



Staffordshire Police



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Policy

Publication Scheme Y/N	Government Security Classification Scheme (GSCS): Policy section can be published on Force Website.
Department of Origin	Public Protection Unit (PPU)
Policy Holder	[REDACTED]
Policy Author	[REDACTED]
Related Information	• Domestic Abuse policy and procedure • FGM Procedure Document • Honour Based Abuse policy and procedure • Out of Court Disposal policy and procedure • DVPN/DVPO guidance – Process map, Safeguarding officers, DA SPOCS and breaches • Crime Allocation Policy • PPN Policy • Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse Guidance • Domestic Abuse in the workplace Policy and procedure. • Use of BWV policy
Date First Approved	16/02/2026
This Version	V1 – Created
Date of Next Review	16/02/2028
Amendments	

1.0 What this policy is about

This document contains information that is for a policing purpose only and should not be passed onto third parties without the approval from the policy holder.

This policy outlines how Staffordshire Police will approach the investigation of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the safeguarding of victims and family members, including a proactive approach to bringing perpetrators to justice. The Policy draws on existing legislation and is APP compliant and should be read in conjunction with existing force policies and procedures and in particular the Staffordshire Police FGM Procedure document.

2.0 Related force policy or related procedures

Female Genital Mutilation procedure document. (Tactical Document)

Domestic Abuse policy and procedure

Stalking and Harassment policy and procedure

Honour Based Abuse policy and procedure

DVPN/DVPO guidance – Process map, Safeguarding officers, DA SPOCS and breaches

Crime Allocation Policy

PPN Policy

Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse Guidance

Use of BWV policy

3.0 Statement of Policy

This policy and associated procedure document seeks to standardise the process for dealing with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) with associated guidelines based on the following principles:

- Protecting and safeguarding the lives of both adults and children identified at being at risk.
- Investigating all reports of FGM effectively
- Facilitating effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system.
- Adopting a joined up, multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing incidents of FGM within Staffordshire
- Improving solved outcomes and reduce victimisation.
- Providing support to victims and associated persons through referral pathways to relevant agencies
- Consideration of the use of ancillary orders such as
 - Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN)
 - Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO)
 - Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPO)

- Stalking Prevention Orders (SPO)
- Sexual Risk Orders (SRO).
- Capturing the Voice of the Child VOC

Positive Action – Recognising a Female Genital Mutilation report.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) as a collective term, also known as genital cutting and female circumcision, for all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia (labia majora, labia minora or clitoris) or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or non-medical reasons. The practice of FGM is illegal in the UK under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#)

In responding to FGM committed against a child, which constitutes child abuse, Officers must act in accordance existing child protection protocols and policy. (Note: A child is a person under 18 years of age.)

Officers must respond to reports of FGM in line with force policy and procedure and the College of Policing APP and NPCC Protocol on the handling of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) offences between the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Officers should not let fears of being branded "racist or insensitive to cultural traditions weaken their investigative strategy. FGM investigations should be robust and enforce the law.

See the Force FGM procedure document for tactical advice to Investigators and Supervisors.

4.0 Implications of the Policy

Financial Implications

There are no known financial implication that are thought to be connected with this policy

Risk Assessment

There is an organisational risk to the reputation of the Force brought about by a failure to implement the measures detailed within this policy.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by or on behalf of the head of Adult Public Protection every 2 years to ensure that it remains compliant with legislation and contains best practice for dealing with incidents of domestic abuse.

6.0 Data Security

Staffordshire police have measures in place to protect the security of data in accordance with our Information Management Policy

7.0 Retention and Disposal

Staffordshire Police will only hold data in accordance with our Records Review and retention Policy and will only hold data for as long as necessary for the purposes for which it is collected.

