



OxfordAgainstCutting
ProtectingGirls&Women



“It was a fabulous session and very informative”
Water Hall Primary

Milton Keynes Schools project – feedback report

Introduction

Oxford Against Cutting (OAC) is an Oxford-based charity working to end harmful practices suffered by girls and women living in the Thames Valley. These include female genital mutilation (FGM), ‘honour’-based abuse (HBA) and early and forced marriage (EFM), and female cosmetic genital surgery. Additionally, we provide body image workshops to address the increasing social pressures put on girls around their physical appearance.

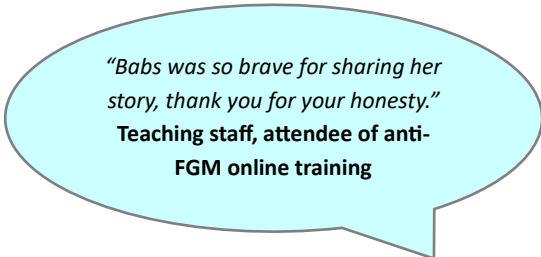
Our mission is to end practices that harm girls and women by providing education, supporting survivors, raising awareness of support services, and empowering young people to champion initiatives against harmful practices. People from affected communities and young people are at the forefront of our activities.

This briefing summarises work carried out between June 2020 and May 2023,¹ when OAC provided **eight FGM-related sessions** for schools in Milton Keynes (with additional schools across Buckinghamshire joining the first session). Participants totalled 123 staff,² 68 Year 2 primary students and 98 from Year 6. The sessions and schools involved are listed in Annex 1.

The sessions

Training for staff was generally 90 minutes long, with student lessons usually being 45 minutes to an hour, though we were adaptive for time constraints, e.g., for one session delivered as part of a wider safeguarding meeting. All OAC training is either facilitated or co-facilitated by a member of an FGM- and/or HBA- affected community, and many staff delegates have commented that this makes our training very powerful, helping them to see these harms as a reality rather than simply as an academic subject.

The OAC team across these sessions consisted of: Babs Ceesay, Dot Pritchard, Hauwa Suleiman, Mariama Sallah and Dr Nesreen Yanni. See Annex 2 for full team details.



“Babs was so brave for sharing her story, thank you for your honesty.”
Teaching staff, attendee of anti-FGM online training

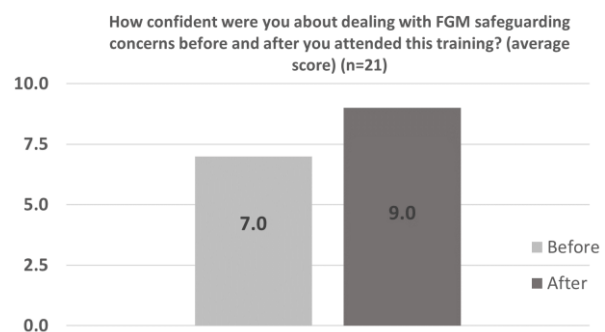
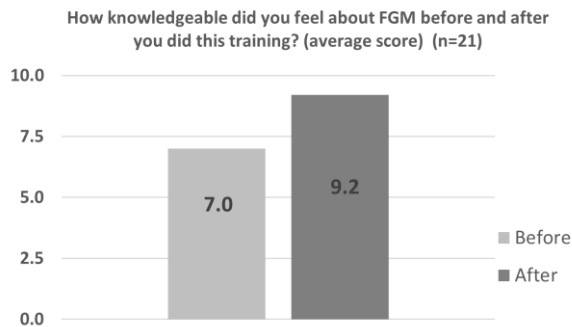


¹ Report prepared by: Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway, Director of Research and Evaluation, ©Oxford Against Cutting, July 2023.

² Who consisted primarily of teaching staff with a small number of others, including SENDCO and family support staff.

Feedback and outcomes

Overall, the positive feedback we received showed the value of the training provided, and that the participants feel more confident and knowledgeable as a result, as shown below in the response collated from a follow-up survey of staff:³



For staff and professionals, this means they are more alert to risk indications and ways to access appropriate intervention. The training overall was highly rated, and additional positive feedback was given by those who had organised the training for their staff and students (see Annex 3). For the students, we were unable to obtain direct feedback but reports from staff confirmed there were increased levels of understanding around the issues related to FGM.



Some additional outcomes were also achieved from the workshops, which included:

- Establishing ongoing relationships between OAC and the schools involved, for example, Knowles Primary School booking repeat visits for the year following our initial delivery and Water Hall planning to return for a training session for year 6; and
- Extending our networks including with other schools in Buckinghamshire through word-of-mouth recommendations.

All of this makes a positive contribution in our aim to end harmful practices suffered by girls and women, with our education work having real and lasting impact.

