



# Understanding Female Genital Mutilation

Information for midwives, health visitors, school nurses and practice nurses supporting women and girls at risk of or following FGM

## FGM affects:



Emotional wellbeing

Social wellbeing

Physical wellbeing

## Statistics



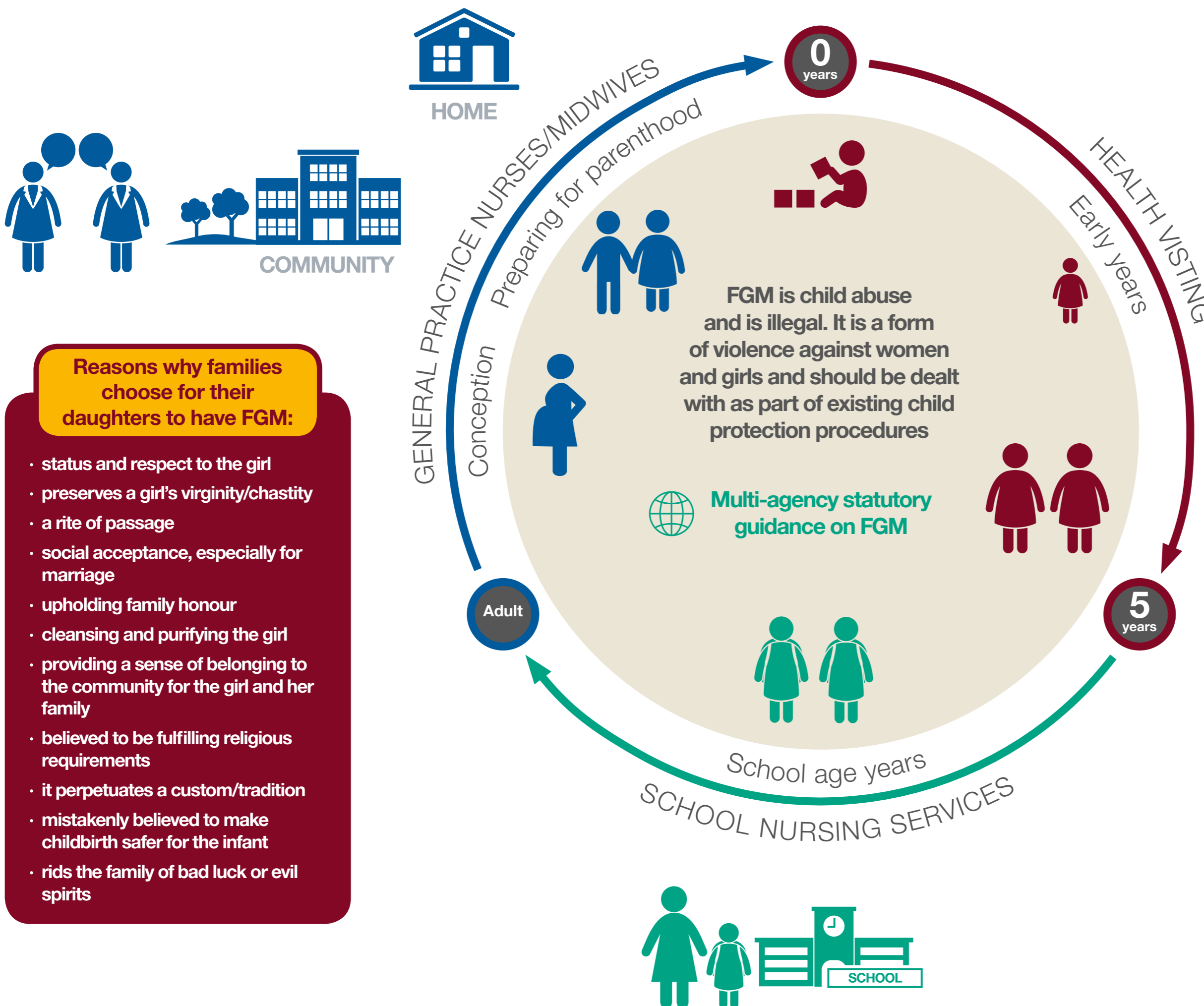
Approximately **103,000** women aged **15-49** and approximately **24,000** women aged **50 and over** who have migrated to England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM. In addition, approximately **10,000** girls aged **under 15** who have migrated to England and Wales are likely to have undergone FGM and approximately **20,000** girls are at risk of FGM.

Approximately **60,000** girls aged **0-14** were born in England and Wales to mothers who had undergone FGM.

## Multi agency working

Public health nurses and midwives have a vital role in partnership working to safeguard and care for women and girls affected by FGM, working alongside:

- Nurseries and schools
- Social care
- Police
- Voluntary sector



## Reasons why families choose for their daughters to have FGM:

- status and respect to the girl
- preserves a girl's virginity/chastity
- a rite of passage
- social acceptance, especially for marriage
- upholding family honour
- cleansing and purifying the girl
- providing a sense of belonging to the community for the girl and her family
- believed to be fulfilling religious requirements
- it perpetuates a custom/tradition
- mistakenly believed to make childbirth safer for the infant
- rids the family of bad luck or evil spirits

## Midwives, health visitors, school nurses and practice nurses must:

- operate within safeguarding responsibilities and undertake safeguarding risk assessments
- understand the mandatory duty to report to the police
- record data for prevalence purposes
- undertake surveillance during childhood to prevent FGM happening
- be vigilant at school holiday time
- be sensitive and culturally aware
- use the universal health reviews and other key contacts to determine risk and provide support

**"Make Every Contact Count"**

**The child's safety and welfare is paramount.  
All agencies have a duty to work together to safeguard girls at risk of FGM.**