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### PROJECT HOPE COFFEE MORNING GROUP

CfED's Project Hope most recent coffee morning with migrant women was held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April at the Queens Cross Network. 12 ladies from different nationalities attended and it was another opportunity for them to meet and greet each other as part of their integration journey. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> of these coffee mornings and so far each one has been extremely helpful, packed with information for participants.

Carol Tromans and three of her colleagues from the Office of Public Health attended to talk with ladies and discuss health related issues. The Office of Public Health were quite keen on exploring with participants the health related services they have been assessing and whether any of them required additional support to that already been accessed.

Samantha Billingham from SODA also gave a talk on the nature and scope of domestic abuse and where help and support is available should any one experience such issue. She shared her personal experience of being in an abusive relationship for many years and how it all impacted her very badly.

Overall the ladies responded well to both talks and are keen on gaining more awareness on the impact of domestic abuse and how to get them & their families to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

# Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

## What is FGM?

Female genital mutilation comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reason.

FGM is also sometimes known as 'female genital cutting' or 'female circumcision'. However, circumcision is not an appropriate term. Communities tend to use local names for referring to this practice including "sunna".

FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

FGM is a cruel and harmful practice. **It is always illegal to practice FGM in the UK and to in any way assist in its practice on UK nationals or permanent residents abroad.** Communities who practice FGM may perceive this to be a normal practice and wrongly justify it under the guise of:

- Custom and tradition
- Preservation of virginity/chastity
- Religion
- Social acceptance, especially for marriage
- Hygiene and cleanliness
- Family honour
- Enhancing fertility
- Increasing sexual pleasure for the male
- Sense of belonging or fear of social exclusion

## Who is affected?

FGM is practised mainly in 28 African countries and in a few countries in the Middle East, including Yemen and Northern Iraq, Asia and within certain ethnic groups

in Central and South America. With increased immigration, the practice has spread to Europe, North America, and Australia.

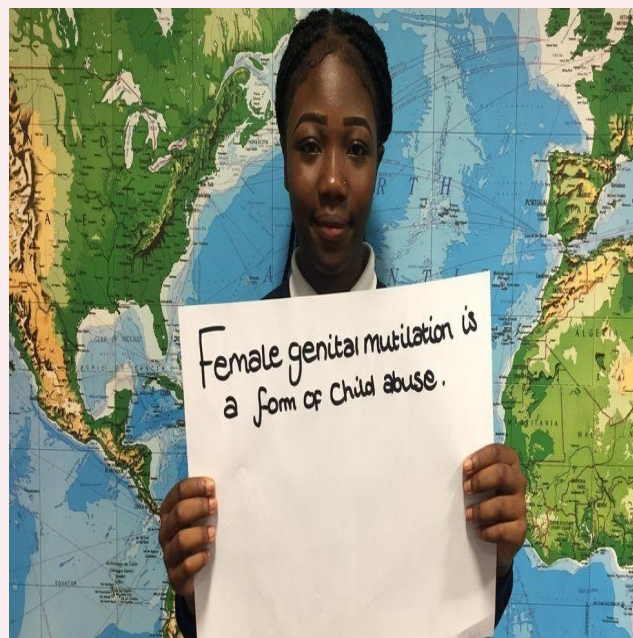
- Between 100 and 140 million girls and women worldwide are estimated to have undergone FGM

- 3 million girls in Africa are estimated to be at risk of FGM each year

- It has been estimated that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK

Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM.

UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However women from non-African communities that are at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women. Those who are affected by FGM may be British citizens born to parents from FGM practising communities or women resident in the UK who were born in countries that practice FGM. These may include immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, overseas students or the wives of overseas students.



## **Undergoing FGM**

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the ethnic group. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood, adolescence, at marriage or during the first pregnancy.

While women and girls born in the UK continue to undergo FGM, it is unclear whether the practice takes place in the UK. Families often take their daughters abroad during school summer holidays to have the procedure done.

**What are the signs that a girl may be at risk of FGM or has undergone FGM?**

Suspicions may arise in a number of ways that a child is being prepared for FGM to take place abroad. These include knowing that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school. The child may also talk about a 'special procedure/ceremony' that is going to take place.

Indicators that FGM may already have occurred include prolonged absence from school, with noticeable behaviour change on return and long periods away from classes or other normal activities, possibly with bladder or menstrual problems. Some teachers have described how children find it difficult to sit still and look uncomfortable or may complain of pain between their legs or talk of something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.

