

# Keeping children *safe*

End FGM/C project

Impact report 2023/24

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Hoda M. Ali

*With* Ealing Council and The Vavengers



**Ealing**

**THE VAVENGERS**

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# Introduction





# Introduction



## **Hoda M. Ali**

Project lead and facilitator

Hoda M. Ali is a health and education safeguarding expert, human rights campaigner and co-founder of The Vavengers. She delivered a flagship Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and bodily-autonomy safeguarding programme in schools across London for 6 years, a series that prompted and informed this iteration. She uses her professional expertise and experience as an FGM/C survivor to facilitate engaging, open and interactive workshops with diverse audiences. Hoda led the development of this project alongside Project Manager Dominica Debczak-Debski and with research, design and operational support from her team at The Vavengers. She facilitated all sessions during the delivery of the project.



## **Ealing Council**

Project commissioner

Ealing is a West London borough. It comprises the districts of Acton, Ealing, Greenford, Hanwell, Northolt, Perivale, and Southall. With 367,100 inhabitants, it is the third most populous London borough. It has 91 state-run schools and nurseries and a prevalence of diaspora communities, including those that perform FGM/C. Ealing Council commissioned Hoda M. Ali and The Vavengers to deliver a Safeguarding programme suited to their demographic that would be offered to their schools. This report is an accumulation and impact evaluation of that piece of work.



## **The Vavengers**

Project support, design and operations

The Vavengers is a female, migrant and survivor-led charity committed to ending FGM/C and all other forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The Vavengers supported Hoda and Dominica with the design, content and data-collection of the programme, including the impact-analysis and design of this report.

# Introduction

## End FGM/C Project

2017–2023, across London

Hoda M. Ali spent 6 years delivering and developing an FGM/C-specialist safeguarding programme to schools across London, funded by the John Lyons Charity. This project was the first of its kind: including FGM/C as a key issue of children’s health and acknowledging the lifelong impact that it has on a large proportion of school girls in the UK. The immense success of this project is reflected in its 6-year roll-out as well as through the subsequent impact reports – *available upon request*. Hoda M. Ali took all this specialist knowledge of working with schools, children and their parents to inform the programme outlined in this report.

## Keeping Children Safe

2023–2024, Ealing London Borough

Hoda and Dominica updated and redesigned the End FGM/C programme to enhance engagement, effectiveness, and ensure the highest impact during an agreed 6 month delivery window. This iteration was commissioned by Ealing Council as a bespoke offering to their schools, utilising the content Hoda has long-used but updating and reformatting to suit their students needs and safeguarding objectives.

Hoda M. Ali with  **Ealing** **THE VAVENGERS**

# Project team statements



Hoda M. Ali  
**Project Lead and Facilitator**

I specialise in delivering impactful training sessions aimed at preventing Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). These workshops are thoughtfully crafted to be interactive, engaging, and customised to address the specific needs of students. The comprehensive lessons offered seek to foster a deep understanding of the complexities surrounding FGM/C and effective prevention strategies.

In the course of this work, I experienced a profound sense of fulfilment and contentment. Notably, the positive feedback received from peers, parents, and students was a highlight. Moreover, I found inspiration in the courage of FGM/C survivors among the parents and staff members, who shared their experiences. It was pivotal to provide a safe space and refer them to FGM/C clinics and support spaces for medical and psychological assistance.

I am disheartened and dismayed that this critical work is not part of the national curriculum, particularly for primary schools across the UK. The prevalence of FGM/C among girl children at primary school age underscores the urgent need for clear guidelines and safeguarding training within educational institutions. Investment in comprehensive lessons is imperative to educate students on self-protection, including the importance of the PANTS rule for safeguarding against FGM/C.

The significance of this work warrants its inclusion in the national curriculum due to its relevance to real-world issues, potential to engage and inspire students, and capacity to foster critical thinking. The utilisation of the slogans “MY BODY MY RULES” and “PANTS” serves to raise awareness and promote safety.

The numbers are staggering. Every 11 seconds a girl, often still a baby, is subjected to FGM/C and one in three of those will die from loss of blood, septicaemia or other complications. Around the world, over 230 million girls and women have been cut. We live in one of the richest countries in the world. Right now we are not doing enough. We have to do better.

*Hoda M. Ali*  
[www.hodamali.com](http://www.hodamali.com)

# Project team statements



Dominica Debczak-Debski  
**Project Manager**

I have had the immense privilege of restructuring the project to make it more efficient, resulting in a threefold increase in school engagement compared to previous years. Our goal was to enhance engagement, effectiveness, and reach within primary schools across West London, and I am thrilled to see the positive impact our efforts have generated.

Throughout the course of this project, we faced various challenges, particularly with initial low attendance in some parent workshops. However, these hurdles only reinforced the necessity and urgency of our work. By listening to feedback and making strategic adjustments, such as reducing the number of parent workshops to allocate more time for direct interaction with pupils, we changed our approach to ensure maximum impact.

The feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the crucial role that Hoda has played in delivering sensitive and vital content with honesty and clarity.

The increased awareness among children, staff, and parents about FGM and the importance of safeguarding has been incredibly rewarding to witness.

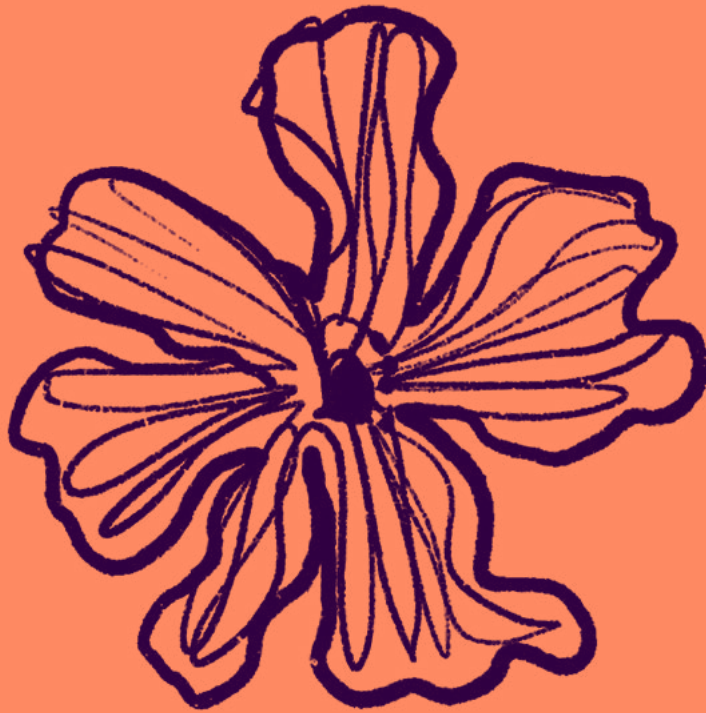
Leading this project has been a deeply humbling experience. It is inspiring to see how open and receptive the children, staff, and parents have been, and how the safe spaces Hoda created enabled important disclosures and discussions. Working alongside Hoda has been both inspiring and an honour; her expertise, presence, and dedication have been instrumental in driving this success. I am profoundly proud of what we have achieved.

