

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Useful information and links for health professionals and travellers about Female Genital Mutilation

Key points

- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 230 million girls and women worldwide have been affected by [female genital mutilation](#) (FGM).
- FGM has no health benefits. It can lead to immediate health risks, as well as long-term complications to women's physical, mental and sexual health and wellbeing.
- Children born in the UK may be at risk of FGM if they travel with their families to visit friends and relatives in countries where this practice occurs.
- In the United Kingdom (UK) it is against the law to perform FGM or to take girls and young women living in the UK abroad for FGM.
- UK health professionals have a [legal duty to report](#) if they find FGM has already taken place or if a child (under 18 years) or a vulnerable adult is believed to be at risk of FGM. Local [safeguarding protocols and procedures](#) should be followed. Failure to do this can result in disciplinary procedures through the appropriate health professional regulatory body under "Fitness to Practise" proceedings.

Resources

- [Department of Health and Social Care. FGM mandatory reporting in healthcare](#)
- [Department of Health and Social Care. Safeguarding women and girls at risk of FGM](#)
- [HM Government. Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#)
- [Home Office: Female genital mutilation: resource pack](#)
- [Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: Female genital mutilation \(FGM\): migrant health guide](#)
- [Royal College of Nursing: FGM guidance for travel health services](#)
- [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Faculty of Travel Medicine: FGM eLearning module](#)
- [World Health Organization: Female genital mutilation](#)
- [World Health Organization: Guideline on the prevention of female genital mutilation and clinical management of complications](#)

REFERENCES

Published Date: 14 Feb 2024

Updated Date: 22 May 2025