

Referrals into MASH **raising concerns regarding FGM**

FGM is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child and adult safeguarding/ protection structures, policies and procedures.

If a child under the age of 18 has had FGM, or if there are good reasons to suspect they are at risk of FGM (having considered their family history or other relevant factor), ***they must be referred using standard existing safeguarding procedures, as is the procedure with all other instances of child abuse.***

There are three circumstances relating to FGM which require identification and intervention:

- Where a child is at risk of FGM
- Where a child has been abused through FGM
- Where a prospective mother has undergone FGM

All agencies are expected to undertake a risk assessment and information gathering exercise prior to making a formal referral to Children's Social Care.

If the matter is urgent, ring the police or MASH team without delay.

A referral should include the following

- Confirmation that family has been informed of referral (unless this places child at immediate/further risk of harm)
- Full details of parents and any children in the family (including unborn with E.D.D)
- Information regarding extended family members who may have a significant influence
- Specific factors which may heighten a girl's or woman's risk of being affected by FGM
- Any information / signs that may suggest that FGM may be about to take place soon
- Indicators / evidence that a girl or woman has already been subjected to FGM
- Confirmation whether appropriate advice and information to the family has already been provided regarding the law and harmful consequences of FGM and information as to the family's response
- Parental/carer attitudes and understanding about the practice and where appropriate Child/young person's knowledge, understanding and views on the issue
- Any information as to whether previous CSC assessments (in regards to other children of family) relating to concerns re FGM have been completed and by whom