

Case study 1

The context for this case was a pilot LA in which the NFGMC PW conducted joint assessments with LA SWs, and was delegated the power to undertake sessions with families whose cases had been designated NFA. The case study was compiled through observation of a session between the NFGMC PW and the family, an interview with the NFGMC PW, and an interview with the children's mother.

Following an initial joint assessment by the LA SW and NFGMC PW, which concluded that the case did not require social service involvement, the family (a woman and her 2 children) agreed that the PW would support them through a series of sessions at home. During an interview, the woman detailed her frustration with the lack of support from statutory services to address the risk of FGM posed to her daughter, and reported that she therefore welcomed specialist support. The PW introduced herself to the children as a Barnardo's worker, who was there to help them to keep safe. FGM was only later raised with the daughter, who knew nothing about FGM or its practice. Sessions were varied in nature and framed within a rights-based approach. They included creative exercises focused on how the body works, understanding different forms of abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), and managing and expressing worries. FGM was introduced to the daughter in a one-to-one session; she then made a poster to teach her brother what she had learned about the practice.

The children's mother emphasised that the PW, 'always made it fun' for the children, so that they 'didn't feel bombarded.' The family appreciated that the PW was always open, honest and consistent in her approach, which they felt had not been their experience with SWs. The NFGMC PW worked with the family through therapeutic whole-family and one-to-one sessions. In addition to this work, the PW supported the children's mother to apply for an FGM PO, connecting her with a lawyer to work on the case. The children's mother noted that she had had no previous knowledge of FGM POs.