

Do Now

What is FGM and what do we need to know about it?



Barkhado has just returned from visiting family in Somalia. As she's been away a while, her friends have been desperate to see her.

Kelly ran up to her and gave her the biggest squeeze she could, spinning her around in a massive hug.

Barkhado seemed really upset by this. 'Seriously, be careful with me,' she said through tears.

Discuss: What could have happened to Barkhado make her react like this?



Explain briefly what you think FGM might stand for, and if you know, why you think it's so important to learn about it.

I think FGM stands for...

It's important we learn about it...

What is FGM and what do we need to know about it?

Learning outcomes:

Describe the risks and facts associated with female genital mutilation (FGM), its status as a criminal act and strategies to safely access support for anyone who may be at risk, or who have already been subject to FGM.



FGM – Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the horrific act of cutting some or all of a female person’s external genitals, for reasons which are not medical, not necessary and usually cultural.

What is FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation, often shortened to FGM, refers to procedures where parts of the external female genitalia are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. There are different types of FGM, ranging from partial removal of tissue to more severe forms involving the narrowing of the vaginal opening. It is recognised internationally as a serious form of abuse and a violation of human rights.

FGM most commonly affects girls, particularly those under the age of 15, although it can happen at different stages of childhood or adolescence. In some cases, it may take place in infancy, before marriage, or during teenage years. The risk is higher in communities where FGM is an established cultural tradition, and globally it is estimated that over 200 million women and girls have been affected.

The procedure is often carried out by community members or relatives, sometimes older women within the community. In many cases, it is performed by individuals without any medical training. This makes it particularly dangerous, as it can lead to serious health risks such as infection, significant pain, and long-term complications. The lack of medical care or safe conditions increases the level of harm.

FGM is most commonly practised in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and some areas of Asia, with higher prevalence in certain regions such as North-East Africa. When looking at maps and statistics, what often stands out is both the high number of people affected worldwide and the concentration of the practice in specific regions. Despite increased awareness and legal action in many countries, FGM continues to take place.

There are a range of reasons often given to justify FGM. These include cultural traditions, beliefs about modesty and appropriate behaviour, and ideas about preparing girls for adulthood or marriage. In some cases, it is incorrectly linked to religion, although it is not required by any major religion. When looking more deeply, the practice is often connected to social pressure, expectations around controlling female sexuality, and long-standing traditions passed down through generations. It is important to recognise that some individuals believe they are acting in the best interests of the child, even though the practice is harmful and unnecessary.

Although FGM is illegal in the UK, it remains a safeguarding concern. Some girls may be taken abroad to undergo the procedure, or may be at risk within communities where FGM is practised. Estimates suggest that thousands of girls in the UK could be at risk, which is why awareness and education are important.

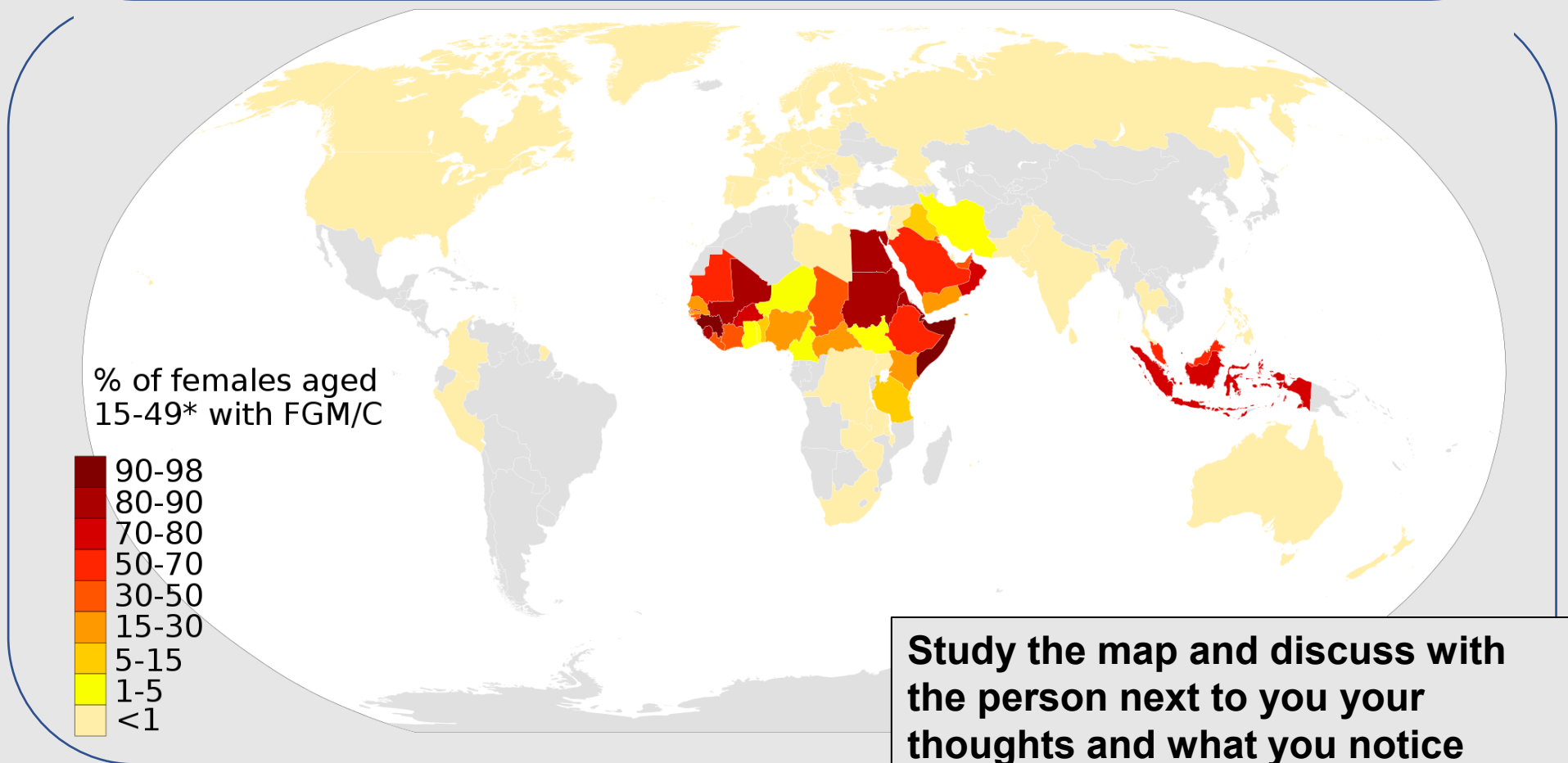
Under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, it is a criminal offence to perform FGM, assist in carrying it out, or arrange for a child to be taken abroad for the procedure. There have been successful prosecutions in recent years, including cases where parents and professionals have been sentenced for their involvement. This shows that the law is actively enforced and that FGM is treated as a serious crime.

