

# Female Genital Mutilation factsheet

*also known Female Genital Cutting/ Female Circumcision*

## What is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?

FGM is “any procedure that’s designed to alter or injure a girl’s (or woman’s) genital organs for non-medical reasons.” It comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the genital organs. There are four types of FGM:

1. **Clitoridectomy:** partial or total removal of the clitoris and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris).
2. **Excision:** partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora.
3. **Infibulation:** narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris.
4. **Other:** all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.

It can have serious consequences on a person’s health and can even lead to death. Usual problems are infections, severe pain, heavy bleeding. Long term problems include pain during sex, recurrent urinary tract infections, cysts, abscesses and fertility problems, flashbacks and predictions. It can cause death during labour or for a child to be born stillborn. It is not supported by any religious doctrine.

## Who can be a Victim?

Procedures are mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15, and occasionally on adult women. In Africa, over three million girls are estimated to be at risk for FGM annually. The World Health Organisation estimates over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 in the UK are at risk of FGM each year. It is practiced in 28 countries in Africa and some in the Middle East and Asia, it is also found in the UK amongst members of the migrant communities.

## The Law

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it an offence for anyone to perform or assist in carrying out FGM in the UK, assist or coerce a girl to carry out FGM on herself, or take someone out of the country to subject them to FGM.

It is also an offence for UK nationals/permanent UK residents to perform FGM on any person overseas, even in countries where it is not a criminal offence. As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015, a professional **must** report if a girl under 18 has disclosed they are a victim or is suspected of being a victim of FGM to the police on 101.

## FGM Protection Orders (FGMPO's)

An FGM Protection Order is a civil measure which offers the means of protecting victims or potential victims from FGM under the civil law. Applications for an FGMPO can be made to specialist courts (Hertfordshire uses Luton County Court) by the potential victim, a representative of a local authority (known as a Relevant Third Party – RTP), or any other person with the permission of the court (for example, the police, a voluntary sector support service, a healthcare professional, a teacher, a friend, or family member). The court may also make an order without an application, for example if they are prosecuting an FGM case, they may place an order to protect other family members such as siblings.

The FGMPO may impose prohibitions, requirements and restrictions in order to protect an individual. Terms may include to order that a person surrender his or her passport or any other travel documents (including that of the potential victim), or to order that family members or other named individuals should not aid, abet, counsel, procure, encourage or assist another person to attempt to commit, commit or conspire to commit an FGM offence.

Breach of a FGMPO is a criminal offence under the 2003 Act. A person guilty of an offence is liable to:

- a fine, imprisonment (maximum penalty five years) or both on conviction on indictment
- a fine, imprisonment (maximum penalty 12 months) or both on summary conviction.

As an alternative to prosecution, breach of an FGMPO may be dealt with by the civil route as contempt of court. The maximum penalty for contempt of court is up to two years imprisonment.



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## Further Information

This can be gained from NSPCC – they have an FGM Helpline 08000283550 [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

## Table showing FGM Prevalence and Terms Used

*Based on statistics from Amnesty International and US Government*

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>PREVALENCE</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TERM USED FOR FGM</u>
Benin	5-50%	2	
Burkina Faso	Up to 70%	2	
Cameroon	Local	1 and 2	
Central Africa Republic	45-50%	1 and 2	
Chad	60%	2 and 3	Bagne, Gadja
Cote d'Ivoire	Up to 60%	2	
Djibouti	98%	2 and 3	
Egypt	85-95%	1,2 and 3	Thara, Khitan, Khifad
Eritrea	95%	1,2 and 3	Mekhnishab
Ethiopia	70-90%	1,2 and 3	Megrez, Absum
Gambia	60-90%	2 and 3	Niaka, Kuyungo, Musolula, Karoola
Ghana	15-30%	2	
Guinea	65-90%	1,2 and 3	
Guinea Bissau	Local	1 and 2	Fanadu di Mindjer
Iran	unknown	unknown	Xatna
Kenya	50%	1,2 and 3	Kutairi, Ichana
Liberia	50%	2	
Mali	94%	1,2 and 3	
Mauritania	25%	1 and 2	
Niger	Local	2	
Nigeria	60-90%	1,2 and 3	Ibi/Ugwu, Didabe fun omobirin, Ila kiko fun omobirin
Senegal	20%	2	
Sierra Leone	90%	2	Sunna, Bondo, Sonde
Somalia	98%	3	Gudiniin
Sudan	90%	2 and 3	Halalys, Tahoor
Tanzania	18%	2 and 3	
Togo	12%	2	
Turkey	unknown	unknown	Kadin Sunneti
Uganda	5%	1 and 2	
Zaire	Local	2	



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