Dear Colleagues

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and is against the law.**

The summer months are known as the “cutting season.” This is a time when women and young girls are considered to be at greater risk of undergoing FGM as the extended summer break allows more healing time thus reducing the risk of detection by professionals.

The law surrounding FGM was strengthened in 2015 and is fully embedded within the Serious Crime Act 2015. From October 2015, there is a mandatory duty to report any direct disclosure or confirmed case of FGM to the police. This sits alongside the normal safeguarding procedures which require practitioners to report any concerns regarding young girls who have undergone or who are considered at risk of FGM.

Local guidance can be found at [NSCB/NCSCB Procedures](#).

Successfully tackling FGM in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire can be achieved through multiagency and integrated working practices in conjunction with robust community engagement, consultation and development. In the UK young girls at risk of FGM are normally between 7 and 10 years of age. However, this illegal practice can be seen in infants, girls and young women of all ages. Education and Health colleagues are in the perfect position to identify children and young women who might already have undergone FGM and also those who are at risk of FGM.

Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Safeguarding Boards would like to support education and health colleagues, urge them to be extra vigilant, be aware of children at greater risk of FGM and refer as soon as possible. For example, children who have family members originally from countries with traditionally high rates of FGM who are planning to travel with their families to countries openly practicing FGM for holidays particularly when extended holidays are planned.

The actual act of FGM is thought to rarely happen within the UK, although there is increasing evidence that “cutters” are being brought here to avoid detection and because it is economically more viable for families to join together to share cost. The majority of children and young women involved are most likely to be taken back to their home country by family members to undergo FGM. Practitioners should refer to the [Multiagency Statutory Guidance on FGM](#) for a list of signs and indicators.

It is important to note that this is an illegal act according to UK law and family members will be investigated on their return to the UK.

The number of girls and women world-wide who have undergone genital mutilation is estimated at between 100 and 140 million, with 3 million young girls affected each year. It is found in 28 African countries, and also in South East Asia and the Middle East.
The highest prevalence rates, of 90% or more, are found in Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan. Eritrea and Mali both also have very high prevalence rates of around 80%.

In Britain, FGM is seen in some ethnic groups that have migrated to this country. The main groups living in the UK are from Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Iraq, Kenya, Kurdistan, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Northern Sudan, Sierra Leone and Somalia. Dispersal of asylum seekers across the UK means that health and education colleagues are more likely to come into contact with girls and women who have already been mutilated and a larger number of girls who might be at risk of being cut.

Training is now available for school staff to raise awareness and help colleagues fulfil their statutory responsibilities. In Nottingham City this training can be accessed through Advanced Designated Safeguarding Leads and the PSHE Advisory Service


In Nottinghamshire County this training can be accessed through the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team (Universal) e mail: sarah.lee@nottscc.gov.uk.

This training forms part of partnership working with The Mojatu Foundation, a community led organisation which aims to raise awareness of FGM. The Mojatu Foundation supports FGM survivors to cope and empowers them to share their stories, gain confidence and knowledge to safeguard other girls and women and voice their concerns. The foundation have been sensitising and empowering survivors and the community to lead campaign from within the community thus dealing with the issue in a dignified and respectable way. The Foundation now have a Nottinghamshire Community FGM Steering Group that meets every first Monday of the month and also a private Nottinghamshire Survivor’s Club bringing together like minded women wanting to end the practice in a generation.

Education colleagues who suspect that any child or young woman is at high risk of or has already undergone FGM are advised to contact: Nottingham City Council Children and Families Direct: 0115 876 4800 or Nottinghamshire County Council on: 0300 500 80 90

Yours sincerely

Independent Chairs, Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City Safeguarding Boards

Further Information:

Key Facts about Female Genital Mutilation from the World Health Organisation: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/

FGM E-learning package Home Office: http://www.virtual-college.co.uk/


PSHE Association:https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/content.aspx?CategoryId=1193
Safeguarding National Information:


Multiagency Statutory Guidance on FGM

Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy