



## **POLICY DOCUMENT**

**Group Member:** Progress Housing Group

**Service Area:** Progress Housing Group

**Document Ref No:** GRPOLHM05

**Subject Title:** Unmet Need and Child Safeguarding Policy

**Version:** 10

**Effective Date:** 01/04/2015

**Last Reviewed:** 03/09/2023

**Next Review Date:** 01/09/2026

**Document Owner:** Head of Progress Lifeline

**Date of Board Approval:** 02/02/2022

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## 1. Introduction / Background

Progress Housing Group are committed to ensuring that every child ( anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday), regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm. This policy aims to ensure that children are safe from adults and other children that might pose a risk. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children’s health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

- 1.1 PHG (Progress Housing Group) is committed to safeguarding children in line with legislation and relevant national and local guidelines.
- 1.2 The Group (PHG) is committed to creating a culture of zero tolerance of harm to children and to reporting safeguarding concerns.
- 1.3 This policy requires colleagues to acknowledge their individual responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. As well as the commitment of management to support this.
- 1.4 Safeguarding children and young people is a multi-agency activity and is dependent upon partnership working with other statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- 1.5 The Government’s [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-safeguard-children) highlighted the importance of Registered Providers in the safeguarding and welfare of children: *‘Housing Staff in their day to day contact*

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*with members of the public and with families may become aware of concerns about the welfare of a particular child.*

1.6 The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Please See Appendix 1

## 2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors working for the Progress Housing Group including Key Unlocking Futures. Key Unlocking Futures has additional procedural guidance for employees working with children.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all unborn babies, new babies, children, young people and their families who come into contact with colleagues from the Group or its subsidiaries.
- 2.3 It can be extended for young people beyond the age of 18 where it is appropriate to enable a young person to have a smooth transition to adult services or the young person has an identified special educational need or disability.

## 3. Responsibility

- 3.1 It is essential that colleagues understand their own role and responsibilities around the reporting of concerns that surround a child or children.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of all colleagues that they are aware of their role in identifying children in need of protection and how to act upon their concerns.
- 3.3 Safeguarding champions have been identified across the Group to support staff where they are unsure about the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and safeguarding processes. A list of these has been provided as appendix 2.

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- 3.4 It is important to emphasise that all members of the community can help safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people if they are mindful of their needs and willing and able to act if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
- 3.5 It is essential that employees are aware of the issues of abuse and are adequately trained to recognise signs and symptoms. When children fail to thrive or are at risk of significant harm, knowing where responsibility sits and what actions to take to safeguard children and young people, is of utmost importance.

## 4. Policy

### 4.1 Aims & Objectives

Where a colleague has cause for concern they will establish the level of need required for a child by referring to The Continuum of Need Thresholds Guidance published by the relevant local authority. In applying these thresholds, colleagues will be able to gauge whether a EHA or safeguarding referral is required.

### 4.2 Unmet Need

Where it is established that there is an unmet need a EHA should be completed to assess the needs of the child, undertaken by a lead professional either within the Group or an external agency and it should be sent to the relevant local authority.

The EHA will be completed with the family to identify unmet needs to create an action plan to meet the needs of the child or children either via its own services or with other organisations.

Where other organisations are required to provide a service, the Group will partake in a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting.

### 4.3 Safeguarding

Where the Group has concerns that there is a risk of significant harm to a child it will ensure that a safeguarding referral is made immediately.

A written record of all actions will be completed on a referral form to the local authority.

### 4.4 Working in Partnership

The Group is a national organisation, yet we see local links and partnership working as crucial to being able to meet the needs of children. It is with this

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in mind that for all areas of operation, colleagues will adopt the local authorities' Early Help Assessment and safeguarding procedures. Wherever practical or available the Group will be party to the local information sharing protocol in order to work effectively with partner agencies. We will also work in partnership with Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnerships including consideration to make information available using the seven key points (Appendix 3).

The Group provide funding to voluntary, community and faith organisations in a variety of ways in particular through the Community Investment Fund. For those organisations who work directly with children (unsupervised by their parents or carers) we will only do so if they supply a child protection policy. The Group will not support any organisations who do not have a child protection policy to ensure the safeguarding of children. If they do not have their own policy we will ask them to adopt and work to the Group's child safeguarding policy.

Occasions may arise where the Group is asked to house individuals that have been convicted of offences against children. When these situations occur the Group is committed to ensuring that the risk is measured and controlled appropriately and will work with appropriate agencies, such as the local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) group or equivalent to ensure there is a joined up, multi-agency approach to managing such situations.

The Group may provide accommodation to young people under the age of 18. This policy requires for liaison and co-operation with any Local Authority which is or maybe making a Child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated by supported accommodation

It is essential that the Group provides prompt referrals for any allegation of abuse or neglect (current/ or ongoing) to the relevant accommodating authority and to the local authority where supported housing accommodation is located if different than the accommodating authority. This will be reflected in relevant procedures that sit under this policy.

