

1. Background

The term female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting (FGC), refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

It has been estimated that there is an anticipated prevalence rate of 1 in 1,000 females in Blackburn with Darwen based on population data obtained.

In the UK FGM is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The Serious Crime Act amends this to create new offences of failing to protect a girl from FGM, introduction of FGM Protection Orders and a mandatory reporting duty requiring regulated health, social care and teaching professionals to report known cases of FGM in under 18s.

2. Why it matters

FGM is a form of child abuse. The immediate health complications include severe pain, injury to adjacent organs, urine retention, shock, haemorrhage, infections and sometimes death.

Long term implications include chronic pain, infections, scar tissue formation and primary infertility. FGM increases the likelihood of pain during sexual intercourse and it increases the risks of obstetric complications.

The psychological trauma that girls go through during mutilation can stay with them forever and can lead to post traumatic stress, feelings of incompleteness, confusion, betrayal and depression.



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Update

3. Information

It is currently estimated that 75 women living in BwD will have experienced FGM and 34 girls may be vulnerable to this in the future.

Certain countries have a high prevalence of FGM (up to 98%) and these include Egypt, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Iraq, Ivory Coast and Uganda. It is known that there are residents living in BwD who were born in these countries.

If practitioners identify any of the risk factors (annex B) as outlined in the government document Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (available on the address below and LSCB website) they have a duty to report to the Police and Childrens Social Care. Annex D sets out the safeguarding responsibilities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

4. What to do

Do you know how you may recognise the signs/risks?

If you have concerns a child is at risk of FGM you must follow safeguarding procedures, available on: www.lscb.org.uk

A referral must be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01245 666400

The LSCB/LSAB provide free face to face training which covers the practice of FGM and this is available to book on:

<https://v1.bookwhen.com/bwd-safeguarding>

Or a free e-learning course is available on

<https://www.fgmelearning.co.uk>