



Developing excellence  
in response to FGM and  
other harmful practices

## The National FGM Centre

The National FGM Centre was established with funding from the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, as a partnership between Barnardo's and the Local Government Association (LGA). The Centre aims to lead innovation the delivery of services for girls and families affected by female genital mutilation (FGM), breast flattening & abuse linked to faith or belief.

The National FGM Centre recognises the need to change the way in which services are delivered to tackle FGM, breast flattening and abuse linked to faith or belief. It is able to provide improved and cost effective care and outcomes

### Contact us:

If you would like to discuss commissioning this accredited FGM training or would like to discuss bespoke training, please contact:

Sonita Pobi, National Lead for Learning and Professional Development Tel:

07710 065 330/ 0208 498 7137

Email: [sonita.pobi@nationalfgmcentre.org.uk](mailto:sonita.pobi@nationalfgmcentre.org.uk)



For more information about any aspect of the Centre's work, please contact the National FGM Centre:

[info@nationalfgmcentre.org.uk](mailto:info@nationalfgmcentre.org.uk)

[www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk](http://www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk)

# Multi-agency training: Child abuse linked to faith or belief



Funded by  
  
Department  
for Education

Local  
Government  
Association

Believe in  
children  
Barnardo's

# Child abuse linked to faith or belief multi-agency training

The stories of Victoria Climbié, Ayesha Ali, Kristy Bamu, and Khyra Ishaq (to name a few) highlighted that child abuse linked to faith and belief is another hidden form of abuse that professionals should be aware of.

The 'National Action Plan to Tackle Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief' (2012) focuses on the belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession; demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray; the evil eye or djinns and dakini; ritual or muti murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and the use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and the beliefs are not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief will present as:

- neglect
- physical
- sexual
- emotional abuse

and the challenge for professionals lies in identifying the underlying cause of the abuse.

**The Children in Need Census 2016/17 showed there were 1,460 cases where the assessment of the child's needs showed child abuse linked to faith or belief as a possible factor.**

Child abuse linked to faith or belief includes belief in the concepts of:



- witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs),
- the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and
- dakini (in the Hindu context);
- ritual or muti murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies;
- use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list.

## Training Aim:

To equip professionals with the knowledge and confidence to recognise and deal with child abuse linked to faith and belief.

## Learning outcomes:

Participants will:

- Identify factors within various faith and belief systems that may make some of these harmful to children and adults
- Gain greater confidence to recognise and support those at risk of abuse linked to faith and belief
- Consider different ways to assess the religious/spiritual beliefs of families
- Reflect on current practise