The expansion of our reach to 17 schools and the direct engagement with over 4,000 children and 700 parents and staff members is a testament to the collective effort and passion for creating a safer, more informed community. Our work is a significant step toward eradicating FGM and Violence Against Women and Girls in West London.

A special thanks to Faye and Karen at Ealing Council for being the greatest cheerleaders and supporters of this project. Thank you to all the schools involved and to the parents of such curious, bright and creative children. *Together, we are making such a positive change in our community, thank you.*

*Dominica Debczak-Debski*

# The project





# The project Objectives

“The project aims to build on Safeguarding Guidelines, preventing FGM/C and other forms of violence through survivor-led and research-based programs, fostering lasting change within our communities.

Schools are the best way to empower communities. By focusing on schools as epicentres of community influence we aim to create a ripple effect that extends far beyond the educational setting. This approach allows us to achieve the greatest impact in preventing FGM/C and various forms of violence against women and girls, ultimately fostering empowered and resilient communities.”

– Hoda M. Ali

## Key objectives:

- Staff, parents report knowing more about Safeguarding, online safety, physical and mental health and VAWG (particularly FGM/C), and feel more confident talking about it with their communities and young people.
- Students demonstrate they know more about their body, rights and FGM/C. They feel more confident talking about these topics and know where and how to access support.
- A tried and tested specialist Safeguarding framework is built that could be delivered to schools across London and the country.

# The project Details

657  
staff\*

1000+  
parents\*\*

17  
schools

4045  
students

\*As detailed on p.12 all school personnel were included in these sessions because Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

\*\*Data for parental attendance was the responsibility of the schools. We weren't able to confirm these numbers so have settled for a low estimate.

# The project

## Details

Each participating school followed the schedule outlined below. Emphasis was placed on bringing parents, staff and students along the same journey of knowledge to encourage questions and conversations.

Week 1	Week 2		Week 3
Thursday	Monday – Thursday	Friday	Thursday
<b>Staff training</b> Meeting and what to expect from the week ahead	<b>Parents workshops</b> Introduction to safeguarding, online safety, physical and mental health and FGM/C.	<b>Children's lessons</b> My Body, My Rules, PANTS, their rights, and FGM/C.	<b>Staff debrief</b> What happened? Answer final questions.

# The project

## Details

The whole project steps could also be outlined as:

1. Identifying suitable schools to participate.

Most schools with have a DSL's (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and hopefully a team – these would be the key collaborators for Hoda's delivery of the programme.

2. Whole school-staff training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Hoda describes sessions that included everyone from the gardener to the head teacher shedding tears together as they engaged with the materials. Hoda's facilitation is one that makes space for vulnerability by starting with her own.

3. Parent workshops.

The parents and staff received all of the same content with parents getting additional sessions on the breadth of safeguarding, something that staff are already well-versed in.

4. Only then does Hoda enter the classroom with students.

Hoda spends a whole day delivering to students in their year-group-specific sessions. The student delivery day ends with a staff debrief allowing space to discuss anything that has arisen during the sessions and providing final support.

# The project delivery | Students

The students program was built off Hoda's expertise while utilising widely recognised frameworks for teaching bodily autonomy. For example the NSPCC PANTS rule and the key messaging of 'my body, my rules'. As Hoda says '**we aren't here to reinvent the wheel, the wheel is already turning!**'

Materials for students consisted of a presentation (bottom right) and a narrative-led supportive booklet they could personalise and take away (cover top right). It was important to give both students and parents resources to take away – we heard stories of parents taking time with their children to both read their respective booklets.

The presentation content and tasks were adjusted to suit the range of age groups. Hoda led separate tailored sessions for years 3-6, the slides on the following page show a selection from across these year groups.



**P**rivates are private  
**A**lways remember your body belongs to you  
**N**o means no  
**T**alk about secrets that upset you  
**S**peak up, someone can help



# The project delivery | Students

Workshop, selected slides

## PSHE Reminders

**P**rivates are private  
**A**lways remember your body belongs to you  
**N**o means no  
**T**alk about secrets that upset you  
**S**peak up, someone can help



## Goodbye Year 3!



I'm Ms Ali!  
I'll be teaching your  
lesson today!



Malala  
Yousafzai

### Ground Rules:



### Task: Make a poster

It must be child friendly  
It must include Childline's number:

ChildLine  
0800 1111

Absum Ibi Cutting  
Kutairi Khitan Halalays  
Bondo Thara Gudnii  
Circumcision Mutilation Sunna

## How can we create gender equality?



# The project | Students

Interactive booklet, selected pages





# The project delivery | Staff and parents

As aforementioned and outlined on page 12, parents received the same content as staff about what to expect in the week ahead and a specialist session on FGM/C (what it is, spotting the signs and reporting). Parents also participate in specialist sessions covering topics including; introduction to Safeguarding, PSHE and curriculum; internet and online safety; mental and physical health.

The prevalence of the internet and social media in young people's lives has drastically changed the topics covered in effective Safeguarding. FGM/C is still too often underrepresented in many programmes and this project is unique in using an intersectional lens to educate on and address all the topics listed above.



# The project | Staff and parents

Workshop, selected slides

## Before we begin




We'd love to hear from you. Please complete the survey.

Open the camera on your phone and hold it over the code for a few seconds. Click on the link that appears.

## Self Care



- If this content is too much, please feel free to exit the training
- If you want to talk further, please do contact me
- Help and support is available



"All procedures which involve the partial or total removal of the external genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons"


The World Health Organisation

## What happens?



- No sterile equipment
- Legs bound for up to 2 weeks
- No anaesthetic
- Non-Surgical Environment


## Types of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting



Type 1      Type 2      Type 3      Type 4

Read more on: [www.thevavengers.co.uk/resources](http://www.thevavengers.co.uk/resources)

## Terminology, does it matter?



- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**- describes the gravity and harm of the act. It is an advocacy term, used in legal documents including laws but may be viewed as negative e.g. The UK has "The FGM Act 2003" (amended by 'Serious Crime Act 2015')
- **Female Circumcision** is an inappropriate term widely used by some communities
- **Female Genital Cutting (FGC)** viewed as a compromise option and non judgemental (used primarily by US agencies)
- **Sunna** increasingly used by communities as more acceptable form of FGM/C

## FGM/C is hidden behind these excuses:



- "Purity, chastity, virginity" = more desirable for marriage
- "Cleanliness"
- "Beauty"
- Family, honour, culture & tradition
- To control a woman's sexuality

We must always provide sensitive, non-judgemental, appropriate care.

