What is FGM?

FGM means any procedure that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. This includes piercing, pricking, and pulling/elongation.

FGM is also known as ‘cutting’ or ‘female circumcision’ and is sometimes referred to as sunna, thara, niaka, kutairi. FGM is not approved by any religion.

FGM is a harmful traditional practice. Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of FGM. Women can experience health problems throughout their lives and FGM can cause difficulties with childbirth. There are no health benefits to FGM.

Criminal Penalties

Anyone found guilty of an FGM offence – or of aiding and abetting such an offence – faces a penalty of up to 14 years in prison, a fine, or both.

Help & Support

If you are in the UK and have concerns that this may happen to you or someone you know, you can speak to a teacher, doctor, school nurse, social worker, police officer or any health, educational or social care professional. They will be able to help and support you.

You can also call the NSPCC on 0800 028 3550. This is a 24-hour helpline for anyone concerned about girls or women at risk of FGM.

If you are abroad and require help or advice, please call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on +44 (0) 20 7008 1500 or the British High Commission or Embassy in the country you are visiting.

Scottish & UK Legislation

FGM is a crime in Scotland and throughout the UK (1). It is also a crime for a person to carry out, assist or arrange the FGM of another person, even if the actual mutilation occurs outside Scotland.

(1) In Scotland it is illegal under the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
This statement aims to help protect girls from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Keep it in your passport or in a purse or wallet that you carry with you all the time – especially when you go abroad.

You can show it to your family, friends and relatives. This statement makes it clear that FGM is a serious criminal offence in Scotland and throughout the UK, with a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison for anyone found guilty of the offence.

This statement is supported by
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