

**Birmingham Against  
Female Genital Mutilation  
Annual Report  
2018/19**



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## **1. BAFGM Purpose Aims and Objectives**

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- 1.1 Birmingham Against Female Genital Mutilation (BAFGM) is a group of multiagency professionals committed to safeguarding children from FGM and reducing the prevalence of new cases of FGM within Birmingham. Educating, awareness raising, appropriate data collecting and the effective use of clear protocols within a supportive environment by all agencies would enable Birmingham children to remain safe within the UK and reduce the risk of FGM.
- 1.2 BAFGM was established by Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, links have been forged with Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership to support delivery of multi-agency training. The group is currently chaired bi-monthly by Detective Inspector Wendy Bird from West Midlands Police who is also the regional lead for the police and attends all the quarterly national policing meetings linking in nationally with the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Forced Marriage Unit (Foreign and Commonwealth Office and HO), CPS, Education, College of Policing and Health. This group has a national strategy that is then shared with BAFGM.
- 1.3 The former Local Safeguarding Children Board provided financial support for the delivery of level 3 multi-agency FGM training, and during 2018/2019, 10 training courses were delivered by Family Action, attended by 600 delegates, all courses successfully evaluated with over whelming positive feedback.
- 1.4 The new Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) has agreed to provide bespoke multi-agency training during 2019/2020 for 360 delegates. The BSCP also continues to promote the free Home Office, FGM online training package through multi-agency networks. At present take-up and successful completion rates by the Birmingham children's workforce have been 5,401 places allocated and 3,510 successful completions.

## **2. What is FGM?**

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- 2.1 The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as: "all procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic means" (WHO, 1996)
- 2.2 FGM has been classified by WHO into 4 different types.
- 2.3 FGM is medically unnecessary, is extremely painful, and has serious health consequences, both at the time of the procedure, and in later life. It can also be psychologically damaging.
- 2.4 A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure, from blood loss or infection. In the longer term, women who have undergone some form of FGM are twice as likely to die in childbirth, and four times more likely to give birth to a still born child.

### 3. Reasons given for FGM:

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- Brings status/respect
- Preserves virginity/chastity
- Social acceptance, especially for marriage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses/purifies
- Sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils religious requirement
- Custom/religion`
- Clean/hygienic
- Aesthetically desirable
- Rids family of bad luck/evil spirits
- Seen as a celebration, ceremony

### 4. Legal context

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- 4.1 FGM has been illegal in this country since 1985 when the Female Circumcision Act was introduced. The Act came into force in September 1985. The Serious Crimes Act 2015 strengthens the FGM Act, making it;
- Illegal to practice FGM in the UK;
  - Illegal to assist a girl to mutilate her own genitalia;
  - Illegal to take girls who are habitually resident in the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in that country;
  - Illegal to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.
- 4.2 The 2003 Act has been amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015, which adds new sections 3A, 4A, 5A, 5B and 5C. These new provisions –
- Introduce ‘**mandatory reporting**’ to police via telephone (call 101) - a health care professional, teacher or social care professionals **must** make a “FGM Notification” to the police if, in the course of their duties, they discover that an act of FGM **is known or has been seen** on a girl under 18.
  - Create an offence of **failing to protect a girl** under the age of 16 from FGM (the offence is committed by a person who has parental responsibility for her or has assumed responsibility for her care);
  - Introduce **Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders**, which may include such provisions, restrictions or requirements as the court considers appropriate in order to protect a girl from FGM; or to protect a girl after FGM has been carried out; and
  - Give the victims of FGM **a right of anonymity**.
- 4.3 In addition to complying with the **mandatory duty**, professionals should continue to have regard to their wider safeguarding responsibilities, which require consideration and action to be taken whenever there is any identified or known risk to a child, whether in relation to FGM or another matter.
- 4.4 Female genital mutilation is physical abuse, and whilst it is perceived by parents not to be an act of hate, it is harmful, it is child abuse and it is unlawful. It has long

lasting significant implications for those who have the procedure performed on them.

