



FGM Policy

Turning Heads directors are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from us or working with us are not harmed in any way. The directors of Turning Heads have a legal duty to act prudently, and this means that they must take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that no one is harmed. It is particularly important where beneficiaries are vulnerable persons or children in the community.

This policy applies to all those involved in Turning Heads, including, but not exclusively, administrators, volunteer drivers, parents, young people, and third party suppliers.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a child protection issue and is illegal in each of the jurisdictions in the United Kingdom for a child up to 18 years of age. The policy provides information about what constitutes FGM, its prevalence, information about the legal context, what action is needed to fulfil the mandatory requirements to report FGM, and guidance to support staff and volunteers in safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk.

This policy, procedure and guidance is aimed at providing all staff and volunteers with information about child abuse and female genital mutilation.

FGM is a collective term for procedures that include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-medical reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy. It is a one-off act of abuse that has dangerous implications and lifelong consequences.

FGM has been classified by the World Health Organization into four types. This classification has been incorporated by the Home Office and the Department of Education.

- Type 1 – Clitoridectomy: partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erectile part of the female genitals) and, in very rare cases, only 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
- Type 4 – Other: all other procedures to a child’s female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping, cauterising the genital area and stretching the labia or clitoris

The FGM mandatory reporting duty is a legal duty provided for in the FGM Act 2003, section 5B (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015). The legislation requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:

- are informed by a girl under 18 years that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observed physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 years and they 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.

Any disclosure of a child or adult ‘at risk’ should be handled in line with wider safeguarding responsibilities. It is an offence for anyone (regardless of nationality and residence status) to perform FGM in the UK or to assist a girl to perform FGM on herself in the UK. Provided that the mutilation takes place in the UK, the nationality or residence status of the victim is irrelevant. It is an offence under the 2003 Act for a UK national or permanent UK resident to perform FGM, or to assist a girl to perform FGM on herself, outside the UK. It is also an offence to assist FGM carried out abroad by anyone (including foreign nationals); although in some cases the offence is limited to the situation where the victim is a UK national or permanent UK resident.

Mandatory reporting is required when FGM has been perpetrated on a girl under 18 years of age. Where there is a risk if FGM identified, or where a woman is over 18 years of age, there is no mandatory reporting required but action needs to be taken under our safeguarding protection policy.

Turning Heads will provide anonymity to safeguard the victim (this may not always be possible, if a referral to the Local Authority is needed). When receiving information about FGM all staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore what the young person or adult has told them or dismiss out of hand the need for immediate protection

- approach the young person's family, friends or those people with influence within the community as this will alert them to your enquiries
- contact the family in advance of any enquiries, either by telephone or letter
- share information outside child protection information-sharing protocols without the express consent of the young person
- breach confidentiality except where necessary to ensure the young person's safety.

When a practitioner receives any report that: a child under the age of 18 years has been subjected to an act of FGM, or there are physical signs that indicate that an act of FGM has been carried out the mandatory reporting duty must be followed. In both the above situations, this action is not dependent upon who provides such information.

If a staff member receives any report from a child or young person less than 18 years of age that they have been a victim of FGM or likely that they will be a victim: the DSL must consult with the Adult and / or Children's services, regarding whether the contact requires a breach to the service confidentiality with that child and if a referral to partner agencies is required.

Appointed Person

An appointed person should be made known to members, volunteers and parents alike; as the designated person to whom concerns should be addressed. If the concern is about this designated person, please report to **Alan Tilley, Turning Heads**.

The appointed person at Turning Heads is:

Name: Alan Tilley Contact number: 0781777739

Reviewed: 1 February 2022

Next Review: 1 February 2024