

Questions to assist FGM Assessment

(Note: where the term FGM is used in the following questions, please replace with the term the family are familiar with)

* indicates questions that should be asked to both parents separately where appropriate.

General questions

- “Do you understand my role and the reason for my visit?”*
 - “Do you have any questions or concerns about my role?”
- “Do you understand what FGM means? What is the term used for cutting/FGM in your community?”
 - Refer to Appendix 3 and use the term identified.

Questions for parents - FGM and the Family

- “I know that some girls and women in your country have been cut. What do you think about this?”*
- “Can you please tell me if FGM has affected you or your family?”*
 - If yes, “do you remember how old you were?”
- “Have you had any complications or problems because of it”? “Are you aware of health services that can support you?” (Give details)
 - If yes or no, “Are you aware of the health problems that girls and women can have?”
 - Explain the short term and long term health and psychological problems
- “Is cutting part of your culture or religion? If yes:”
 - “Tell me about this”
 - “Do you think FGM is connected to witchcraft and/or marriageability?”
- “What are your family’s views on FGM?”*
 - Explore location and frequency of contact with family members.

Questions for parents - FGM and the Community

- “What are the views of your community in the UK on cutting?”*
- “In your community/country why is cutting practised?”
 - “Who usually carries out the cutting in your community”
- “At what age are girls usually cut in your country of origin/in your community?”
 - In certain communities, FGM is closely related to particular milestones a girl reaches, e.g. puberty. Obtaining this information could potentially tell you when a girl at risk might be cut.
- “If a girl is not cut, what could the consequences be?”*
- “Would there be pressure from your family or the community to have your daughter(s) cut?”*

Questions for Parents - Daughter(s) Safety*

- If left in the care of a grandmother, aunt, or other extended family members, would there be a risk to your daughter(s) of FGM?
- Do you feel anyone in the community could pressure you to have your daughter(s) cut?"
- "How do you think you can protect your daughter from being cut?"
 - "If you felt pressured by your family or community to have your daughter(s) cut, who would you go to for support?"
 - "On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being you are not confident that you would be able to seek support at all or 10 being you are extremely confident that you could seek support if you felt pressured to have your daughter cut, where would you scale yourself?"
- "Are you aware of the Laws in the UK about FGM?"
 - "Are you aware that it is illegal to take someone out of the UK to be cut or to bring someone into the UK to carry out cutting?"
 - The social worker should explain the law around FGM and the consequences of breaking the law and that FGM is considered child abuse in the UK.
- "Who do you feel that you would speak to if you were worried about your daughter's safety?"
- "Are you aware that FGM is illegal and considered child abuse in the UK?"

Questions for Parents - Daughter(s) Knowledge

- "What does your daughter(s) know about FGM?"
 - "Is this something you want us to explore with them?" (You can explain what activities this may include if the parents are anxious.)
 - "What would your daughter say she is most worried about? Why?"
- "Has your daughter got any friends, siblings or cousins who have been cut?"
 - If yes, this will give you information on close community/family member's views on cutting and potential risks a girl(s).

Closing Questions

- "Do you have any questions about what we have discussed today?"*
- "What are you worried about as a result of today's visit? Why?"
 - "How can I help you with any of your worries?"
- "Is there anything that you do not understand that you would like me to talk about or explain again?"

Questions for Girl(s)

We advise you to use an activity to gather information from a girl(s) or young person on the first visit or engage in a general conversation about likes, dislikes, family life, school or hobbies etc. This type of intervention will put the girl(s) at ease and assist in establishing and building a rapport.

If the girl(s) replies no or is unsure to any of the following questions please visit www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/resources for activities to help introduce and explore FGM with children and young people.

Below are examples of questions you might like to consider for girls, bearing in mind their age and understanding.

- “What have your parents said to you as to why I am here?”
 - “What did they tell you?”
 - If child unsure explain your role.
- “Has anyone ever spoken to you about FGM before? If so, who, and what did they say?”
- “Have you ever spoken to anyone else about it?”
- “Have you learnt anything in school about the body and your body rights?”
- Explain that a child can say no to something which makes them uncomfortable or sad and ask “If you are ever worried about something, who would you speak to?”
- “Are there any questions you would like to ask me?”

Conclude by making sure the girl/family understands that:

- **FGM is child abuse**
- **FGM is illegal**
- **FGM can have harmful health consequences**
- **You will be taking some actions as a consequence of your assessment**
- **You will be sharing information about the assessment with your colleagues and other organisations where appropriate.**