

## What help can you get?

If you have had FGM, you can get medical help and support from your GP or any other healthcare professional. You can get help from your midwife if you are pregnant.

You can also find details of specialist FGM clinics and services at [www.nhs.uk/fgm](http://www.nhs.uk/fgm)

**If you are concerned about any girl who may be at risk of FGM, tell a professional or phone the NSPCC helpline on 0800 028 3550 (open 24 hours a day). Information is available on the NSPCC website;**

**<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>.**

**If you are worried that you may be pressured by your family or community to have FGM performed on you or your daughter, ask your GP, Health Visitor, Teacher or any other professional for help. If a child is at immediate risk, call the Police on 999.**

**For advice, support or to report FGM, please call:**

Children's Social Care on **01225 396312**. For adults with care and support needs please ring B&NES Community Services team on **01225 396000**

If you would like this information in another local community language or a different format, please ring 01225 396350

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**

**NHS**  
*Bath and North East Somerset  
Clinical Commissioning Group*

Thanks to Oxford Against Cutting for allowing us to use the image of the young woman.

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# Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)



**FGM causes serious health and emotional consequences that last a lifetime.**

**It is also illegal in the UK.**

## What is FGM?

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is a collective term for all procedures involving injury to or removal of female genital organs. There is no medical reason for this removal of or damage to healthy and normal female genital tissue and it interferes with the natural body functions. It can seriously harm women and girls' health, causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term health consequences. Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of FGM. Women who have had FGM are likely to experience difficulties in childbirth. FGM is most commonly carried out on girls between 5 and 10 years of age, although girls can be younger or older than this.

## Types of FGM

- Type 1** removing some or all of the clitoris
- Type 2** removing some or all of both the clitoris and the small labia (the "lips" that surround the vagina).
- Type 3** removing some or all of the female genitalia, including the clitoris. Sewing the edges together to leave a small hole.
- Type 4** all other types of harm to the female genitals, including cutting, burning, scraping, pricking, stretching, intimate piercing.

## Why does FGM happen?

It is usually a girl's parents or extended family who arrange for her to have FGM. Reasons for doing it include:

- custom

- religion
- preserving tradition
- preserving virginity
- cleanliness
- protecting so-called family honour
- social acceptance, especially in relation to marriage

These reasons for FGM are based on misunderstanding or lack of awareness. Some believe FGM is required as part of their religion, for example Type 1 FGM is sometimes mistakenly called sunna. But there are no religious texts which support FGM or say it should be done.

## FGM is illegal

FGM is illegal and must never be carried out either in the UK or abroad. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. It is also illegal to help someone carry out FGM in any way. Anyone found guilty of this faces up to 14 years in prison and can be fined.

## FGM causes serious harm to your health

FGM causes serious harm to girls and women, including:

- constant pain
- repeated infections which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- problems passing urine or incontinence
- depression, flashbacks, self-harm
- problems with labour/childbirth which can lead to death
- sexual health and menstrual problems