

(November 2015)



One Minute Guide



What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) ...

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as “...all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended) narrows the definition of FGM **to not include**:

- a surgical operation on a girl that was necessary for her physical or mental health, or
- a surgical operation on a girl who was in any stage of labour, or had just given birth, for purposes connected with the labour or birth

Do you know if you are under a duty to notify the police if you think a child under 18 has been a victim of FGM?

Where a person is in a regulated profession (i.e. a teacher, social worker or healthcare professional) and in the course of their work they believe that that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18 years, they must notify the police.

What does it mean for me?

Phone the police non-emergency crime number, 101, if a girl under 18 you treat:

- Tells you she has had FGM (female genital mutilation)
- Has signs which appear to show she has had FGM

When?

As soon as possible; normally by close of the next working day. Longer timeframes are allowed under exceptional circumstances but always discuss with your local safeguarding lead.

Can someone else do this?

No. This is a personal duty; the professional who identifies FGM/receives the disclosure must report.

Why?

FGM is child abuse and a crime. Health professionals have a responsibility to care for and protect girls.

What if the girl is over 18 but was subject to FGM when she was a child?

The duty **does not** apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases or in cases where the woman is over 18.

What if I don't do this?

If you do not comply, your professional regulator may consider the circumstances under the existing 'Fitness to Practise' proceedings.

What about referring to the Children and Families Service?

If you believe that a child has been the victim of, or is at risk of FGM then you should also refer the child to the Children and Families Service by following the NYSP Referral Process. This is not part of the legal duty to refer but is the action all professionals should take to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.

Where can I find out more information?

Further information is available in the NYSCP Female Genital Mutilation Practice Guidance and the NYSCP Referral Process, both of which are available from:

www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk