



IHPE Position Statement: Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Key Information

- FGM is described by the World Health Organisation as: "*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.*"
- Also referred to as female genital cutting (FGC) or female circumcision.
- More than 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut.
- FGM is classified into 4 major types.
- FGM has no health benefits.
- FGM can cause a variety of severe short and long term health problems, such as severe bleeding and difficulties urinating, and later cysts, infections, as well as complications in childbirth.
- FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and adolescence, however can and is performed at any age.
- FGM is a form of child abuse and the practice is illegal in the UK.
- It is estimated that within the UK there are 137,000 women living with the consequences of FGM and new cases are still being recorded.

Statement

1. The Institute of Health Promotion and Education believes that FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.
2. FGM is a global concern.
3. Action is needed in many countries including high income ones.
4. The Institute of Health Promotion and Education will support efforts to eliminate FGM.
5. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in protecting children from harm such as FGM.
6. Professionals should be encouraged and supported to work together to protect girls and women at risk of FGM.

7. Interventions intended to eliminate the practice of FGM should be based on engagement with those cultural or ethnic groups who practise it.
8. Interventions should be devised to meet the physical, mental and social needs of women and girls who have undergone FGM.
9. Legislation in relation to FGM exists in many countries. These laws should be continuously monitored to assess effectiveness in preventing FGM.
10. There is a need for increased training and education for certain professional groups including health and education staff, in identifying girls and women who are at risk and supporting those who have undergone FGM.
11. The Institute of Health Promotion and Education advocates that a statutory and comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) programme should be introduced in all schools. FGM should be included as one important element of this.
12. Further research is needed including: about the reasons for and consequences of FGM; why key individuals carry out the procedures; and, how FGM can be eliminated in different contexts.
13. There needs to be increasing advocacy for this important public health issue at local, national and international levels.

Organisations and resources

Department of Health (UK)

Guidance: Safeguarding women and girls at risk of FGM. (Last updated January 2017).

- FGM safeguarding pathway
- FGM risk assessment templates
- Female genital mutilation risk and safeguarding: guidance for professionals

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-women-and-girls-at-risk-of-fgm>

The Home Office (UK)

Free online training package dealing with FGM, developed with Virtual College. To help professionals identify and assist girls who are at risk of FGM. Target groups include: teachers, police, doctors, social workers and Border Force staff.

<https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/news/virtual-college/2014/08/home-office-intensifies-fight-against-fgm-with-online-training>

FORWARD

Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development is committed to gender equality and safeguarding the rights of African girls and women.

<http://forwarduk.org.uk/>

Local authorities (UK) e.g. Nottingham City Council

- The City of Nottingham was the first City in the UK to declare a zero-tolerance stance on FGM.
<http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/nipd/2016/09/12/sheriff-nottingham-take-zero-tolerance-stance-female-genital-mutilation/>
- Joint strategic needs assessment – FGM (2017)
http://jsna.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/insight/Strategic-Framework/Nottingham-JSNA/Children-and-young-people/Female_Genital_Mutilation_2017.aspx

Local Government Association (2015)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): A Councillor's Guide February. London: LGA.
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/female-genital-mutilation-136.pdf>

Macfarlane A, Dorkenoo E (2014)

Female Genital Mutilation in England & Wales: Updated statistical estimates of the numbers of affected women living in England and Wales and girls at risk. London: Equality Now and City University London; www.equalitynow.org
<https://www.equalitynow.org/content/prevalence-fgm-england-and-wales>

Mojatu Foundation

Supports Human rights of individuals, especially girls and women.
<http://www.mojatu.com/end-fgm>

The National FGM Centre

This is a partnership between Barnardo's and the Local Government Association to achieve a systems change in the provision of services for girls and women affected by FGM. Funded initially by the Department of Education.
<http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/>

NSPCC

They work directly with children and families across the UK and collaborate with frontline professionals and researchers.
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/>
NSPCC has helpline dedicated to FGM that is anonymous and open 24/7.
Tel: **0800 028 3550**

PSHE Association

The national association for PSHE education professionals. Providing members with dedicated support, resources, training and guidance. Resources include: resource pack, information sheet, and presentation for staff.
<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/search/node/fgm>

Royal College of Nursing

The RCN is actively engaged in promoting best practice to help raise awareness about FGM. The RCN has information and resources on FGM and Safeguarding.
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/female-genital-mutilation>

The Sex Education Forum

Is a group of local and national organisations and practitioners based at the National Children's Bureau (NCB). It has campaigned for the last 30 years for good quality sex and relationships education for all children and young people.
<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/about-us.aspx>

28 Too Many

A charity created to end FGM in the 28 African countries where it is practised and in other countries across the world where there are diasporas of practising communities.

<https://www.28toomany.org/>

UNICEF

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Global Concern. UNICEF, New York, 2016.

https://www.unicef.org/media/files/FGMC_2016_brochure_final_UNICEF_SP_READ.pdf

UN Women in partnership with the UNFPA-UNICEF (2017)

Training Manual on Gender and Female Genital Mutilation. Santo Domingo: UN Women.

<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/data/view.php?d=6&rid=5424>

World Health Organisation

- Eliminating female genital mutilation. An interagency statement - OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO
- Fact sheet
- Global strategy
- Health risks

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

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<https://ihpe.org.uk/>

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