

National Organisations

FORWARD- Foundation for Women's
Health Research and Development
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London, NW10 5NY
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Website:
www.forwarduk.org.uk

Afruca-Africans Unite Against Child
Abuse
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London, N1 3QP
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Black Women's Health & Family Support
First Floor
82 Russia Lane
London
E2 9LU
Tel: 020 8980 3503
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website: <http://www.bwfs.org.uk>

Local Organisations

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Healthwatch was established in April
2013 and is the consumer champion
for health and social care in England
giving children, young people and
adults a powerful voice.



Female Genital Mutilation

What you need to know



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), is widely practiced in more than 28 African countries, parts of the Middle East, some parts of Asia and in parts of various other countries.

It is not required by any religion and is practiced by Christians, Muslims, Jews and non-believers in a wide range of communities and cultures.

The UK Law

FGM is against the law in the UK under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and is a form of child abuse. It is a very serious crime and carries a penalty of 14 years in prison. It is also an offence to take a female child out of the UK for that purpose or to arrange it. When FGM has occurred after January 2004 the Police will need to be informed.

What is FGM?

There are different types of female genital mutilation depending on the area or community that practices it. The World Health Organisation describes:

Type i

Removal of part or the entire clitoris

Type ii

Refers to removal of part or all of the small labia and includes stitching or

sealing of it with or without the removal of part or the entire clitoris

Type iii

Removal of part or most of the external genitalia with stitching or narrowing of sealing of it with or without the removal of part or the entire clitoris

Type iii

Removal of part or most of the external genitalia with stitching or narrowing of the vaginal opening and sealing of the large labia. This is often called infibulations

Type iv

Refers to stretching or pulling of the clitoris and/or labia: burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue; scraping of the tissue around the vaginal opening or cutting of the vagina. Also introduction of herbs into the vagina to cause bleeding or tighten or narrow it.

FGM/Circumcision is dangerous to health

Short term problems include severe pain, difficulty passing urine, bleeding, infection and death.

For some types **Long term** problems include difficulty passing urine and long painful periods. For type iii there may be a long scar which can make sex and

childbirth difficult. Recurrent infections can lead to infertility.

Women may also feel angry, depressed and suffer from post traumatic stress disorder.

Where you can get support

Medical help such as reversal procedure help with painful periods and difficulty passing urine and psychological support can be obtained through your GP and practice nurse.

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant please speak to your midwife who will be able to advise and support you with any concerns you may have.

In addition parents and children can access these services via the health visitor and school nurse.

Young people can access help from their teachers, college staff or any health professional.