

GREATER MANCHESTER SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Week of Action: 24th – 28th June 2024

Letter from the
Greater Manchester
Safeguarding Children Partnerships

June 2024

Dear Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Education Colleagues,

Re: Female Genital Mutilation – Summer Awareness & the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Week.

The Safeguarding Children Partnerships of Greater Manchester are writing to inform you of the FGM need for summer awareness. As part of the GM Safeguarding Children Week 2024, we hope to send this letter to every school in Greater Manchester and request you all jointly raise awareness of FGM in your school before the end of term. We thank you in advance for supporting this action.

FGM is a practice that takes place worldwide in at least 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East. It also takes place within parts of Western Europe and other developed countries, primarily among immigrant and refugee communities where FGM is commonly believed to be a way of ensuring virginity and chastity.

FGM is carried out on girls of all ages but may be more common between the ages of 4 and 10. It can also be known as female circumcision, cutting, or by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan among other names.

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to practise FGM in the UK, illegal to take girls who are British Nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM - whether or not it is lawful in that country - and illegal to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

Girls could be flown abroad to undergo the procedure during school holiday periods.

The GM Safeguarding Children Partnerships wish to raise practitioner awareness of the heightened risk to girls in the school holidays, the indicators that FGM may be planned, and inform children at risk of what they can do to prevent this from happening.

Indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM are as follows:

- She has a parent from a practicing community
- She and her family have a low level of integration into a community
- The mother or any sisters have experienced FGM
- She has talked about, or you know about, the arrival of a female family elder
- She talks about it to other children
- She refers to a 'special procedure' or 'special occasion'
- She will be taken on a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent

Safeguarding girls at risk of harm through FGM poses specific challenges because the families involved may give no other cause for concern with regard to their parenting responsibilities or relationships with their children.

It is vital that all professionals are aware of the warning signs and know what to do in order to safeguard girls at risk.

Safeguarding professionals also have a responsibility to ensure that individuals, families and communities know that FGM is illegal and that agencies are actively tackling FGM and supporting communities not to practice it. This knowledge alone may deter families from having FGM performed on their children and safeguard girls from harm.

You can promote awareness by:

- Distributing this [leaflet](#)
- Displaying a [poster](#)
- Using this [lesson plan](#)
- Delivering a [FGM presentation](#) to your staff with a reminder of your local safeguarding reporting process.
- Discussing the Greater Manchester [FGM Protocol](#) in a team meeting.
- Promote the NSPCC FGM Helpline - It's free and available 24/7 : 0800 028 3550 or email help@NSPCC.org.uk
- Highlight local support available from [The Guardian Project](#)


More information can be found on your local safeguarding partnerships website.

Bolton	Home – Bolton Safeguarding Children
Bury	Bury Safeguarding Partnership - Bury Safeguarding Partnership
Manchester	Manchester Safeguarding Partnership
Rochdale	www.rochdalesafeguarding.com
Salford	salford professionals/female-genital-mutilation
Tameside	Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership - Tameside MBC
Trafford	Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Board (traffordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk)

Yours sincerely



Assistant Director
Early Help & Schools
Rochdale



Director for Education &
Skills
Bury



Director of Education and
Inclusion
Salford



Designated Nurse
Safeguarding Adults /
Prevention Lead
Trafford



Independent Chair
Bolton



Director of Children's Services
Manchester



Partnership Chair
Tameside

Collective signatures from Safeguarding Children Partnerships in Greater Manchester

