

Do you have concerns about FGM?

FGM is a form of child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK

FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names. FGM is carried out for a number of cultural, religious and social reasons. Some families and communities believe that FGM will benefit the girl in some way, such as preparing them for marriage or childbirth. But FGM is a harmful practice that isn't required by any religion and there are no health benefits of FGM.

Key Terms associated with FGM

'Cutter' A 'cutter' is somebody who carries out FGM. They might use things like knives, scalpels, scissors, glass or razor blades to carry out the procedure.

'Cutting season' This refers to the summer months – often July, August and September – when many girls are on break from school. This is often the period when girls have time to undergo FGM. Girls might be flown abroad during this time, so it's important to be aware of this risk.

Signs of FGM

A child who's at risk of FGM might ask you for help. But some children might not know what's going to happen to them. So it's important to be aware of the signs.

Signs FGM might happen

- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad
- A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'
- A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM
- A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays
- A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school
- A girl struggles to keep up in school
- A girl runs away – or plans to run away - from home.

You might have heard female genital mutilation (FGM) be called a different name. Some common names for FGM include:

Female Circumcision, Cutting, Sunna, Gudniin, Halalays, Tahur, Megrez and Khitan.

Support - For Parents/Carers

If you're worried a child is at risk of or has already had FGM, call our free, anonymous dedicated FGM helpline on [0800 028 3550](tel:0800 028 3550) or email fgm.help@nspcc.org.uk.

FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is an African-led women's rights organisation who can offer [guidance on emergency support and advice](#) for those affected by FGM.

Support - For Children and Young People

FORWARD Youth works to ensure the safety, well-being and dignity of girls facing FGM. They have helpful [advice on FGM](#), as well as [support for children and young people](#).

How Childline can help

Children and young people can get support from Childline if they're worried about or have experienced FGM. Childline has lots of helpful [advice on FGM](#), including how to get help and fears about speaking up. Calls to [0800 1111](tel:0800 1111) are free and confidential. Children can also contact [Childline online](#).

Report abuse Call us on 0808 800 5000, email help@nspcc.org.uk