

**Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership**  
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4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Derby and Derbyshire Headteacher, Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead,

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage**

I would like to bring to your attention the concerns arising at this time of year related to the upcoming school holidays, and to share relevant links to resources to assist your staff in keeping girls safe from FGM and both girls and boys from Forced Marriage and other forms of so-called 'honour-based' abuse. In addition, legislation has also made it an offence to:

- carry out, offer or aid and abet virginity testing and hymenoplasty, and
- cause a child under the age of 18 to enter a marriage in any circumstances, without the need to prove that a form of coercion was used. This includes non-legally binding 'traditional' ceremonies which would still be viewed as marriages by the parties and their families.

Unfortunately, in Derby and Derbyshire we are still seeing women who have experienced FGM presenting at our local Hospitals. We are also seeing increasing concerns around forced marriage, in which one or more of the parties is married without their consent or against their will, and where duress is a factor.

We ask that schools remain vigilant to the potential that their learners may be at risk or have been subject to FGM and/or Forced Marriage and /or other forms of so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including virginity testing and hymenoplasty. Schools play a critical role in protecting and supporting learners who are at risk or affected by these harmful practices.

**Any information that a female child or young woman is at risk of or has undergone FGM and / or where there are concerns about a child or young person being at risk of, or subject to, forced marriage or any other form of so-called 'honour-based' abuse must result in a referral to local authority Children's Social Care.**

Where it is thought there is an immediate risk of FGM, practitioners should be alert to the need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure.

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In addition, all practitioners working with suspected or actual victims of forced marriage and associated so-called 'honour-based' abuse need to be aware of the "one chance" rule. That is, they may only have one opportunity to speak to a victim or potential victim and may possibly only have one chance to save a life.

**Whenever a child or young person is in immediate danger ring the police on 999.**

All practitioners working within all agencies need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they are faced with FGM, forced marriage and so-called 'honour-based' abuse cases.

Remember you can always seek advice via Derby Children's Services Professional Consultation Line or Derbyshire Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals.

A [mandatory reporting duty for FGM](#) also requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers<sup>1</sup> in England and Wales to report known cases of FGM in under 18-year-olds to the police.

Further information about local and national information and resources on FGM, forced marriage and so-called 'honour-based' abuse can be found at the end of this letter.

Could you please cascade this information amongst your staff and ensure they are fully aware of their responsibility to protect girls and boys from these forms of child abuse, which are illegal in the UK, and that this responsibility extends to children taken overseas. We can all help play a pivotal role in protecting children, supporting those at risk and contributing to the broader effort to eliminate this harmful practice.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Sobey  
Partnership Manager  
Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

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<sup>1</sup> This includes qualified teachers or persons who are employed or engaged to carry out teaching work in schools and other institutions

**Local and national information - FGM, forced marriage and so-called 'honour-based' abuse**

**Advice and Services in Derby and Derbyshire**

If you wish to talk to a Social Worker for advice:

- Derby Children's Services Professional Consultation Line 07812 300329. The service operates Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm
- Derbyshire Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals 01629 535353. The service operates Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm

Referral to Children's Social Care:

- Derby via Initial Response Team during normal working days between 9 am and 5 pm on 01332 641172. At all other times contact Careline 01332 956606. Non-urgent concerns should be submitted via an [online referral](#)
- Derbyshire via Starting Point Telephone contact to Starting Point 01629 533190 or for non-urgent referrals via an [online referral](#)

Mandatory FGM reporting:

- Via Derbyshire Constabulary on 101

Derby and Derbyshire multi-agency safeguarding children procedures:

- The procedures have a specific chapters about [Safeguarding Children at Risk of Female Genital Mutilation](#), [Forced Marriage](#) as well [Honour Based Abuse and Violence](#)
- Please also see [Making a referral to Social Care](#) and [Local Contacts](#)

**National Guidance and Resources**

**NSPCC**

- **NSPCC FGM helpline** offering advice, information and support to anyone concerned that a child's welfare is at risk because of female genital mutilation. Call 0800 028 3550 or email [FGM.Help@NSPCC.org.uk](mailto:FGM.Help@NSPCC.org.uk)
- **Childline** Call 0800 1111, [FGM](#) and [forced marriage](#) information for children and young people

**National FGM and Forced Marriage safeguarding guidance**

- [Forced marriage guidance](#) about how to protect, advise and support victims of forced marriage includes information and practice guidelines for professionals, how the Forced Marriage Unit can help, legislation, survivors handbook, leaflets, posters and 'right to choose' campaign short films. Key resources include:
  - [Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage](#)
  - [Forced Marriage and Learning Disabilities: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines](#)
  - [Awareness of Forced Marriage - Free Online Course](#)
- [FGM](#) information advice and guidance, including the Home Office FGM Unit, protection orders, resources, posters, leaflets campaign materials and lesson plans. Key resources include:
  - [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#)

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- [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information](#)
- [Factsheet on mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation](#) which has also been translated and published in 10 languages
- [Female genital mutilation: resource pack](#)
- [Recognising and preventing FGM free e-learning package](#)
- [Virginitv testing and hymenoplasty: multi-agency guidance](#)
- [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act](#) (2022) and Government [press release](#): legal age of marriage in England and Wales rises to 18

### National FGM Centre

- [Centre](#) for developing excellence in response to FGM and other harmful practices. Key resources include:
  - [FGM](#) – information, advice, resources including lesson plan plans, leaflets and free elearning
  - [Female Genital Mutilation: Guidance for schools](#)
  - [Information to gather for a good referral: Female Genital Mutilation](#)
  - [Bloodlines](#) – a reflective learning resource aimed at all professionals working with girls who could be at risk of/ have undergone FGM

### Freedom

- The [Freedom charity](#) and [Freedom](#) mobile app - help, assistance and instruction to children, friends of children and professionals about children and young people who are at risk of, or are subjected to violent crimes such as Female Genital Mutilation, so-called 'honour-based' violence and forced marriages in the UK
- Helpline number 0845 607 0133 or text the words 4freedom to 88802

### Petals

- [Web app](#) is for young people, both girls and boys living in the UK who want to find out more about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and how it might affect them and others. The app has facts, support and information on how to take action

### Karma Nirvana

- Working to end so-called 'honour-based' abuse and forced marriage in the UK. Includes:
  - National Honour Based Abuse helpline: 0800 5999 247
  - End Virginitv Testing campaign, including national guidance and a short video on [virginitv myths](#)
  - Tackling Virginitv Testing Myths recorded [webinar](#)
  - [Animation](#) on Virginitv Testing and part of #16DaysofAction to raise awareness on Virginitv Testing
  - End Child Marriage [campaign](#)

### Forward (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development)

- African women-led [organisation](#) working to end violence against women and girls including female genital mutilation, child marriage, forced marriage, harmful practices, domestic and sexual violence. Provides information, advice, one to one support, training and community-based interventions
- Helpline number 020 8960 4000