## **What are the health risks of FGM?**

There are many health risks associated with FGM. These are dependent on the type and severity of the procedure. The immediate health complications may include severe pain and shock, infection, excessive bleeding, urine retention, haemorrhaging, and even death. These short term effects may not manifest themselves when victims are in the UK if FGM has been performed abroad, which is the most common practice. The long-term health complications include chronic pain, infection, cysts and abscesses, menstruation difficulties, damage to the reproductive system, infertility, complications in pregnancy and childbirth, sexual dysfunction, and psychological

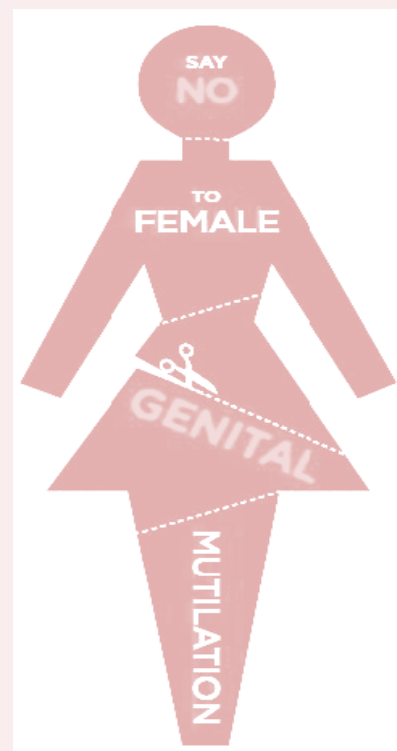
damage such as posttraumatic stress disorder. FGM also has detrimental effects on the newborn babies of mothers who have undergone FGM.

**Guidance around referral to Social care**  
If any child (under-18s) or adult with care and support needs in your care has symptoms or signs of FGM, or if you have good reason to suspect they are at risk of FGM having considered their family history or other relevant factors, they must be referred using standard existing safeguarding procedures, as with all other instances of child abuse. **Adults:** There is no requirement for automatic referral of adult women with FGM to adult social services or the police.

If you require any further help and advice or have concerns please contact Dudley Safeguarding:

**For children 0300 555 0050**

**For adults 0300 555 0055**





# Money Mentoring

**Despite not receiving directly any funding for our money mentoring service, CfED has continued to provide service due to the goodwill of volunteers.**

**One of our Community Hubs volunteer caught up with Peter our qualified and trained money mentor. Here is a short interview with him.**

**Interviewer:** How is the money mentoring service going?

**Peter:** The service is going steady in terms of 1-1 information and support. Most of our current cases come from family support workers who work for the Dudley Council. I am really pleased about this as it shows family support workers have faith in us and sees the usefulness in the service we offer to their clients.

**Interviewer:** What do you actually offer a service user?

**Peter:** I and colleagues help service users make sensible spending choices and can meet up with them over a number of weeks or even months until their financial situation has improved.

**Interviewer:** What else have you been doing?

**Peter:** Recently we trained 185 students at Dudley College on basic money management. In addition we attended two student events and handed out 219 student money hand books and tips for money management.

**Interviewer:** What was your main message to the students?

**Peter:** The main message to them was simple. If you make sensible spending decisions you will actually have more money available.

**Interviewer:** Can you explain further?

**Peter:** Yes, of course. If students don't get into having debts by careless spending they will pay less on interest or default payments. This will also enable them to maintain a good credit rating and later, perhaps after student life, borrow at low interest rates for things like a mortgage.

We encourage students to work hard on savings for things they want rather than using credit facilities particularly at the extremely high interest rates many companies are offering.

**Interviewer:** Have you discovered any interesting facts from the students?

**Peter:** We undertake a short survey as to the amount students were spending monthly on mobile phones. Of 55 students who participated in the survey we learnt that,

11 were spending an average of £10 per month, 18 an average of £20 per month and 4 of them an average of £60 per month. We found that 15 student were paying £40 plus per month on their mobile phone.

We made suggestions to them that if taken on board would reduce cost by 50% and more with potential savings of around £240 per year.

**Interviewer:** How can we get in touch with the service?

**Peter:** Contact the CfED Office on 01384 456166 and leave a message. We respond to every call concerning the money mentoring provision.





## **New Immigration System Will Not Be Ready by April 2019, Report Warns**

Free movement of people will have to be kept for several years after Brexit because a new immigration system will not be in ready in time, a new report published on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 has warned.

Curbing migration was a major concern among Leave voters and forms a key part of Theresa May's negotiating priorities yet ministers have been warned it will be "unfeasible" to create a new system by April 2019.

In a new report, the Institute for Government (IfG) think tank said the scale of the administrative challenge was too great and the current immigration system should be kept until a replacement was ready to avoid disruptive changes to labour markets.

It also found the current process for registering European Union (EU) nationals was "not fit for purpose" and the Home Office could require up to 5,000 extra civil servants to cope with large numbers of applications and appeals.