Students are not expected to deal with situations like this themselves, but they should understand how to respond safely. If they are worried about someone, they should speak to a trusted adult such as a teacher, parent, or safeguarding lead. Looking out for friends and reporting concerns can help prevent harm. It is important to remember that anyone who has experienced FGM is a victim and should be supported, not blamed.

Questions:

1. Who is most at risk of FGM?
2. Who usually performs FGM and why is this particularly dangerous.
3. Look at the map and statistics. Explain what is most shocking.
4. Using your information and the map, where does FGM usually happen?
5. What reasons are given for performing FGM?
6. What are the actual reasons why FGM is performed?
7. How is this still a problem for girls living in the UK?
8. Explain the legal status and give examples of prosecutions.
9. Describe two small ways you could help stop this.

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Study the map and discuss with the person next to you your thoughts and what you notice from the map

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Useful helplines and charities

NSPCC FGM Helpline - 0800 028 3550 or email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.

[Young Minds](#). Child and adolescent mental health charity. Call: 0808 802 5544 (parents' helpline)

[Teen Line | Teens Support hotline - Connect, talk, get help!](#) Teen Line's highly trained teen listeners provide support, resources and hope to any teen who is struggling.

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/you-co/types-crime/child-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/> Victim support for those impacted by FGM

<https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fgm/fgm-support-organisations/>

Police-approved help organisations and link to report FGM offenses or victims

<https://www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation-help-advice> official UK government advice page

Reporting a Concern at Thornden School

- It is important to us that all of you feel safe, happy and belong at Thornden.
- We also know that sometimes it is not as easy as simply telling a member of staff
- It could be:
 - A friend you are worried about
 - Someone being unkind to you
 - Something you have heard and think we should know

How can you report anything you are worried about?

- Speak to a member of staff or parent / carer
- Visit the Well Being Den or Head of Year area
- On Satchel each week you will be sent a link to a form to share any worries you have
- On our school website homepage there is a 'Report a Concern' link.
- In the Student Bulletin there is a 'Report a Concern' link
- On all school desktops there is a 'Report a Concern' logo to click and report anything

Need Support? You're Not Alone

If anything in today's lesson has affected you, or you want to talk to someone, there is help available.



Mental Health & Low Mood

YoungMinds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>
Kooth – <https://www.kooth.com>
Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>

Talk to Someone

Your Tutor or Head of Year – We're here to help.
Wellbeing Team and School Nurse
Report a Concern on Satchel
Safeguarding Team with the Purple lanyards

Healthy Lifestyle

NHS Every Mind Matters – <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>
Change4Life – <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

Apps That Can Help

Calm – For mindfulness and sleep.
Headspace – Meditation and stress relief.
Clear Fear – Manage anxiety (designed for young people).
MeeTwo – Anonymously talk to other teens, moderated by experts.

Eating Concerns

Beat Eating Disorders –
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>
NHS Live Well – Eating Disorders –
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/eating-disorders/>