Thank you.

## FGM/C and the law

- FGM/C is against the law in the UK and has been a criminal offence since 1985
- It is illegal to help, support or arrange for FGM/C to be performed on a girl or woman
- It is also illegal to take a girl outside the UK to have FGM/C carried out
- It is a serious crime that carries a penalty of 14 years in prison

Know your rights.


Source: Gov UK | learn more at [thevavengers.co.uk/knowyourrights](http://thevavengers.co.uk/knowyourrights)



# The project | Staff and parents

Support booklet, selected pages

Copyright © The Vavengers



<b>Inside</b> →	
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## Signs of FGM/C



<p><b>Signs that a child may be at risk of FGM/C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Their mother or older sibling has been subjected to FGM/C</li> <li>→ A girl talking about plans to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion to become a woman'</li> <li>→ Parents or guardians stating that their girl-child will be out of the country for a prolonged period. This may arise when asking a teacher to take the girl out of school or during travel vaccinations</li> <li>→ A girl talking about a holiday to a country where FGM/C risk is high</li> <li>→ The girl's family is part of a community that has a prevalence of FGM/C</li> <li>→ It is key to look for similar signs from a boy that is known that they have girl siblings or family members at school. They may also talk of an unusual holiday or special occasion</li> </ul>	<p><b>Signs that a child may have already been subjected to FGM/C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Difficulty walking, sitting or standing</li> <li>→ Sudden withdrawal from certain activities or communication</li> <li>→ Spending longer than normal in bathrooms or toilets due to difficulties urinating</li> <li>→ Soreness, infection or unusual presentation noticed by professional when changing a nappy or helping with toileting</li> <li>→ Spending long periods of time away from the classroom with bladder or menstrual problems</li> <li>→ Having frequent unusual menstrual problems</li> <li>→ Prolonged or repeated absence from school or college</li> <li>→ A prolonged absence from school or college with personal or behaviour changes e.g. withdrawn, depressed</li> <li>→ Being particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations</li> <li>→ Asking for help or advice but not being explicit about their circumstance due to embarrassment or fear.</li> </ul>
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## Family Agreement

Staying Safe Online

Date:

- 1 I will ALWAYS immediately tell a parent or another trusted adult if something online seems scary, threatening or confusing.
- 2 I will NEVER give out my full name, address, telephone number, school name, location, schedule, password, or other identifying information when I am online. I will ask if trusted adult about any exceptions.
- 3 I will NEVER meet up with someone I've met online. In rare cases, my parents may decide it's OK, but if I do decide to meet a cyberpal, I will make sure we meet in a public place and that a parent or guardian is with me.
- 4 I will NEVER respond to any messages that are scary, threatening, use lots of swear words, or that just feel strange. If I get that kind of message, I will screenshot it and tell an adult immediately. The adult can then contact the online service or appropriate agency. If I'm uncomfortable in a live chat room, I will use the "ignore" button.
- 5 I will NEVER go into an online area that costs money without asking permission from my parents or teacher first.
- 6 I will NEVER send a picture over the internet to anyone without my parent's permission.
- 7 I will NOT give out a credit card number online without a parent present.

Signed

Young person:  Parent:

**Safeguarding children**

Certificate of workshop completion awarded to:

Signed: *Hoda Ali*

Hoda Ali  
Co-founder The Vavengers

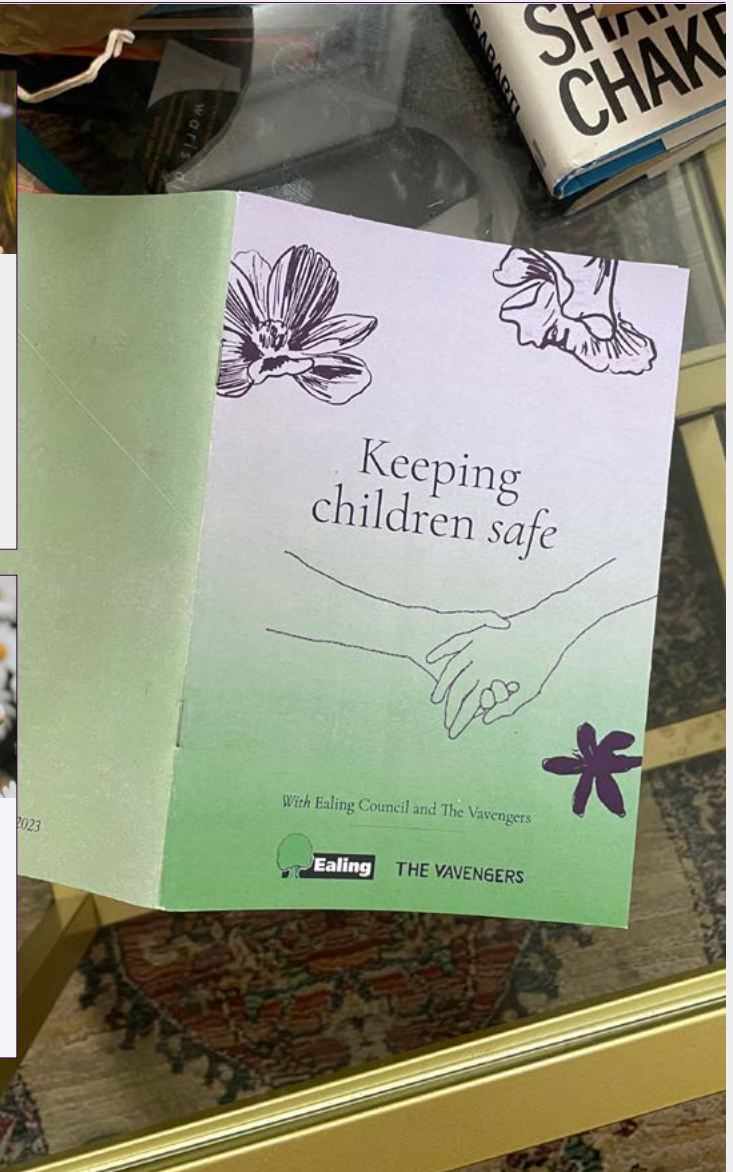
Date:






<p><b>What are the health implications of FGM/C?</b></p> <p><b>FGM/C causes life-long physical and emotional harm. The health problems that can occur are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Severe loss of blood, pain or shock</li> <li>● Difficulties in urinating or menstruating</li> <li>● Bladder infections</li> <li>● Increased risk of HIV/Aids</li> <li>● Mental health problems – extreme depression, anxiety and trauma</li> <li>● Problems with sexuality and pain during sex</li> <li>● Complications, and sometimes death, during pregnancy and childbirth including obstructed labour due to reduced opening, or incontinence due to fistula (tears in bladder or rectum)</li> </ul>	<p><b>What can you do to protect your child from FGM/C?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discuss the risks of FGM/C with all family members to ensure they understand that FGM/C is illegal and that it causes serious physiological and psychological harm. If you communicate and educate, you can better protect your daughters and girl-children you care for</li> <li>● Do not leave your daughter with people or in places where she may be at risk of FGM/C</li> <li>● Make sure your daughter understands what FGM/C is (using the booklet for children as a guide) and make sure she knows that nobody is allowed to do it to her</li> <li>● Develop a plan with your daughter for what she must do if she thinks she is at risk of FGM/C - including immediately telling you or a trusted adult about her concerns</li> </ul>
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# Measuring impact: methodology



# Methodology

Surveys, written feedback and documenting anecdotal experiences were the main forms of collecting data during this project – chosen to suit the format and audiences.