8.0 Other source documents to refer to

- Home Office, Department for Education and Department of Health 2016 - Multi Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation
 - CPS Female Genital Mutilation – prosecution guidance.
 - NPCC Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation: a Policing Strategy (2015)
 - NPCC Protocol on the handling of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) offences between the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Crown Prosecution Service
 - HM Government Forced Marriage & Learning Disabilities: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines
 - NHS Female Genital Mutilation – Information Sharing.
 - National FGM Centre
 - Save the Children (FGM)
 - College of Policing FGM APP
 - College of Policing (2014) : Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence
 - CPS (2014) Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage: Guidance on identifying and tagging cases
 - Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM
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- Code of Practice for Victims of Crime
 - Authorised Professional Practice (APP) – Female Genital Mutilation
 - College of Policing Domestic Abuse guidance
 - VAWG strategy
 - Shifting the Scales – Commissioned report by the DA Commissioner

Staffordshire Police



Female Genital Mutilation Procedure Document



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Related Information	• Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure • FGM Policy • Stalking and Harassment policy and procedure • Honour Based Abuse policy and procedure • Out of Court Disposal policy and procedure • DVPN/DVPO guidance – Process map, Safeguarding officers, DA SPOCS and breaches • Crime Allocation Policy • PPN Policy • Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse Guidance • Domestic Abuse in the workplace Policy and procedure. • Use of BWV policy • TTL policy
Date First Approved	16/02/2026
This Version	V1.2 – Created
Date of Next Review	16/02/2028
Amendments	

1.0 What this procedure is about

This procedure details the processes to be followed by officers and staff concerning the report and investigation of female genital mutilation (FGM). It should be read in conjunction with the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) **Background notice, advice notice for first responders and advice notice for investigators**. Key themes are

- Focus on identifying the risk first
- Evidence needs to be captured at first attendance wherever possible as an evidence led prosecution should always be considered.
- Children are now recognised as victims in their own right and their voice should be heard and assess any risk posed to them
- Always consider your options – if no arrest is made what other out of custody options are available. Ask yourself how you can safeguard the victim as this is your responsibility.
- Always consider the use of civil orders
- Ensure that support agencies are signposted

This procedure is designed to ensure that officers and staff are clear in their roles and responsibilities when dealing with incidents of FGM. It is vital that we deliver a quality service from the point of initial contact.

Police and other practitioners working with people who may have been subject to FGM need to be aware of the "one chance rule. That is, they may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim and thus they may only have one chance to save a life. This means that all practitioners working within statutory agencies need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they deal with FGM reports. If the victim is allowed to leave without support being offered, that one chance might be lost.

2.0 Introduction and Definition

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also called 'female cutting' or 'female circumcision', is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. FGM happens because of various cultural, religious and social reasons. Some communities think that FGM will help the girl in some way, such as preparing her for marriage or childbirth.

FGM can cause severe psychological, emotional and medical problems. It can include extreme pain, shock, infection and many other long term serious medical issues. There are no health benefits to FGM. Find out more about [the medical aspects of FGM](#). FGM is a form of [child abuse](#) and violence against women and it's against the law in the UK.

Types of FGM

FGM is grouped into four main types by the World Health Organisation (WHO):

- type 1: part or total removal of the clitoris or clitoral hood
- type 2: part or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minor
- type 3: narrowing of the vaginal opening
- type 4: all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes

Investigators should note that the WHO classifications have not been adopted or incorporated into domestic legislation so as to define FGM for the purpose of any offence. Nonetheless, Police should be aware of the WHO classification because they may be used or referred to in FGM resources, or by medical experts. The law in England and Wales criminalises a person who excises, infibulates or otherwise mutilates the whole or any part of a girl's labia majora, labia minora or clitoris.

FGM and the law

The [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#) makes it illegal to:

- perform FGM in the UK
- help or arrange for anyone to carry out FGM abroad on girls who are British Nationals or UK residents
- help a girl to carry out FGM on herself
- fail to protect a girl under 16 who is known to be at risk of FGM

FGM carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison.

