

R5 Safeguarding in Specific Contexts

Radicalisation · Trafficking · FGM · Honour-Based Harm — awareness and referral guidance

Purpose and scope

This document provides awareness-level guidance on four specific safeguarding contexts that may be relevant in international youth and mobility projects. It is not a substitute for specialist training. If you identify a concern in any of these areas, contact the DSL as soon as you are able. The DSL contacts specialist services.

For all four contexts: your role as a staff member or volunteer is to recognise and refer — not to investigate, assess, or treat.

1. Radicalisation

1.1 What it is

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support or engage in extremism or terrorism. It is a gradual process, not a sudden event. Young people, people in crisis, and people who feel isolated or excluded are more susceptible — but radicalisation can affect anyone.

1.2 Warning signs

- Sudden changes in behaviour, friendship groups or appearance.
- Expressing extreme, divisive or intolerant views — especially about a group of people.
- Showing support for extremist ideologies, groups or materials.
- Expressing feelings of being persecuted, misunderstood, or a chosen avenger.
- Accessing or sharing extremist material online.
- Becoming secretive about their online activity or communications.
- Seeking to recruit others to a cause.

One or two signs do not confirm radicalisation. A pattern, or an escalating pattern, warrants a report to the DSL.

1.3 Referral pathway

Report to the DSL as soon as you are able. In the UK: Prevent (anti-radicalisation programme) — referrals via police or local authority. In EU countries: contact your national safeguarding body or police safeguarding unit. The Country Legal Supplement lists country-specific contacts.

1.4 What NOT to do

- Do not challenge a person's views directly or confront them.
- Do not share your concerns with others before speaking to the DSL.
- Do not attempt to de-radicalise the person yourself.
- Do not dismiss concerns because the person "doesn't seem the type."



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2. Human Trafficking

2.1 What it is

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by means of threat, force, deception or abuse of power, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation, and forced begging. A person can be trafficked within their own country, not only across borders.

2.2 Warning signs

- A person who seems disoriented, confused, or unaware of their location.
- A person who does not have their own ID or travel documents.
- A person who appears controlled, monitored, or scripted — as if coached on what to say.
- Evidence of physical abuse, malnourishment or exhaustion.
- A person who is reluctant to speak when alone, but speaks more freely when their companion is absent.
- A person who lives and works in the same place under others' control.

2.3 Referral pathway

Report to the DSL as soon as you are able. In the UK: the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) — police, social services or first responders submit a referral. In EU countries: contact police and/or the national anti-trafficking body. The Country Legal Supplement lists country-specific contacts.

3. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

3.1 What it is

FGM refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of, or injury to, the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is a form of child abuse and a human rights violation. FGM is usually carried out on girls between infancy and the age of 15, but it can also affect adult women. It is illegal in most countries.

3.2 Warning signs

- A girl who has a prolonged absence from a project or school around a school holiday or travel period.
- A girl who mentions a special ceremony, "becoming a woman," or a trip to the country of origin.
- A girl who shows signs of pain, difficulty walking or sitting.
- A girl who expresses fear about a forthcoming trip to a family member's country.
- A parent or community member making statements suggesting it is planned.

3.3 Mandatory reporting



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Mandatory reporting obligations vary by country

Many countries have statutory mandatory reporting obligations for FGM, particularly for regulated professionals such as healthcare workers, social workers and teachers. The specific obligations depend on the legal framework in the country where you are working. Check the Country Legal Supplement for the requirements in your country.

Regardless of whether a statutory mandatory reporting obligation exists in your country: reporting a concern about FGM to the DSL is a professional and ethical obligation for all staff and volunteers in this framework. It is always the right thing to do.

If you are uncertain about your specific legal obligations in your country, check the Country Legal Supplement and contact your DSL.

3.4 Referral pathway

Report to the DSL as soon as you are able. DSL contacts child protection services and/or police. In many EU countries, reporting concerns about FGM is a professional duty even where it is not a statutory mandatory reporting obligation. The Country Legal Supplement lists country-specific requirements.

4. Honour-Based Harm (HBH)

4.1 What it is

Honour-based harm is a term used to describe a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families or communities to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Violence can occur when perpetrators feel that a relative has shamed the family or community by, for example, having a relationship with someone of whom the family disapproves; having sexual contact outside marriage; or not conforming to gender expectations.

Honour-based harm can affect men and boys as well as women and girls.

4.2 Warning signs

- A young person who expresses fear about what their family will do if they do something of which the family disapproves.
- A young person who is being isolated from friends, controlled in their movements, or monitored by family members.
- A sudden change in behaviour — withdrawal, anxiety, depression.
- Being stopped from accessing education or leaving home.
- Signs of physical abuse.

4.3 Referral pathway

Report to the DSL as soon as you are able. In the UK: FMU (Forced Marriage Unit): 0207 008 0151 or fmu@fcdo.gov.uk. Police. Honour-based violence specialists. In EU countries: police and specialist NGOs. The Country Legal Supplement lists country-specific contacts.

References



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EU Trafficking Directive 2011/36/EU. Council of Europe Istanbul Convention (violence against women and girls). Country Legal Supplement (Safe Spaces) — national contacts and obligations by country.
Glossary of Key Terms (Safe Spaces) — for definitions of all bolded terms in this document.



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