



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon Baroness Chapman of
Darlington**

Minister of State for Development

King Charles Street
SW1A 2AH

Sarah Owen MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

5 March 2025

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 February 2025 on behalf of the Women and Equalities Committee regarding the upcoming hearing on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). I am replying as the Minister for Development.

While we have made progress towards the elimination of FGM – a girl is a third less likely to undergo FGM today compared to 30 years ago – the absolute numbers of women and girls subjected to FGM are still rising. No woman or girl should have to endure this, and I want to reaffirm the UK's strong commitment to ending it.

I am proud that the UK is a long-term partner in the global effort to end FGM. Our focus is on supporting survivor and community-led approaches to end FGM, improving laws and policies, and strengthening the evidence base on what works. In Kenya, Senegal, Somalia and Ethiopia we are supporting activists and grassroots organisations to lead change in communities. This contributed to a new Somaliland National Anti-FGM Policy, approved in September 2024. Last year, the UK's diplomatic efforts and funding for CSO advocacy in The Gambia contributed to overturning a Private Members' bill seeking to repeal the ban on FGM. We are also supporting work with national governments to get laws, policies and costed action plans in place banning FGM across 17 countries. In Sudan our work has contributed to a historic new law criminalising FGM in 2020, and 1,880 Sudanese communities publicly committing to FGM abandonment.

I am committed to ensuring that our domestic and international efforts to tackle FGM align. To that end, where a potential victim of FGM has already been taken abroad, the joint Home Office and FCDO Forced Marriage Unit work to assist British nationals (including dual nationals) through FGM centres, providing consular assistance to victims and potential victims of FGM. The joint unit also undertake outreach work aimed at professionals who can play a key role preventing potential cases of forced marriage and FGM - this includes Border Force, safeguarding officers based at schools and colleges, social services and police.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Baroness Chapman', written in black ink on a white background.

**The Rt Hon Baroness Chapman of Darlington
Minister of State (Minister for Development)**