Warning signs:

There are a number of signs a girl could have been a victim of FGM:

- changes in behaviour
- missing school, particularly after a trip to a country where FGM is common
- spending long periods of time out of the classroom
- spending longer than usual going to the toilet
- avoiding going to the toilet
- discomfort when sitting down
- avoiding physical exercise

- frequent menstrual or urinary infections

Children often don't know that FGM is going to take place. This means there may be few warning signs before it happens. But, sometimes children do know in advance, which can lead to a change in their behaviour, such as seeking advice or help from professionals and friends.

FGM Protection Orders

Whilst the criminal law focuses on prosecuting those who commit FGM offences, the focus of FGM Protection Orders (FGMPOs) – a civil law measure – is on protecting victims and those at risk of FGM.

Section 5A(2)(a) and Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (FGM Act 2003) provides for the making of FGMPOs in England and Wales. An FGMPO is a family court order which can be made for the purposes of protecting a girl or woman against the commission of an FGM offence – that is, protecting a girl or woman at risk of FGM or protecting a girl or woman against whom an FGM offence has been committed. An application for an FGMPO can be made to the family court by a victim, a relevant third party (currently local authorities) or any other person with the permission of the court. A court can also make an order of its own volition, without an application being made to it, during other family proceedings **or in the course of criminal proceedings for an FGM offence**. In deciding whether to make an order, a court must take account of all the circumstances of the case including the need to secure the health, safety, and well-being of the potential or actual victim. The court can make an order which prohibits, restricts, requires, or includes any such other terms as it considers appropriate to stop or change the behaviour or conduct of those who would seek to subject a girl to FGM or have already arranged for, or committed, FGM.

Mandatory reporting duty

The mandatory reporting duty under the FGM Act, 5B applies to all regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales. They are under a duty to report to the police any known case of FGM on a girl who is under 18 at the time of making the report. A known case is one where:

The girl has disclosed to the professional that she has undergone FGM or the professional, in the course of their work, has observed physical signs appearing to show that an act of FGM has been carried out and has no reason to believe that the act was a lawful surgical operation within the FGM Act.

The duty is personal to the professional, who must report the case directly to the police. Failure to comply with the duty is not a criminal or civil matter, but is to be dealt with as a serious disciplinary matter under existing performance procedures in place for each profession.

Where a professional believes that a girl is at risk of FGM, this does not fall under the mandatory reporting duty but should be dealt with through established safeguarding procedures.

Piercing and Cosmetic Surgery

Particular considerations arise in relation to piercing of female genitalia and cosmetic surgery. See current CPS guidance on link below.

[Female Genital Mutilation | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)

2.0 Related force policy or related procedures

FGM Policy

Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure

Honour Based Abuse policy and procedure

DVPN/DVPO guidance – Process map, Safeguarding officers, DA SPOCS and breaches

Crime Allocation Policy

PPN Policy

Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse Guidance

Use of BWV policy

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSABILITIES

3.1 Force contact - Gathering Information

On receipt of a report of an incident of FGM, the following immediate action should be taken.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

First responder – this could be contact staff, LPT officers, specialist investigators or PCSO's.

When speaking to a victim for the first time, first responders should remember

-

- [illegible]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.2 Attending Officer

On route to the incident, officers should obtain **all relevant** information from the call handler.

It is mandatory that officers should activate BWV at all incidents, however they may be circumstances where it is clearly inappropriate and if so the reason for not recording should be noted in a PNB entry, a supervisor should be informed and justification should be available if questioned.

Officers should familiarise themselves with the HBA and FGM College of Policing APP advice prior to attending if tactically possible while prioritising safeguarding.

[illegible]

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| 2 | 95% |
| 3 | 100% |
| 4 | 50% |
| 5 | 100% |
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Female Genital Mutilation | The Crown Prosecution Service

[REDACTED]

- Page 8 of 12

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
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 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]

3.5 – Supervisor responsibility – Sergeant

A supervising Sergeant has the responsibility in ensuring that the investigation is being conducted expeditiously and that all reasonable lines of enquiry have been pursued and will include:

- ✓ Has the victim been appropriately safeguarded?
 - ✓ Has the voice of the child been captured?
 - ✓ Has a DASH/DARA been completed?
 - ✓ Have golden hour principles of investigation been met?
 - ✓ Is there a clear suspect strategy?
 - ✓ Has the officer completed a victim contract?
 - ✓ Has a FGM Protection Order (FGMPO) been considered, or use of other ancillary orders.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Review any requests for domestic abuse rolling handovers (see Rolling handover policy and procedures)
- Ensure NPCC Protocol on the handling of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) offences between the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Crown Prosecution Service has been complied with.

