

USEFUL CONTACTS

Bedford Borough Children Service's

Phone: 01234 718700

Central Bedfordshire Children Service's

Phone: 0300 300 8585

Luton Children Service's

Phone: 01582 547653

Out of hours Emergency Duty Team

Phone: 0300 300 8123

Police

Phone: 101

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) 24 Hour Help line

Phone: 0800 800 5000

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate

FGM Helpline

fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Phone: 0800 028 3550

In an emergency dial 999 or contact your local Police Station

FORWARD - The Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development - for African women & girls

Phone: 020 8960 4000

www.forward.org.uk

ACCM (UK) is committed to eliminating of all harmful traditional and discriminatory practices that violate Human Rights of girls and women (boys and men), such as FGM.

Phone: 01234 356 910 or 07712482568

Email: info@accmuk.com - www.accmuk.com

The Tulip Trust is dedicated to supporting and Tackling the Taboo, working specifically with women affected by FGM. They offer an anonymous free online support service for women via their website <http://tuliptrust.org/> Monday - Sunday 10.00 am - 10.00 pm
Email: Contact@tuliptrust.org.

Bedfordshire domestic & sexual abuse partnership please visit their website www.bedsdu.org.uk

Brook is the country's largest young people's sexual health charity and provides free and confidential sexual health services, support and advice to young people under the age of 25. To find your local Brook centre please visit their website www.brook.org.uk.

To download this leaflet, please visit;

Bedford Borough LSCB

Phone: 01234 276512

www.bedford.gov.uk/lscb

Central Bedfordshire LSCB

Phone: 0300 300 6455

www.centralbedfordshirelscb.org.uk

Luton LSCB

Phone: 01582 547590

www.lutonlscb.org.uk



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?

FGM can take place when a baby is only a few hours old and could be done without the parents knowledge. There is no age limit as older girls and women are being pressured into having FGM done. 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.

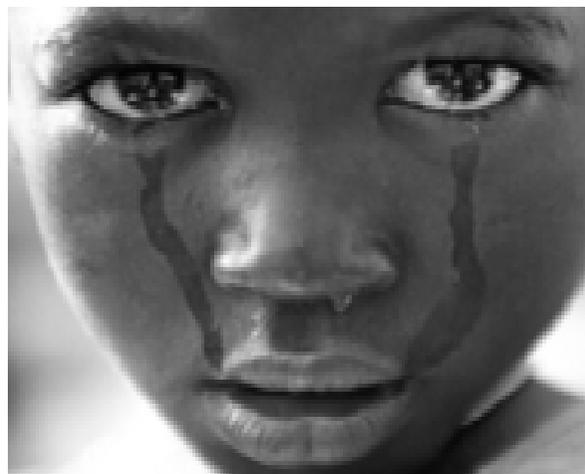
FGM AND THE LAW

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.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a new duty on teachers, social workers and healthcare professionals to report to the police known cases of FGM involving victims aged under 18. This duty came into force on 31 October 2015.

It is now 'an offence to take UK nationals and those with permanent UK residency overseas for the purpose of FGM, to aid and abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM. It is illegal for anyone to perform FGM on 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.



Amy Vitalli - Panos Pictures

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.

If you have any concerns that you have been effected by FGM then please speak to a trusted professional. You have the right to speak to someone of a gender you feel comfortable talking to about FGM.

If you are worried that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, you can contact the Police on 101, Children Services on the contact details below or the 24 hour FGM helpline anonymously on 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.

The free 24-hour helpline has been set up to offer information and support to those concerned that a child has been or may become a victim of female genital mutilation.