

Helping you to protect your daughter from female genital mutilation (FGM)

# Leaflet for families



## Protecting girls with a family history of FGM

If a health professional knows that women and girls in your family have had FGM, this means your daughter has a family history of FGM. This information will be recorded on your daughter's healthcare record, and also as part of her electronic healthcare record using the FGM Information Sharing system.

When your daughter is treated in the future, this information will be made available securely and confidentially to the health professionals who will treat her. This information will help health professionals to work with you to care for your daughter and protect her from harm throughout her childhood.

Before recording this information in your daughter's record, a healthcare professional will discuss this with you and explain what it means and how it will be used. They may speak further with you depending on the circumstances.

Please ask questions and let your healthcare professional know if you require support or translation from an independent interpreter.

**Care**  
**Protect**  
**Prevent**



## What is FGM?

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there is no medical reason for this to be done. It is very painful and can seriously harm women and girls' health. Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure. Women who have had FGM are also likely to experience difficulty in childbirth.

FGM can be carried out on girls of all ages but it may be more common between the ages of 5 and 10. FGM is also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting' and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan amongst others.

FGM is not required by any religion and there are no religious texts which support it or say it should be done.

FGM causes serious harm to girls and women, including:

- constant pain
- repeated infections which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- problems passing urine or incontinence
- depression, flashbacks, self-harm
- labour/childbirth problems which can lead to death

## FGM is illegal

FGM is illegal and it is child abuse. It must never be carried out either here or abroad. It is also illegal to arrange for your child to be taken abroad for the procedure or to help someone else to carry out FGM in any way. Anyone found guilty of this faces up to 14 years in prison and may also be made to pay a fine.

## What help can you get?

If you have had FGM, you can get medical help and support from your GP or any other healthcare professional. Help is also available from your midwife if you are pregnant.

If you are concerned about any girl who may be at risk of FGM tell a health professional or phone the NSPCC helpline

**0800 028 3550**, 24 hours a day.

If you are worried that you may be pressurised by your family, or community to have FGM performed on your daughter, ask your GP, health visitor or other healthcare professional for help.