

13 years for first FGM conviction

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The first conviction of female genital mutilation (FGM) has resulted in a 13 year jail sentence for the child's mother. This comes more than 15 years after the enactment of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and 33 years after the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985, which first made the practice illegal.

Despite allegations of FGM rising almost fivefold in recent years, prosecutions for this form of child abuse have been unsuccessful up till now - largely as a result of difficulties in obtaining sufficient proof.

The DfE have issued various statutory and non-statutory guidance for multi-agencies, resource packs on FGM and made express reference to the duty on teachers to report suspected FGM in Keeping Children Safe. In addition, draft statutory guidance on the new sex and relationships education regulations includes references to teaching secondary age pupils about the illegality of FGM and availability of support.

As a result of schools and other agencies sharing information with the police, hundreds of FGM protection orders have been issued. It may have taken decades, but hopefully this first conviction and the raft of other preventative measures will combat this horrific practice and protect children at risk.

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