## Test and learn

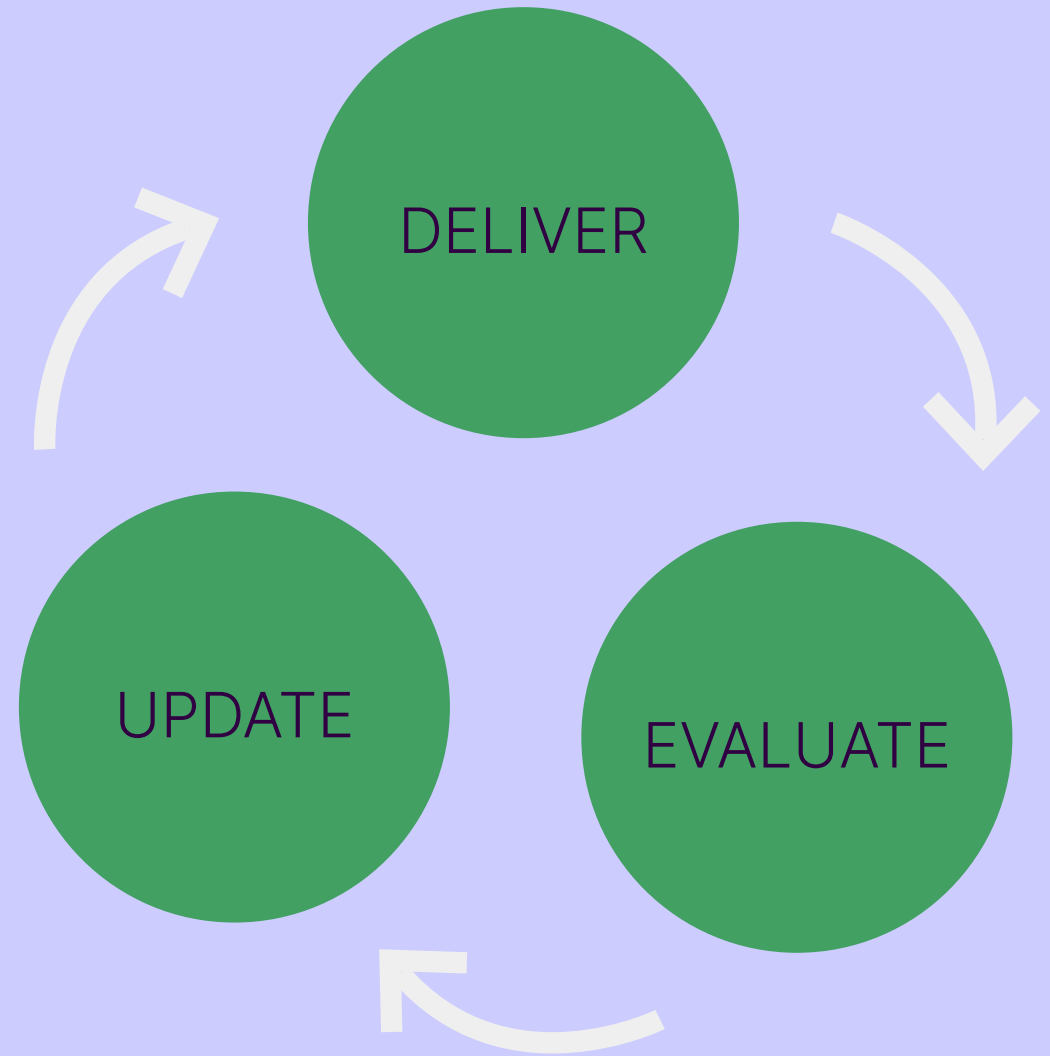
We adopted a test and learn approach so we could make adjustments as we went along, informed by live insights.

For example, the first sessions at Havelock and North Primary Schools provided insights that prompted adjustments to sessions to improve delivery. This included reducing the number of parent workshops from five days to four so that Hoda could have one full day a week (Fridays) to teach years 3-6.

## Only part of the story

Human connection and relationships are the biggest drivers of positive change. This programme prioritises these outcomes, outcomes that don't always fit into static documents.

This report does its best to capture the projects impact, but no survey, word or picture could represent the breadth of human experiences that came from the program.



# Insight methodology

## Staff and parents

We conducted four surveys, two before the workshops and two after for both parents and staff. Initially QR codes were only included on the first and last slides of the sessions (bottom right), asking attendees to scan them with their phone to complete on the spot.

Hoda encountered challenges with this format as the sessions were time-limited and the survey would distract people's attention span for prolonged periods. Learning from this, small cards (top right) were given out for participants to do the survey in their own time. Understandably this was an unreliable format as people are busy and forget but it was useful to test and we still believe having multiple access-options is important.

*We came away with a lower than ideal percentage of completed surveys, particularly the parents' endline one.* Hoda implemented the above touch-points but ultimately it was the responsibility and impetus of the schools to encourage their completion.