Jill Rutter, IfG Brexit programme director, said: "The political imperative for change in immigration is significant, but so is the administrative challenge. "The scale of the task - creating a new immigration system - is huge and it is critical that government gets it right.

"The current process for dealing with permanent residence applications from EU nationals is not fit for purpose, as the government itself acknowledged.

"It needs to be streamlined as a matter of urgency and as a first step towards a new post-Brexit system." Customs checks for EU citizens at the border should be kept to a minimum to assuage fears around the impact of a hard border in Ireland, the report said.

Joe Owen, IfG researcher and report author, said: "Brexit is an opportunity to design an immigration system that is more effective for the country and less burdensome for employers.

"It's important that the Government avoids making multiple changes and introducing unnecessary disruption and confusion.

"To provide stability, we should continue with the existing migration system until the new one is ready."



ELECTION 2017

## **2017 General Election: An opportunity for immigration reform**

On 8th June 2017, the UK will go to the polls in a general election, the results of which will have a crucial bearing on the UK's future. During the

five-year parliamentary term until 2022, we will negotiate our exit from the European Union and establish a new role for ourselves on the global stage. In the coming weeks, candidates from all the political parties will tell us what they think Britain's place within the world should be, and how they think migrants should be treated a post-Brexit society. This will be a chance to press our future representatives in Parliament on their views on immigration, and scrutinise their promises and threats.

This article offers JCWI's vision for an immigration system that benefits UK citizens and migrants alike.

## JCWI's view for GE2017

Throughout recent history we have benefited from the ideas and energy brought by people from across the globe. The contributions made by migrants have helped the UK to be a rich, vibrant society as well as a strong economic and political power. But increasingly, migrants have been subject to hostile public debate and increasingly aggressive policies which have reduced their rights and security in the UK. Our politicians have not always been open about the vital contribution made by migrants, and nor have they invested in the resources needed to help immigration work for everyone. These failures have led to concerns among business, the public, and migrants alike about the way immigration is being handled. The upcoming negotiations with the European Union and other countries around the world will be crucial. Unless there is proper debate about the shape of the UK's approach to immigration, our society, economy and culture could be compromised for years to come. We want GE2017 candidates to commit to keeping the UK outward-looking and internationally connected, and above all to ensure that migrants coming here are treated fairly and equitably.

We call on them to particularly endorse the following:

- 1. Abandon the net migration target.**
- 2. Ensure that the immigration rules are fair and humane.**
- 3. No Community should be left behind.**
- 4. Address inefficiencies in current immigration law and processes.**
- 5. Increase the accountability of Home Office decision-making.**
- 6. Rethink the 'hostile environment' strategy.**

In the context of a new post-Brexit immigration policy, the new Government should move away from the hostile environment approach.

Enforcement should occur at properly managed borders and by immigration officials, not in our communities. Community involvement should instead be in the form of a local integration

strategy which aims to reach out to, rather than intimidate, migrant communities.

## 7. Tackle the causes of irregular migration.

Over the coming weeks parliamentary candidates will be out and about canvassing. Why not ask the following questions to them and see what feedback you get?

Questions to candidates

1. Will you commit to keeping the UK outward-looking and open after Brexit, instead of trying to cut immigration at all costs?
2. Will you work to ensure that the UK's immigration rules treat migrants coming here in the future with humanity, dignity and respect?
3. Will you guarantee a right to remain for existing Citizens in the UK?
4. How will you ensure the benefits of migration benefit all communities in the UK particularly Dudley from their manifestos?

For more on JCWI's position on immigration visit [www.JCWI.org.uk](http://www.JCWI.org.uk)

## From their manifestos



"Strong and stable immigration policies"



"Migrants would not be made 'scapegoats' or 'blamed for economic failures'."



"Making the positive case for immigration and reducing hate crimes."



**Refugee Action want for the next five years to see Britain maintain and extend its welcome for refugees and asylum seekers. In partnership with the Refugee Council they have developed the Refugees Welcome Pledge and are inviting all parliamentary candidates to sign.**

**You can ask your local candidate to go on line at**

**[www.refugee-action.org/campaigns/general-election-campaign/](http://www.refugee-action.org/campaigns/general-election-campaign/) and sign the pledge committing to protect refugees in the UK.**

**The more candidates who sign the pledge the more chance we have to make sure the UK continues its proud tradition of welcoming people in need of safety and protection.**

### **Refugee Welcome Pledge**

**"I pledge to respect the importance of refugee protection, including the wide-ranging debates about immigration, and If elected, to holding the proud tradition throughout the UK of welcoming people forced to flee war and persecution and helping them rebuild lives."**

We welcome any articles, news, events, views and opinions that you would like to share with the wider community and see included in our newsletter.

Please send them to: Centre for Equality & Diversity, 16a Stone Street, Dudley, DY1 1NS.



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