It is essential that the Group provides prompt referrals for any allegation about past abuse or neglect, to the accommodating authority and if different, the LA in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred. This will be reflected in procedures that sit under this policy.

This policy also recognises that young people should be involved in any decision making around any changes to the support package/ living arrangements where they are living in supported accommodation.

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#### 4.5 Recruitment of Staff

Where roles within the Group may come into contact with children as part of their daily requirements, specific reference will be made to *Safe Recruitment, Selection and Supervision of Staff* from the *Pan Lancashire Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children Manual*

**[Welcome to the Lancashire Children's Social Care Procedures Manual \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)**

Group employees are subject (where eligible) to a Disclosure and Barring Service check conducted prior to employment based on the function of their role and the delivery of service they undertake.

#### 4.6 Allegations

Allegations against a staff member or 'Persons in a Position of Trust'. For the purposes of this policy, a Person in a Position of Trust is someone who works with or cares for children in a paid or voluntary capacity and about whom allegations of abuse or neglect are made (who may/may not work for the Group).

All allegations of abuse, neglect or maltreatment of children by a Person in a Position of Trust (who may/may not work for the Group) must be treated in accordance with the Raising Concerns at Work policy. (The Director of Business Assurance is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy). The following are examples of where an allegation must be reported, there may be other instances not listed below:

An individual has

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child,
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child,
- behaved towards children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This may result in suspension of the person as the key priority is to ensure all children and young people are safe. For allegations that relate to staff connected with young people's supported accommodation schemes OFSTED must also be informed.

All Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership partners are to identify a person who will hold responsibility for information management oversight within their respective organisations of individuals within their agencies where concerns have been raised about a person in a position of trust (PiPoT). This person may be a Safeguarding Lead or specifically a Position of Trust Lead detailed in appendix 3.

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#### 4.7 Prevent Strategy

The **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ([legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk))** that came into force in March 2015 includes a provision called the Prevent Duty which places a general requirement on specified authorities to “have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.”

The “specified authorities” include local authorities, the NHS, schools, further and higher education bodies, probation service providers and police forces across England, Wales and Scotland (the duty does not apply to Northern Ireland). The full listing of “specified authorities” is set out in schedule 6 of the legislation.

Although the Group does not fall under the Prevent Duty “specified authorities” we work closely with many of them and will therefore ensure that colleagues have an awareness of the prevent agenda and signs of radicalisation, the link between the vulnerabilities making people more susceptible to abuse and being susceptible to radicalisation, and what to do should they suspect a child is at risk of radicalisation.

#### 4.8 What constitutes Abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons and may result in significant harm to, or the exploitation of the person subjected to it.

- Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts;
- It may be physical, verbal, sexual or emotional;
- It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act;
- It may occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they had not consented, or cannot consent;
- Abuse may be deliberate or unintentional or result from lack of knowledge.
- Abuse can take place on line (such as on social media) as well as in person

Who may be the abuser? Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual. A wide range of people may harm others.

These include:

- a member of staff, owner or manager at a residential or nursing home
- a professional worker such as a nurse, social worker or general practitioner
- a volunteer or member of a ‘community group’ such as a social club or place of worship another service user

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- a spouse, partner, parent, relative or friend
- a carer
- a neighbour, member of the public or a stranger
- a person who deliberately targets others in order to exploit them.

#### 4.9 Types of Abuse

The main categories of abuse are as follows:-

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect and Acts of Omission

Some other forms of child abuse and child protection concerns include:

- Female genital mutilation (Appendix 4)
- Missing, exploited or trafficked children (MET)
- Child sexual exploitation
- Forced Marriage (Appendix 4)
- Honour based violence (Appendix 4)
- Online Safety

This policy recognises the risks of self-harm and suicide. The Group will ensure arrangements are in place to protect children and young people from self-harm, including record keeping and sharing information with the accommodating authority.

#### 5. References

- The Children Act 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1988
- The General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- The Children Act 2004
- HM Government 2007
- Home Office 2003 Hidden Harm
- FGM Act 2003
- Working Together to safeguard children 2015 (not legislation but is guidance but need to follow)
- Working Together to safeguard children 2017 (not legislation but is guidance but need to follow)
- The Allegation Management Framework 2016
- The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023

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## 6. General Data Protection

Where an employee of the Group believes that significant harm is or has the potential to occur, a report to the Police or local Safeguarding Team will be made without the requirement of consent.

Where an unmet need has been identified and an EHA is required this will only be undertaken with the informed consent of the family.