Our thanks to Milton Keynes MASH for funding this work, and to the staff and students who took part in workshops for their participation and feedback.

³ Conducted via SurveyMonkey sent via a link to staff where appropriate/possible.

Annex 1 – Participating schools, sessions, and dates

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| 1 | 11/6/2020 | Oxford Diocese Bucks Schools Trust (eight schools represented – see list below) | <i>Anti-FGM safeguarding webinar</i> |
| 2 | 17/5/2021 | Knowles Primary School | <i>Anti-FGM staff training (online)</i> |
| 3 | 17/6/2021 | Knowles Primary School | <i>‘What is culture’? Year 6 (in-person)</i> |
| 4 | 17/6/2021 | Knowles Primary School | <i>‘Who can you tell’? Year 2 (in-person)</i> |
| 5 | 2/9/2022 | Water Hall Primary | <i>Anti-FGM staff training (in-person)</i> |
| 6 | 15/11/2022 | Monkston Primary School | <i>Anti-FGM safeguarding training (in-person)</i> |
| 7 | 16/5/2023 | Knowles Primary School | <i>‘Who can you tell’? Year 2 (in-person)</i> |
| 8 | 16/5/2023 | Knowles Primary School | <i>‘Culture and FGM’? Year 6 (in-person)</i> |

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| Chesham Bois St John’s, Lacey Green |
| Christ the Sower, Milton Keynes |
| Curzon School, Penn Street |
| Great Horwood School, Great Horwood |
| Longwick Primary, near Princes Risborough |
| St Mary’s, Aylesbury |
| Thomas Harding Junior, Chesham |
| Woodside Junior, Amersham |

Annex 2 – Meet the team



Babs Ceesay – Anti-FGM Facilitator

Babs is a community nurse based in Oxford and a survivor of FGM. She is originally from the Gambia in West Africa and her passion is to use her experience of FGM to fight against harmful and traditional practices. She has worked with professionals and communities to raise awareness and encourage them to use shared knowledge and understanding to help end the practice. She is also a Survivor Ambassador for Savera UK.



Dot Pritchard – Operations Manager

Dot is Operations Manager at Oxford Against Cutting, working to raise awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and issues around body image through education and conversation. Dot is a lead facilitator and helps design, review and facilitate OAC's workshops. She has also been a mentor with Refugee Resource and a trustee for Young Women's Music Project. Dot has a BA in Philosophy and teaches yoga.



Hauwa Suleiman – Anti-FGM and Anti-HBA Facilitator and Diverse Communities Working Group Co-Chair and Coordinator

Hauwa is a specialist in gender issues affecting women and girls. She has experience volunteering in Nigeria with programmes targeting vulnerabilities in internally displaced persons camps, orphanages and impoverished communities. She has recently completed an MA in Development & Emergency Practice, specialising in Disasters, Risks and Shelter.



Mariama Sallah – Anti-FGM Facilitator

Mariama is an adult care worker who was born in the Gambia. She is a survivor of FGM and has a passion to help the girl child. As a Facilitator, Mariama uses her lived experience to help protect girls at risk and support survivors. Mariama has two children and enjoys cooking.



Dr Nesreen Yanni – Anti-FGM Facilitator

Nesreen is a paediatrician and campaigner against FGM from Egypt. She previously worked as a GP in Egypt, and with various NGOs, bringing health education to rural communities. She raises awareness against the practice of FGM, facilitating workshops with students, communities and teachers, particularly in the medical profession.

Annex 3 – Additional feedback

Dear Dot,

A great big thank you from the PSHE Group you spoke to this afternoon for your presentation on FGM with so many facts and pieces of information! Please also pass our thanks onto Nesreen. It was so good to hear from someone with first-hand experience in these matters. You work so well as a team sharing all you know about these difficult issues. I think you stunned the group into silence. We followed up a bit after you left, which was useful. Sharing this information is so vital – THANK YOU.

The information about FGM was crucial for some of the teachers there this afternoon to know. You pointed them to resources they could use for teaching but it might be useful to include ideas about how teachers actually teach the subject, especially for KS2. I expect your funding relies on the number of information sessions you run but maybe the criteria could be moved to include follow up sessions for teachers on how teachers teach FGM? Just a thought. It covers the language they use, the ground rules they need to remind everyone about, the activities they can use in lessons.

I wish you success with all of your efforts in this area – you never know, sometime in the future this will not be needed – if only that were so.

Best wishes from

[School Effectiveness Partner]

Hi all

Thank you so much for your visit today. You worked so hard with us all day and I am very grateful.

The staff training was very well received and I had positive feedback from the workshops.

[Organiser of school staff training]

"The feedback from [the 'what is culture and 'who can you tell'] sessions was great. Thank you very much."

Knowles Primary School

"A very good session considering its sensitivity."

Teaching staff, attendee of anti-FGM in-person training