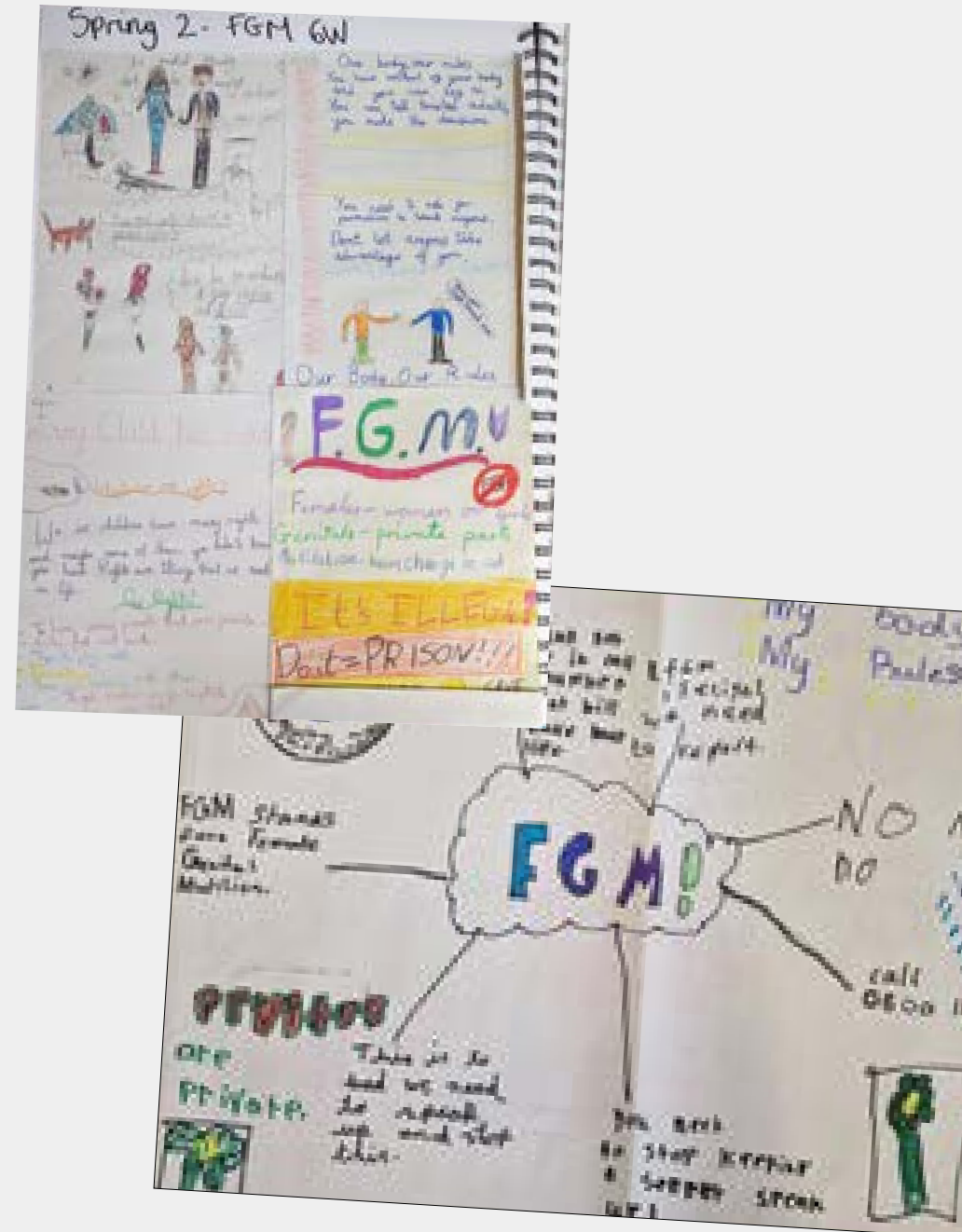
We are confident that the survey results we do have, alongside anecdotal evidence and photographs, create a fair picture of the events and impact of the program. There is more insight to be gained from participants that didn't formally record their experience in future.



# Insight methodology

## Students

We took a light-touch approach to collecting insights from students, ensuring we didn't overload them in already content-rich sessions. Insights from students include; noted reactions of students during the sessions, parents feedback, and the outcomes of the sessions tasks (examples right).



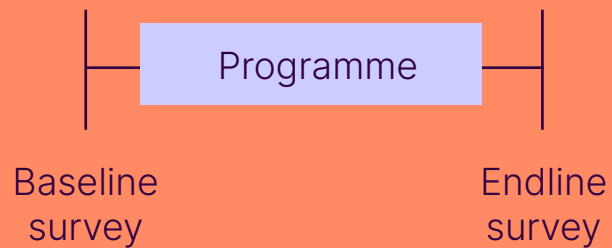
# The insights



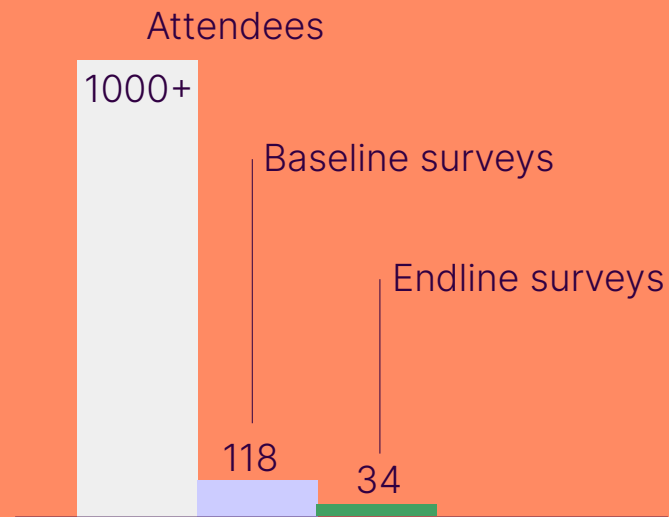


# Parents surveys

We used Survey Monkey to ask parents 12 questions before the workshop delivery (baseline survey) and 11 afterwards (endline survey).



## Parent response breakdown



# Parents baseline summary

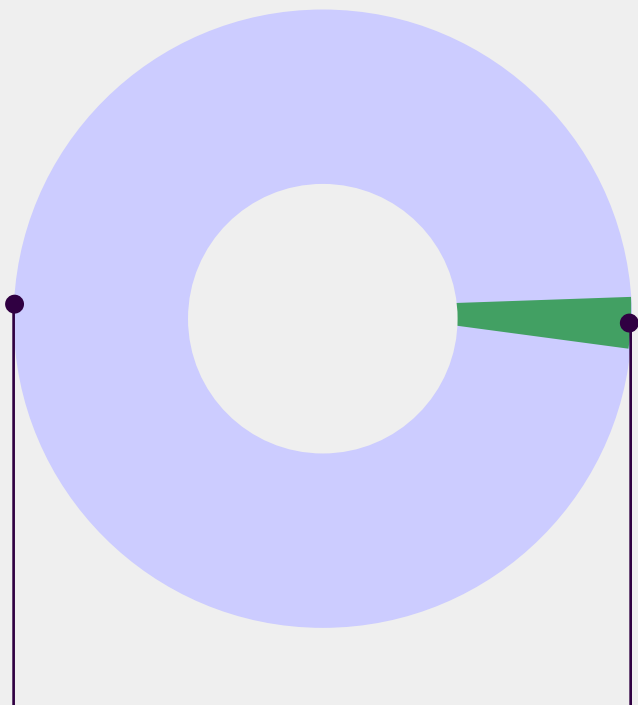
Parent\* participants were overwhelmingly female (91%). This was unsurprising given the social trends in primary caregiving, but important context when considering who influences family decisions around the topics raised in the sessions. It is also not reflective of the student demographic which was an almost exact 50/50 cis-gender split. Because of this large female-majority in the parents, we weren't able to pull significantly relevant trends in the way different gender parents answered the questions.