Progress Housing Group recognises the importance of confidentiality and will ensure that when information is provided to other agencies, it will be in line with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Human Rights Act 1998, although this will not be at the expense of leaving the vulnerable a child at risk.

## 7. Implementation

### 7.1 Training

Safeguarding is a specific requirement of the Group's corporate induction training with all new frontline staff required to attend.

Training is mandatory for all the Group staff and is to be refreshed on a 3 year cycle.

Training will be in accordance with the Lancashire Safeguarding Assurance Partnership Guidance.

### 7.2 Procedure references

the Group will use the Early Help Assessment to Safeguard Children procedure

the Group Vulnerable Customer Procedure

the Group Disciplinary Procedure

the Group Grievance Procedure

Key's Young People's Supported Accommodation Safeguarding Procedure

### 7.3 Linked documents

Group Raising Concerns at Work Policy

Group Personal Safety & Lone Working Policy

Group Code of Conduct

Group Domestic Abuse Policy

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Group Hate Crime Policy  
Group Witness Support Policy  
Group Disclosure & Barring Check Policy  
Early Help Assessment processes within each Local Authority area  
Lancashire Continuum of Need Thresholds Guidance  
Lancashire Safeguarding Assurance Partnership Multi Agency Procedure

## 8. Consultation

A review took place over February 2023 with relevant staff from across the Group to ensure the policy is still relevant and make any necessary changes. This review group now reviews the policy annually.

Consultation has also taken place with the Operational Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team and safeguarding review group.

## 9. Review

It is recommended that this policy is reviewed every three years or as a result of any change in legislation or contract requirements.

## 10. Equality Impact assessment

We welcome feedback on this policy and the way it operates. We are interested to know any possible or actual adverse impact that this policy may have on groups in respect of gender, marital status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or other characteristic.

We aim to consult those who may be affected by a policy before it is formally introduced. We encourage involvement in shaping new services. We want to take account of the needs, circumstances and experience of those likely to be affected by a proposed policy and identify any possible inequalities or discrimination between different groups.

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and reviewed against this policy.

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## Appendix 1

### Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Blackburn with Darwen	Blackpool	Lancashire
Megan Dumpleton	Peter Charlesworth	No named individual
<a href="mailto:Megan.dumpleton@blackburn.gov.uk">Megan.dumpleton@blackburn.gov.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:Peter.Charlesworth@blackpool.gov.uk">Peter.Charlesworth@blackpool.gov.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk">LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk</a>
01254 585184	01253 477541	01772 536694

As outlined in “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (2015), the LADO will be informed of all allegations against adults working with children and provides advice and guidance to Senior Managers on the progress of cases to ensure they are resolved as quickly as possible. Information relating to allegations is collated and presented to Children’s Safeguarding Assurance Partnership to inform training, research, safer recruitment and awareness raising.

The LADO is located within Children’s Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

You can find the area LADO by looking on the relevant Local Authority web site.

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The LADO role applies to the children's workforce (paid, self-employed and volunteers). The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case.

The LADO will provide advice and guidance and help determine that the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures. Within the role the LADO helps co-ordinate information sharing. The LADO will also monitor and track any investigation with the expectation that it is resolved as quickly as possible.

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These procedures may also be used where concerns arise about:

- The person's behaviour with regard to his/her own children;
- The behaviour in the private or community life of a partner, member of the family or other household member;
- A person's behaviour in their personal life, which may impact upon the safety of children to whom they owe a duty of care.

## Appendix 2

### Progress Housing Group Safeguarding Strategic Lead:

Name	Job Title	Area of Business	Contact
Annette Stevens 07896716139	Operations Director Safeguarding Lead and Person in Position of Trust Lead	Housing Community and Support Services	In any cases where abuse is identified
Joanne Bushell	Head of Progress Lifeline	Lifeline/Control Centre	

### Progress Housing Group Safeguarding Review Group Members:

Name	Job Title	Area of Business	Contact
Kirsty Ellis 07890384578	Head of Operations (Homes and Opportunities)	Homes and Opportunities	In any cases where abuse is surrounding an Independent Living and general needs tenants
Liz Stanton 01772 435865	Refuge Manager	Clare House	In any cases where abuse is surrounding Domestic Violence
Tola Adesemowo 07929789688	Head of Operations (Income and Communities)	Income and Communities	In any cases where abuse is surrounding General Needs, Independent Living Leasehold
Annette Stevens 01772450894	Director (Housing operations, Reside with Progress)	Supported Living Schemes	In any cases where abuse is surrounding a tenant of a supported living scheme and Progress Living

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Diane Strickland 07966 483322	Property Services Customer Liaison	Property Services	In any cases where abuse surrounding the safeguarding of a child/children is identified by a property services member of staff
Zoe McEvoy	Director (People & Culture)	HR	In any cases where abuse is surrounding a member of staff.
Ursula Patten 01772 678973	Director (Key)	Key	In cases where abuse
Neil Bergin-Faragher	Head of Customer Experience	Progress Connect	In any cases where abuse surrounding the safeguarding of a child/children is identified by a Progress Connect member of staff

### Appendix 3

## INFORMATION SHARING

Sharing of information is vital to ensure that children at risk of abuse or neglect receive the support they require. It is also essential that all practitioners understand when, why and how they should share information.

Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. No practitioner should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping an adult or child safe (HM 2015).

Where there is concern that the adult or child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm then their safety and welfare **must** be the overriding consideration. Information may also be shared where an adult is at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection, or prosecution of a serious crime including where consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

Below are 7 key points on information sharing but for further detailed guidance refer to [Information sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers](#) (HM Government 2008) accessed at:

**Seven key points on information sharing:**

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1. **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

**Seven golden rules for information sharing regarding children can be found at:**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

## Appendix 4

### Forced Marriage

There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage; everyone should have **the right to choose**. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage, but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement still remains with the prospective spouses. However, in forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some

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vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.

The UK Government regards forced marriage as an abuse of human rights and a form of domestic abuse, and where it affects children and young people, child abuse. Forced Marriage is a criminal offence. It can happen to both women and men, although many of the reported cases involve young women and girls aged between 16 and 25. There is no “typical” victim of forced marriage; some may be over or under 18 years of age, some may have a disability, some may have young children and some may also be spouses from overseas.

Despite the recorded numbers, forced marriage still remains a hidden practice, as many more cases remain unreported. However, with the ever-increasing levels of support now being made available, along with wider awareness-raising on how this support can be accessed, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of reported cases. A number of forced marriages do take place here in the UK without any form of overseas element, while a large number of others may involve a prospective partner brought into the UK from overseas or a British national being taken abroad for that purpose.

## Capacity to consent to marriage

If a person does not consent or lacks capacity to consent to a marriage, that marriage must be viewed as a forced marriage whatever the reason for the marriage taking place. Capacity to consent can be assessed and tested but is time and decision-specific.

Victims frequently end up trapped in a relationship marred by physical and sexual abuse. The impact this has on children within the marriage is immense.

## Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which was set up in January 2005 to lead on the Government’s forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both inside the UK, where support is provided to any individual, and overseas, where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals.

The FMU operates a **public helpline** to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from simple safety advice, through to aiding a victim to prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK (‘reluctant sponsor’ cases), and, in extreme circumstances, to rescue victims held against their will overseas.

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Anyone in Lancashire who is worried about forced marriage can contact the police directly or seek advice from their **local community safety teams**. Lancashire **adult** and **children** safeguarding procedures must also be followed.

## Honour based violence and abuse

Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. This may include forced marriage and domestic violence and abuse (DVA).

Domestic abuse support services can support victims of honour based abuse and forced marriage.

<https://www.lancashire.police.uk/help-advice/personal-safety/forced-marriage-honour-based-violence-and-fgm.aspx>

## Female Genital Mutilation

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that female genital mutilation (FGM):

*“Comprises of all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons” (WHO 2014)*

FGM is also known as Female Circumcision (FC) and Female Genital Cutting (FGC). The reason for these alternative definitions is that it is better received in the communities that practice it, who do not see themselves as engaging in mutilation.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. The FGM Act (2003) makes it unlawful for UK nationals or habitual UK residents to carry out FGM in the UK or abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM even in countries where FGM is legal.

This legislation was designed to prevent families and carers from taking girls abroad to undergo the procedure. The Act increased the maximum penalty for being found guilty of FGM from 5 to 14 years imprisonment. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 also made it a criminal offence to re-infibulate following childbirth.

Section 5B of the 2003 Act introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report ‘known’ cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in

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the course of their professional work to the police. The duty came into force on 31 October 2015.

'Known' cases are those where either a girl informs the person that an act of FGM – however described – has been carried out on her, or where the person observes physical signs on a girl appearing to show that an act of FGM has been carried out and the person has no reason to believe that the act was, or was part of, a surgical operation. This does not include third party disclosures.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/573782/FGM\\_Mandatory\\_Reporting\\_-\\_procedural\\_information\\_nov16\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf)

Consideration of a safeguarding response however is needed if a woman is identified with FGM.

Consideration of the wider issues found within FGM practising communities will need to be explored with a woman, i.e. domestic abuse, honour based violence and forced marriage.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/512906/Multi\\_Agency\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_on\\_FGM\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512906/Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_FINAL.pdf)

Evidence informs us that girls born to mothers with FGM are also at risk of being subjected to FGM, a child safeguarding referral is therefore required for a multi-agency strategy discussion to assess the risk to any females associated with a woman identified with FGM.