## **5. Birmingham Context**

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- 5.1 Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership websites has been updated this year to reflect changes in recent years in legislation.
- 5.2 West Midlands Police received 57 FGM referrals during 2018/19 (3 crime and 54 non-crime) a reduction of 22 on last year.
- 5.3 During the same period, Birmingham Children's Trust received referrals for 100 children where FGM was indicated as a possible concern. Of those, 52 children received a statutory assessment, whilst the remainder were stepped down to Early Help and or Universal Services.
- 5.4 Disappointingly there are no ongoing prosecutions for FGM related offences in Birmingham.
- 5.5 In Birmingham three FGMPO's have been obtained.
- 5.6 There have been 272 female births to mothers who were victims of FGM in University Hospitals Birmingham during the last year (April 2018- Mar 2019).

## **6. Progress on Work programme**

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- 6.1 West Midlands Police host the bi-monthly BAFGM meetings. The focus during the least year has been sharing emerging learning from high profile cases and the delivery of multi-training. Learning from conferences and meetings attended by BAFGM members has meant that learning from the recent Metropolitan police FGM conviction and ongoing FBI case, have been fed back into the group so that lessons can be learned quickly.
- 6.2 The BAFGM chair has delivered FGM awareness sessions to all police student officers, new detectives and new 999/101 operators in West Midlands Police. Each statutory partner within BAFGM delivers bespoke courses within their own organisations.
- 6.3 Detective Constable (DC) Gill Squires from Birmingham Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who is currently seconded to the Home Office FGM Unit provided a workshop in Birmingham on FGM, Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage (FM). A member of the local judiciary helped to lead the joint training on the procedure for applying for FGMPO's. This was delivered to 100 delegates many of whom were from Birmingham and the feedback was excellent.
- 6.4 Building on the success from last year's operation, officers from across the region repeated Operation 'Limelight' working with Solihull Children's Services and the Border Force to raise awareness by speaking to families travelling to/from countries where FGM is prevalent at Birmingham airport during the summer (2018) alongside. During the operation partners spoke 566 passengers were stopped and spoken to about FGM. Campaign leaflets were handed out to women providing information on support groups. Briefing for airline cabin crews were provided on

how to spot safeguarding issues. A number of families stopped where from Birmingham and a five were referred into Birmingham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. There are plans to repeat the Operation Limelight during the summer holiday period in 2019.

6.5 Operation Limelight 2018 gave out the following:

Home Office passports	61
Home Office 'FGM' leaflets	50
WMP leaflets	195
WMP Air Cabin Crew leaflets	315
Force Pens	700

- There were no arrests.
- General feedback from those participating in the operation was that their knowledge of the subject had increased because of taking part, and many felt that they would be more confident in dealing with the issue from being involved.

6.6 There was press interest on one of the days which Border Force dealt with... and signposted WMP Press office. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/aug/31/warning-system-in-airport-toilet-cubicles-to-help-victims-of-fgm>

6.7 In November 2018 West Midlands Police hosted seminar in Birmingham to share learning from a successful prosecution for FGM in Australia and provide an update on an ongoing FBI investigation into FGM in the Dawoodi Bohra India/Pakistan community. Key note speakers from Greater Manchester's FGM lead and an FGM campaigner highlighted the risk to girls aged 6/7 years from this community. The 35 delegates who attended seminar provide very positive feedback.

6.8 The Chair of BAFGM organised a national, multi-agency conference on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 attended by 350 delegates, to coincide with International Zero Tolerance Day for FGM. The conference was held at Millenium Point in Birmingham, the programme also focused on Harmful Practices, Witchcraft and FGM. National police partners, statutory agencies and partners from across the region attended with funding coming from the police and Police and Crime Commissioner Office. BAFGM attendees supported the event on the day. The feedback was excellent with many attendees being from Birmingham. As a result a teacher at the event went to court and took out FGMPO's in order to protect a Birmingham pupil at her school and siblings at another. The key note speeches were filmed and it is hoped to share these across the wider partnership particularly for those who couldn't attend.

