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# FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

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Policy Statement

It is important to note this policy is to be viewed as an awareness policy for those in the Adult Health and Social Care sector who are a provider of services. There is a multi-agency statutory guidance document, issued by the government, on which this policy is based. The guidance document has three key functions:

* To provide information on FGM, including the legislative framework.
* To provide strategic guidance on FGM for chief executives, directors and senior managers within local authorities, police, NHS, or any third parties, exercising public protection functions on behalf of those bodies. For this policy, we are a third-party, exercising adult safeguarding duties via the local authorities we provide services for.
* To provide advice and support to front-line professionals, such as social workers, nurses, support workers, charity employees, etc.

The Policy

Principles Supporting the Guidance

FGM is a criminal offence, it is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls. Cases should be dealt with as part of existing structures, e.g. Adult and Children Safeguarding processes, policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms, unless otherwise informed by the Local Authority. The following principles apply to identifying and responding to those at risk of, or who have undergone FGM:

* The safety and welfare of the child are paramount.
* All agencies should act in interests of the rights of the child as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (1989).
* FGM is illegal in the UK.
* FGM is an extremely harmful practice, responding to it cannot be left to personal choice.
* Accessible, high quality and sensitive health education, police, social care and voluntary sector services must underpin all interventions.
* FGM is often an embedded social norm within communities, engagement with families and their communities play an important role in contributing to ending it.
* All decisions or plans should be based on high-quality assessments, undertaken by suitably trained staff.

Definitions

**Adult/women:** Adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over

**Child/Girl/Young Person:** As defined by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, ‘child’ means a person under the age of 18. This includes young people aged 16 and 17 who are living independently; their status and entitlement to services and protection under the Children Act 1989 is not altered by the fact that they are living independently.

**Child Abuse and Neglect:** The recognised categories of maltreatment are:

* Physical abuse
* Emotional abuse
* Sexual Abuse
* Neglect

**Domestic Violence/Abuse:** Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This encompasses, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

* Psychological
* Physical
* Sexual
* Financial
* Emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources, or capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance or escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation, or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

The government definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called honour-based violence, including FGM and forced marriage.

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, or mental capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage where violence, threats and other forms of coercion are involved. Coercion may include emotional force, physical force, or the threat of such force, or financial pressure.

What is FGM?

It is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for the practice. In some cultures, it is a deeply rooted practise, widely carried out in specific ethnic populations in Africa, parts of the Middle East and Asia. It serves as a complex form of social control of women’s sexual and reproductive rights. While FGM is concentrated in countries around the Atlantic Coast of the Horn of Africa, Iraq and Yemen, it has also been documented in communities in Colombia, Iran, Israel, Oman, India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

Types of FGM

FGM is classified, by the World Health Organisation (WHO) into four types:

* TYPE 1 –- Clitoridectomy: Partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erective part of female genitalia) and in very rare cases, the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris);
* TYPE 2 – Excision: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are the “lips” that surround the vagina);
* TYPE 3 – Infibulation: Narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner or outer labia, with or without removal of the clitoris; and
* TYPE 4 – Other: All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping, and cauterising the genital area.

Statistics are gathered via NHS services in the UK, who, through their treatment is identified as having had FGM.

For clarity, the duty to report any FGM alleged abuse, is via the process outlined in Chapter 14 of the Care Act 2014 and the local authority multi-agency guidance. The local authority will then give explicit guidance as to further steps they would require a provider of services to undertake if any.

Related Policies

Adult Safeguarding

Confidentiality

Cyber Security

Data Protection Legislative Framework (GDPR)

Meeting Needs

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Notifications

Position of Trust

Record Keeping

Safeguarding Children in an Adult Setting

Related Guidance

Female Genital Mutilation:

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents

Female Genital Mutilation: Help and Advice:

https://www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation-help-advice

Training Statement

All staff, during induction, are made aware of the organisation’s policies and procedures, all of which are used for training updates. All policies and procedures are reviewed and amended where necessary, and staff are made aware of any changes. Observations are undertaken to check skills and competencies. Various methods of training are used, including one to one, online, workbook, group meetings, and individual supervisions.

Date Reviewed: May 2023

Person responsible for updating this policy: **IFEYINWA ODOEMENAM**

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