

What to do if you are concerned about a girl and FGM.

What is female genital mutilation (FGM)?

FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names.

FGM is a form of child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK.

Why FGM happens

FGM is carried out for a number of cultural, religious and social reasons. Some families and communities believe that FGM will benefit the girl in some way, such as preparing them for marriage or childbirth.

But FGM is a harmful practice that isn't required by any religion and there are no health benefits of FGM.

Support

For parents

If you're worried a child is at risk of or has already had FGM, call our free, anonymous dedicated FGM helpline on [0800 028 3550](tel:0800 028 3550) or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.

FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is an African-led women's rights organisation who can offer [guidance on emergency support and advice](#) for those affected by FGM.

For children and young people

FORWARD Youth works to ensure the safety, well-being and dignity of girls facing FGM. They have helpful [advice on FGM](#), as well as [support for children and young people](#).

How Childline can help

Children and young people can get support from Childline if they're worried about or have experienced FGM. Childline has lots of helpful [advice on FGM](#), including how to get help and fears about speaking up. Calls to [0800 1111](#) are free and confidential. Children can also contact [Childline online](#).

The Department of Health and Social Care has published leaflets for people who want to know [more about FGM](#). These can be found on the NHS website and are available in other languages.