum penalty of a fine or imprisonment of up to 14 years, or both
- Section 5B of the Act introduced a mandatory duty requiring anyone knowing about FGM to report their concern. This came into force in October 2015

### What is FGM?

- Involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons
- It has no health benefits and causes harm in many ways. It is traumatic and is a violent act
- It involves removal and damage to healthy and normal female tissue and interferes with the natural function of a child or woman's body
- It causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term health consequences, including difficult childbirth, causing dangers to the child
- FGM is prevalent among women aged 15-49 in Africa and the Middle East

### How is FGM carried out?

- Usually by an elder woman in the community. Generally girls are restrained by other women
- UK girls are sometimes taken on 'holiday' to become a woman
- Communities in the UK have their own practitioners here
- Non-sterile equipment is used i.e. razor blades, scissors, and shards of glass or sharp stones etc.

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### Why is FGM carried out?

- Cultural identity
- Gender identity- moving from a girl to a woman-enhancing femininity
- Sexual control-believed to reduce the woman's desire for sex and therefore the possibility of sex outside marriage
- Hygiene/cleanliness-unmutilated women are regarded as unclean

### Facts about FGM

- For the period September 2014 to March 2015 3,963 newly identified cases of FGM were reported nationally and 60 newly cases of FGM reported were under the age of 18
- Religion is NOT a basis for FGM

### Indicators that FGM may be about to take place

- The family come from a community that is known to practice FGM, e.g Somalian, Sudanese and other sub-Saharan countries
- Parents taking children out of school for a prolonged period
- A child may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- A child may disclose that she is to have a 'special procedure' celebration or party

### Indicators that FGM may have already taken place:

- A child may be presenting with bladder problems or menstrual problems
- Prolonged absence's from school and noticeable changes in behaviour
- The child asking to be excused from PE

**FGM is a fundamental human right issue with adverse health and social implications. It violates the rights of girls and women who should have the right to live free from violence and coercion without being forced into marriage. FGM causes lifelong physical and psychological issues**

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