It was great to see high levels of confidence in keeping their children safe online and talking about FGM/C. Most felt it was the shared responsibility of parents and schools to educate children on Safeguarding and their rights and nearly all agreed it is important for children to have this knowledge. Only 3% of parents cited 'community expectations' as a barrier to discussing FGM/C compared to 40% citing lack of information – this is a brilliant piece of evidence to support this project and refute the common misconception that performing communities don't want to change. There were still 16 parents that didn't believe boy children needed to know about FGM/C, suggesting there is work to be done to remind them that males play an enormous role in the prevalence of FGM/C and VAWG.

\*Parents here is used as a blanket term. As the results show, the majority of this pool were parents but it also included carers and other family-members.

# Survey insights Parents **baseline**

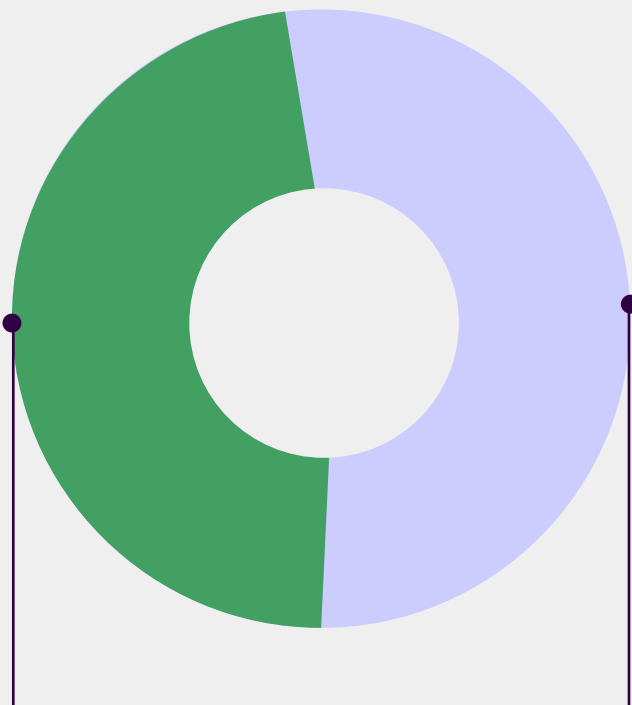
1. Gender of parents



92%  
female

8%  
male

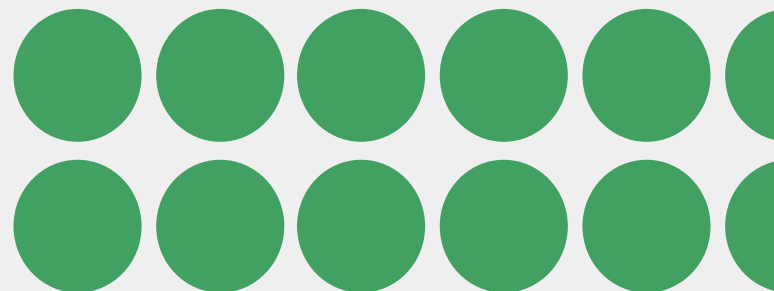
2. Gender of child



44%  
male

56%  
female

3. Relation



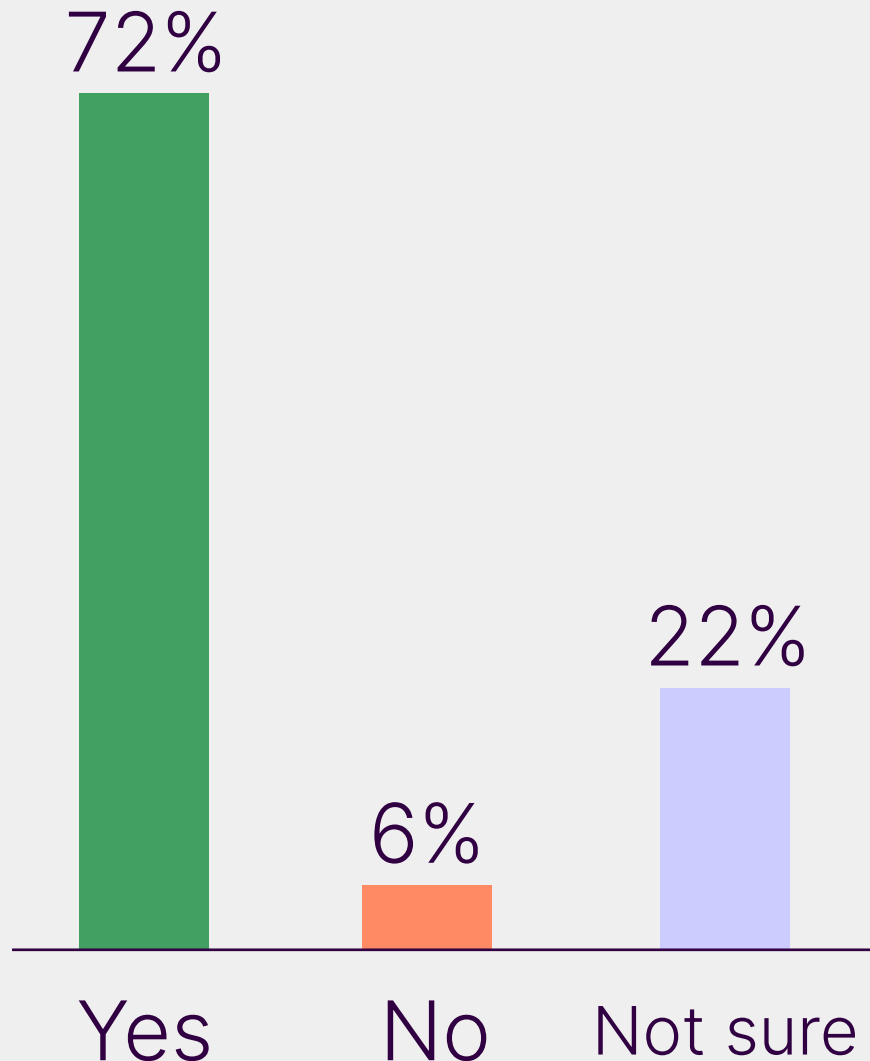
96% parents

3% other family (4)

