

## Useful Contacts

Cambridgeshire Children's Services

0345 045 5203

Out of Hours - Emergency Duty Team

01733 234724

Police Child Protection Team 101  
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to  
Children 24 Hour Help line  
Tel 0800 800 5000

### FGM Helpline

Email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

Telephone: 0800 028 3550

In an emergency dial 999 or contact your local Police  
Station

Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children Board

01480 373522

[www.cambslscb.org.uk](http://www.cambslscb.org.uk)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Telephone: 020 7008 1500

From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 1500

FORWARD - The Foundation for Women's Health,  
Research and Development - for African women & girls. Tel: 020 8960 4000  
[www.forward.org.uk](http://www.forward.org.uk)

For the UK Government multi-agency practice guidelines on tackling and  
preventing female genital mutilation visit [https://www.gov.uk/government/  
publications/female-genital-mutilation-multi-agency-practice-guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-multi-agency-practice-guidelines)



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[www.cambslscb.org.uk](http://www.cambslscb.org.uk)

or call Cambridgeshire LSCB on 01480 373522

# Female Genital Mutilation



## Factsheet for Women and Girls

## 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 religion 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 practised 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.

It is estimated that in the UK there are approximately **20,000 girls under the age of 15 at risk of FGM every year.**

Women who have undergone FGM may also need medical attention or other support such as counselling.

## 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 Vitali - Panos Pic