

Female Genital Mutilation

Self-help booklet

What is Female Genital Mutilation?

Female genital mutilation (“FGM”) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, when there’s no medical reason for this to be done. Some families may believe that FGM will benefit the girl, this can include preparing them for marriage.

FGM can happen at any age but normally happens to young girls before puberty starts. FGM is painful and can cause long-term problems and complications.

It is also known as “female circumcision” or “cutting”. It is illegal in the UK, and it is illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM, or to help someone who is trying to perform/arrange FGM.

What can you do?

FGM can happen in the UK or abroad. In the summer holidays, it is more common for FGM to occur. It is important to be aware of signs that you may be at risk for FGM, this can include:

- A relative visiting from abroad, they could be known as a ‘cutter’
- Siblings or relatives having previously undergone FGM
- An upcoming long holiday abroad, this could be in the summer holidays or in term time
- An upcoming special occasion often centred around becoming a woman

If you are worried about being a victim of FGM, you can call the free NSPCC helpline on 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk. If you are in immediate danger call 999.

If you are worried about being taken abroad for FGM, you can conceal a small metal object like a spoon in a discreet place such as in your underwear. If travelling through an airport this will be picked up by metal detectors and security should take you to another room by yourself if you are over 17. This gives you the opportunity to speak to them and ask for help.



You can also apply for a female genital mutilation order; this is a legal document which is designed to protect you and your circumstances. It can include legal requirements such as instructing certain people not to take you overseas. To find out more and apply for one visit - [Get a female genital mutilation protection order - GOV.UK](#)

If you are worried but unsure that an upcoming holiday may lead to FGM, you can tell a trusted adult about your concerns and create a code word that will alert them that you are in danger. If possible, give them your details, including passport number and where you are going, so they know where you are when they alert the relevant people.

If FGM has already taken place you can access support services such as your local victim service. If you are feeling unwell or would like to seek a medical opinion after FGM has taken place, call 999 in an emergency or you can visit a local FGM clinic, find your local clinic here - [National FGM Support Clinics - NHS - NHS](#)

What can NSVCS do?

Through our victim services, we are here to support anyone who has been affected by female genital mutilation. Our person-centred approach aims to empower and build resilience; we provide the necessary tools to navigate your recovery journey and move forward from the impact of crime. Support offered by our victims' services is free, independent and confidential, and available to victims and witnesses regardless of whether the crime has been reported or not.



We can help in the following ways:

- Emotional support
- Advocacy
- Support through criminal justice processing
- Signposting and onward referrals
- Access to Restorative Justice
- Practical Support including crime prevention and safety advice

Useful organisations

Daughters of Eve - works to protect girls and young women at risk from FGM.

The Mix - information and support for under 25s on a whole range of issues, including rape and sexual assault as well as safe sexual relationships. Get confidential help by email, text, webchat or phone: 0808 808 4994.

Female genital mutilation | FORWARD

Karma Nirvana - an organisation helping those who are victims of honour-based abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation - Prevent & Protect | NSPCC: The NSPCC has a FGM helpline, 0800 028 3550

National FGM Support Clinics - NHS - NHS: The NHS has FGM clinics where you can discuss your needs in a sensitive and non-judgmental environment.



Reporting

You can also report to the police:

- In an emergency always call 999.
- In a non-emergency call 101
- Report online - [Contact us](#) | [Police.uk](#)
- Visit a local police station
- To report a crime anonymously, contact Crimestoppers at 0800 555 111, or visit [Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously](#) | [Crimestoppers](#)