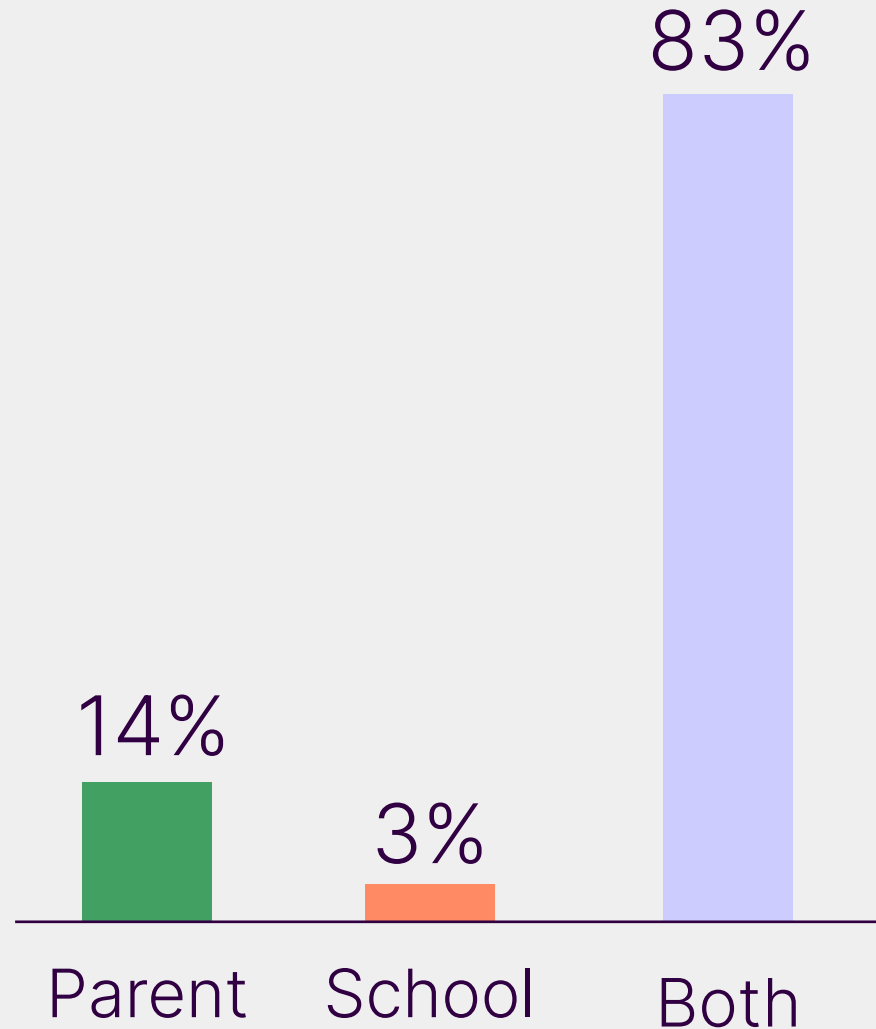
1% carer (1)

# Survey insights Parents **baseline**

4. Do you feel confident in your ability to keep your child safe online?



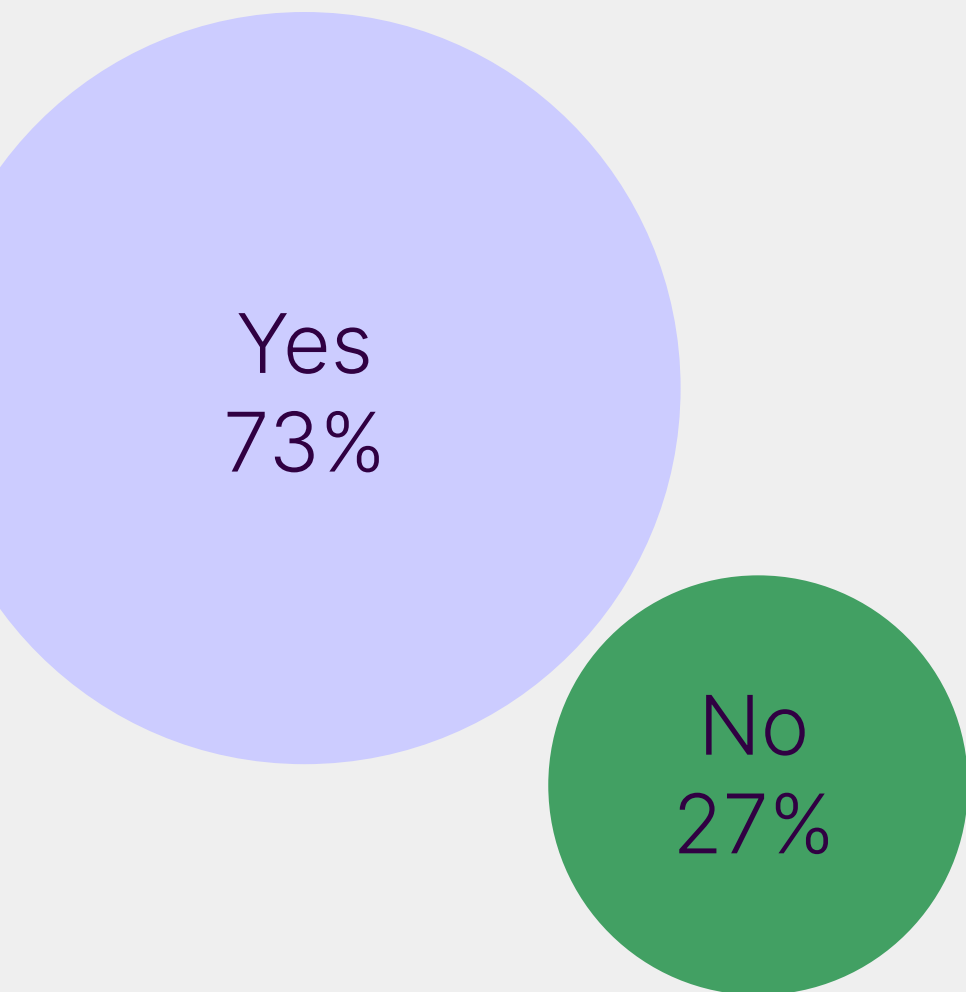
5. Who do you think should be mainly responsible for educating children about Safeguarding and their rights?