3.6 – Supervisor Responsibility - Inspector

Inspectors are required to review any investigation that has reached 3 months duration. This is to ensure that the investigation has been progressed sufficiently.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]

3.7 Missing Persons and Those Who Run Away

People, especially those under 18, who leave home to escape FGM, or the threat of FGM, may require specific safeguarding considerations. Police may feel they should inform families if the young person is found. On occasion, police and children's social care have faced criticism both for failing to share information about a young person who has run away from home and for giving them practical support and protection. ***Ultimately, however, the first concern should be for the welfare of the young person.***

Someone facing FGM is at risk of significant harm if they are returned to their family. There have been incidents where families have killed the woman or young person after they have been located. In these situations, Police and children's social care should feel confident about justifying their actions, because experience shows that if information is shared with their family and friends, it may place the person in danger.

Some families go to considerable lengths to find their children who run away and some may use subterfuge to locate and return them. For example, some families may falsely accuse a missing person of a crime (e.g. theft) in the expectation that the police will locate the person for them.

Those fleeing FGM that has not yet taken place may be reported as missing by their families. The FGM aspect of the case may not be apparent when the report is made.

Also of concern is where someone is NOT reported missing by their family but reported by a third party i.e. boyfriend, girlfriend, friend etc. Due consideration should be given to the possibility of FGM as well as other potential threats.

3.8 Victim support and Signposting

Victims should be referred, with their consent to appropriate local and national support groups, counselling services and women's groups that have a history of working with survivors of domestic abuse and FGM.

Below are a number of support groups to which victims may be referred, this list is not exhaustive, and many other agencies also offer advice and support.:

[The National FGM Centre](#)

A partnership between Barnardo's and the Local Government Association (LGA) to improve FGM services.

[NHS](#)

Free information on why and where FGM is carried out and the health risks involved.

[NSPCC FGM Helpline](#)

A national charity offering advice and free telephone support for children and adults with questions about FGM.

[28 Too Many](#)

An international charity working to end FGM through research and local initiatives.

[Daughters of Eve](#)

A charity protecting girls and young women at risk from FGM.

[Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development \(FORWARD\)](#)

A leading African diaspora women's campaign and support organisation tackling discriminatory practices against girls and women.

[The Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation \(IKWRO\)](#)

Charity providing advice, advocacy, referral and support to women and men in the UK in Arabic, Kurdish and Farsi languages.

[University College of London Hospital \(UCLH\) FGM clinic](#)

A clinic in London providing care and support for women experiencing problems as a result of FGM.

[Home - Women's Aid](#)

Woman's Aid

[Female genital mutilation - GOV.UK](#)

Home Office FGM Unit

4.0 Implications of the Policy

Financial Implications

There are no known financial implication that are thought to be connected with this policy

Risk Assessment

There is an organisational risk to the reputation of the Force brought about by a failure to implement the measures detailed within this policy.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by or on behalf of the head of Adult Public Protection every 2 years to ensure that it remains compliant with legislation and contains best practice for dealing with incidents of domestic abuse.

6.0 Data Security

Staffordshire police have measures in place to protect the security of data in accordance with our Information Management Policy.

7.0 Retention and Disposal

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8.0 Other source documents to refer to

- * College of Policing APP – Female Genital Mutilation [college.police.uk]
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM (Home Office) [gov.uk]
- Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on FGM [bava.org.uk]
- Code of Practice for Victims of Crime
- Authorised Professional Practice (APP) – Domestic Abuse
- College of Policing Domestic Abuse guidance
- VAWG strategy
- Shifting the Scales – Commissioned report by the DA Commissioner