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# **Strengthening protection from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): consultation**

***We are seeking views on plans to strengthen the existing legislative framework for the protection of women and girls from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), a form of gender based violence.***

Gov.Scot (04.10.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2FUDwxE> -

### ***Ministerial Foreword***

The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a physical manifestation of deep rooted gender inequality. It is an illegal and unacceptable practice which violates the human rights of women and girls. We have made our position crystal clear - this is simply unacceptable and we are committed to protecting all girls and women who are at risk of this.

Figures from the World Health Organisation tell us that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have been subject to FGM in 30 countries across Africa, the Middle East and Asia[1]. This gives us a sense of the scale of the challenge and the extent to which the practice remains rooted in some parts of the world. Whilst we know that many countries have taken steps to make the practice illegal, there remains more to do – and we in Scotland need to play our part in protecting women and girls.

We know that there are no quick fixes to tackling FGM and there is no single solution to ending the practice. Therefore our approach to tackling it in Scotland is considered, collaborative and community based. In this way we can make sure that what we do helps prevent FGM, provides protection to those at risk, provides the support that those affected require and through participation gives a voice to communities affected by this practice.

We have already taken forward work in this area. In February 2016, we published a National Action Plan to Prevent and Eradicate FGM. We're making progress in implementing the actions in the Plan, including the recent publication of multi-agency guidance for professionals. We've also provided funding for projects who are working within communities to raise awareness of FGM and support women and girls who are at risk or who have already been subject to FGM. And the Programme for Government published last month committed us to bringing forward legislation in this area.

So we know that we have more to do to ensure that those at risk are better protected and that perpetrators of this practice are held to account. The Scottish Parliament took an important step in 2005 by making the practice illegal, and in 2015 the Parliament gave legislative consent to an important provision in the Serious Crime Act 2015 to ensure that extra-territorial jurisdiction applied to the Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005.

The Serious Crime Act also included a number of additional provisions which now apply in other parts of the United Kingdom, and I am keen that we consider whether or not we should take similar further steps in in Scotland. This consultation paper therefore seeks to explore these issues further and I would welcome the views of all with an interest so that we can make further progress towards ensuring that no-one ever has to be subject to this fundamental breach of human rights.

Christina McKelvie  
Minister for Older People and Equalities

[Link to publication](#)

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