

New duty for health and social care professionals and teachers to report female genital mutilation (FGM) to the police

What is the new duty?

On 31 October 2015 a new duty was introduced that requires health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in girls aged under 18 to the police.

For example, if a doctor sees that a girl aged under 18 has had FGM they will need to make a report to the police. Or, if a girl tells her teacher that she has had FGM, the teacher will need to report this to the police.

What will happen after the case has been reported to the police?

FGM is a serious crime and the police will need to investigate each reported case appropriately.

The police will work with social care professionals to make sure that the girl is safe and her needs are put first.

Why is it being introduced?

When a girl has undergone FGM, a serious crime has taken place so it is very important that the police are involved as soon as possible. This will make sure that a proper investigation can take place.

The purpose of the new duty is to help make sure that professionals have the confidence to confront FGM and to help increase the number of referrals to the police so that cases can be investigated appropriately.

What the new duty won't do

It **doesn't mean** that police will take action without consulting appropriately with social care professionals and other relevant professionals.

It **won't require** professionals to report cases to the police where they *suspect* FGM may have been carried out or think a girl *may be at risk*. The duty also doesn't apply to women aged 18 or over. Professionals will follow existing safeguarding procedures in these cases.

Summary: Mandatory reporting of FGM*

Duty applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales.

Requires these professionals to make a report to the police if, in the course of their professional duties, they:

- are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

*introduced in Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015