Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there is no medical reason for this to be done. It is also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting", and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahrur, megrez and khitan, among others. FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse.

FGM is carried out for various cultural, religious and social reasons within families and communities in the mistaken belief that it will benefit the girl in some way (for example, as a preparation for marriage or to preserve her virginity).

There are no acceptable reasons that justify FGM. It’s a harmful practice that isn’t required by any religion and there are no religious texts that say it should be done. There are no health benefits of FGM.

Girls are sometimes taken abroad for FGM, but they may not be aware that this is the reason for their travel. Girls are more at risk of FGM being carried out during the summer holidays, as this allows more time for them to "heal" before they return to school.

Explore the following links to find out more.

- **NHS Choices**: information looking at a variety of facts surrounding FGM and the long term health implications of FGM on women and girls.  

- **NSPCC**: information and films relating to women and girls effected by FGM. Also links to information on identifying the signs of FGM.  

- **ChildLine**: support and advice for those affected by FGM.  

- **BBC Newsbeat**: news article addressing the issue of FGM in the UK.  
  www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/36838870/the-first-ever-fgm-figures-show-nearly-6000-new-cases-in-england

A copy of the government guidance for local authorities can be found at  
www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation

If you are concerned that a child you work with might be a victim or in danger of female genital mutilation you must follow the safeguarding procedures at your training school.