

## *What is FGM?*

FGM is the acronym for Female Genital Mutilation, this involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genitalia organs for non-medical reasons. FGM can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating and later cyst infections as well as complications in childbirth and increased risks of new-born deaths. More than 200 million girls and women today have undergone FGM in 30 countries in Africa the Middle East in Asia where FGM is practised.

FGM is extremely painful and can have some serious immediate side effects, such as the following:

- Extreme pain.
- Blood loss, cysts and abscesses.
- Shock.
- Swelling of the genital tissue.
- Problem with healing.
- Swelling of the genital tissue.
- Repeated infection that can cause long term damage.
- Problems urinating or the development of incontinence issues.
- Organ damage.

## *Who are we?*

Israac is a Sheffield based charity, which has been running for more than 30 years, offering an inclusive and warm welcome to Sheffield Somali Community and embracing all communities in the local area.

Israac mean unity in the Somali language we have worked to support local communities with social spaces, services and activities that local people identify as helpful and enriching.

We offer support to communities to maintain a strong cultural identity whilst promoting positive integration.

## *Our Aim*

Israac aim and objectives is to eradicate FGM within the BAME community, to educate the families about FGM, and to be advocate on behalf of the women, and the community.

Our aim is to work with the professional i.e., Health professional, police, social works and teachers and to liaise with them.

To also educate and communicate without cultural bias and to remove the stigma the BAME community has within the professionals

To improve professional and front-line staff knowledge on FGM, the law and their responsibilities.

## *Signs of FGM*

Girls who originate from countries where FGM is common, such as some African countries, are at higher risk of having the procedure done to them, especially if they still have extended family living in these communities. If a girl's mother or sister has undergone FGM, the likelihood of them having the procedure is also significantly higher.

As FGM is done during childhood, the victims may not realise what is about to happen to them. If they are aware that they are about to undergo FGM, they may not want to speak out, out of fear of betraying their family or getting their parents in trouble with the law.

Many girls at immediate risk of FGM won't necessarily understand what is going to happen to them so it is important to look out for suspicious signs as they may arise in several ways that a child may be at risk of FGM these include:

- Knowing that mother or older sibling has undergone FGM.
- A girl talks about plans to have a special procedure to attend special occasions/celebration to become a woman.
- A girl's parent state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period, or during school holidays.
- A girl may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin where they practice FGM.
- Difficulty or discomfort walking, standing or sitting.
- Complaints of pain between the legs.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed.
- In school a girl may have long periods away from classes.
- In school a girl may avoid physical education.
- Reluctant to go to the doctors.

## *Know the law*

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 prohibits to carry out FGM in the United Kingdom or Abroad, this includes to mutilate the whole or any part of a girl or woman's labia majora, labia minora or clitoris (section 1 of the 2003).

For a person to aid, abet counsel or procure a girl or woman to carry out FGM on her own genitalia (section 2)

To assist a non -UK person to mutilate girl or woman's genitalia outside the UK (Section 30)

To fail to protect a girl under 16 from risk of FGM while they have responsibility for her, this applies to parents or guardians (section 3A).

For a UK national or resident to commit or allow any of the above offences to be committed outside the United Kingdom.

A maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.