## 7. Priorities for 2019/20

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1. Development of FGM Strategy and Action Plan 2019-21
2. Strengthen lines of accountability and support with Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
3. Review and refresh of the BAFGM Website
4. Explore the potential for greater collaboration at a region level to tackle FGM

## **8. Membership & Representation**

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- 8.1 Members are drawn from across the multi-agency workforces so attendance is sometimes difficult operationally for those delivering their own training, clinics, and have their own organisational priorities.
- 8.2 Active members are as below:-
- Detective Inspector Wendy Bird, West Midlands Police (Chair)
  - Dr. Geoff Debelle, Designated Doctor Child Safeguarding, BSoI NHS
  - Anna-Marie Boyd, Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group
  - Arvi Sagoo, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust
  - Alison Byrne, FGM Specialist Midwife, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
  - Sandeep Virk, Manager, Birmingham Children's Trust
  - Tony Diaram, Learning & Development Programme Manager, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
  - Liz Bates, Services For Education, (a not for profit charity)
  - Detective Constable Gill Squires, West Midlands Police - Subject Matter Expert
  - Nazia Fazal, Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid
  - Larisha Porter (deputy head) and/or Rubina Jan (teacher), Bordesley Green Girls School
  - Joanne Tracey, Service Manager at Coachild
  - Shaida Bibi, Community Co-ordinator, Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate, Birmingham City Council
  - Dr Jeanette Littlemore, Birmingham University
- 8.3 Other professionals and third sector groups are cc'd into any emails but do not attend but any free training is still offered out to all irrelevant of attendance. When we run conferences we ask our third sector groups if they want stalls so that people could see what their organisations offered.

## **9. Resources and Finance**

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- 9.1 The conference programme was supported by West Midlands Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. BAFGM had a dedicated website however, this ceased last year when funding was no longer available. The website did provide resources, training and guidance. The BSCP provides multi-agency training for practitioners working with families at risk of FGM.
- 9.2 At this stage the BAFGM partnership does not have access to funding or any dedicated administrative support, this does impact on the groups capacity to produce formal reports, updates and minutes of meetings.

## **10. Home Office FGM campaign**

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- 10.1 The Home Office has launched a FGM campaign as part of their commitment to tackling this crime and protecting vulnerable women and girls.

10.2 The campaign will support their ongoing work to tackle FGM, which includes an ongoing programme of outreach by the Home Office's FGM Unit, work with law enforcement bodies, and working with partners to help ensure the Government's response is as effective as it can be.

- Partner Brief and Campaign Materials: [click here](#)
- FGM Posters: [click here](#)



## 11. The Department for Health Resource Pack

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11.1 The Department for Health has issued all GP practices in England with the 'Female Genital Mutilation Resource Pack'. The pack includes:

- *Raising Awareness of Female Genital Mutilation* – a training DVD developed by Health Education England, with materials from the existing '[eLearning for Healthcare' elearning modules](#)'
- [Female Genital Mutilation Risk and Safeguarding – Guidance for professionals](#) published by the Department of Health in March 2012  
Copies of the Patient Information Leaflet in English, available to order from [DH Orderline](#) in other languages and English. Please note, all language versions are available to download on this page at [NHS Choices](#)
- 2 copies of '[A Statement Opposing Female Genital Mutilation' also known as the FGM Health passport' also known as the FGM Health passport](#), available to order from Home Office or to download from NHS Choices
- [FGM Enhanced Dataset: Implementation Summary for GP Practices](#) – Please note, all GP practices will be required to submit information under the Enhanced Dataset when treating patients who have FGM from October 2015

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Date of Publication: May 2019