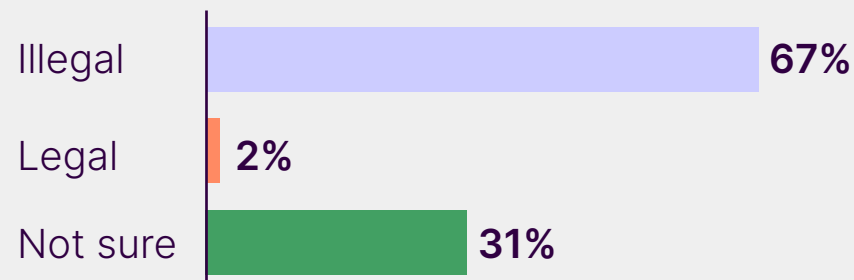


# Survey insights Parents **baseline**

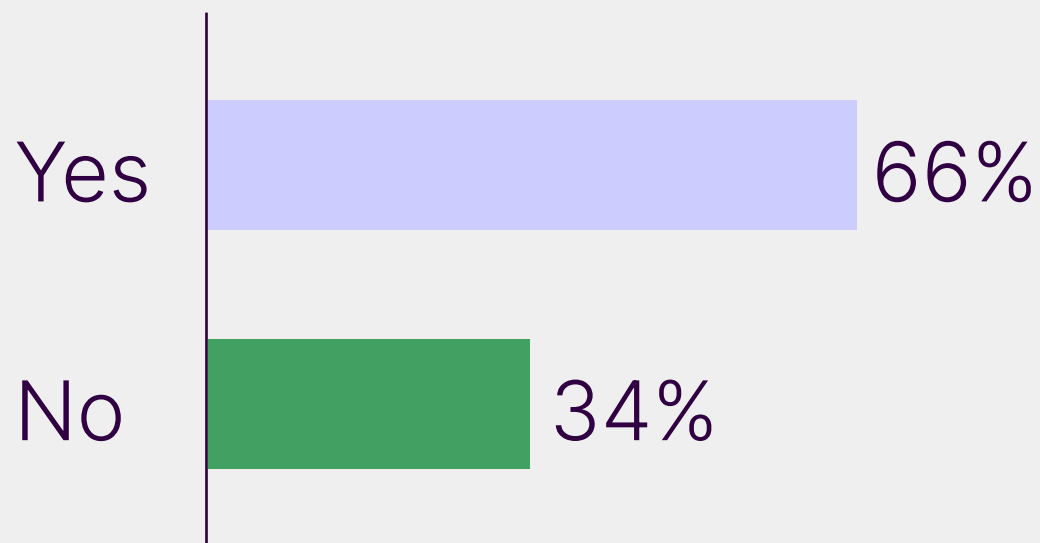
6. Do you know what Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is?



7. To the best of your knowledge, FGM/C is...

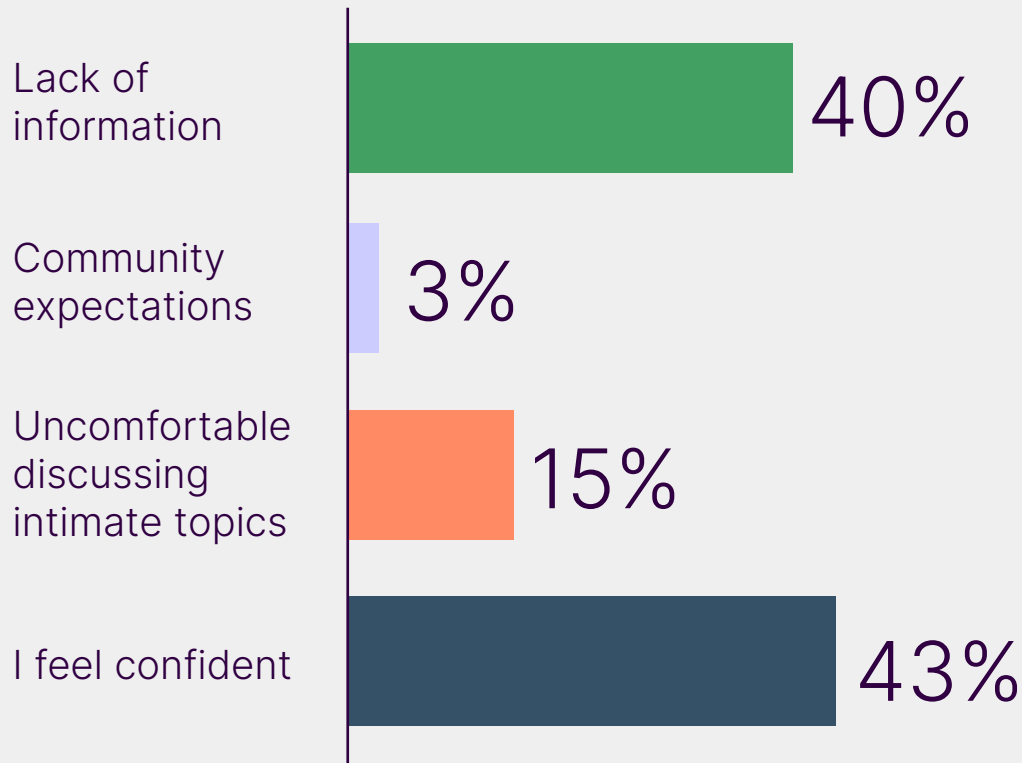


8. Do you feel confident discussing FGM/C?



# Survey insights Parents baseline

**9. If any, what barriers stop you from feeling confident discussing FGM/C?**



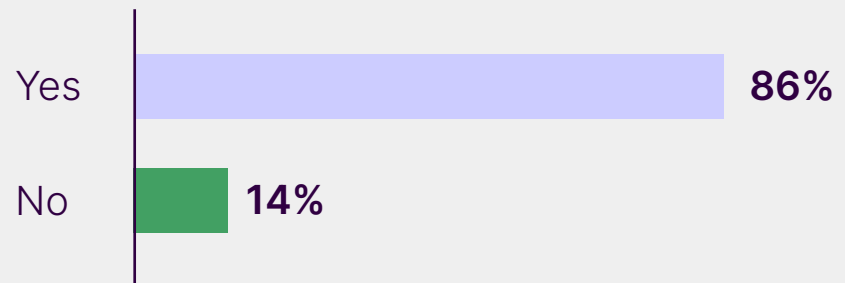
**10.** "It is important for children and young people to know how to keep themselves safe, including reporting information about FGM/C"

**Do you agree?**

Yes  
97%

**11.** "Boys (assigned at birth) should learn about FGM/C even though they will not be subjected to it"

**Do you agree?**



# Parents endline summary

This survey had very low-levels of response (34 participants), owing to the challenges outlined on page.21. Sadly this means we can't present these results as a fair overview of the whole project but will draw out themes and acknowledge that these participants' experiences are relevant and can still be learnt from – the quotes on p.34 are a great example of the humans behind the responses.

Of those that took the survey, the responses were nearly entirely positive. Both in terms of attendees enjoyment of the sessions, the level of knowledge/confidence they felt, and the actions they might take following the workshops. It's great to see that the majority of parents who responded (32/34) were confident in using the PANTS rule – evidence that acronyms of this kind are a useful way to disseminate messaging to a large audience.

The survey also requested feedback from parents. It was all positive with recurring themes around the topics being important but not talked about enough, enjoying the data-led stories, and the knowledge about how to report Safeguarding concerns. Constructive feedback suggested a range of timings so more parents could attend and it seems more tangible examples and active advice on keeping children safe online would be welcomed.

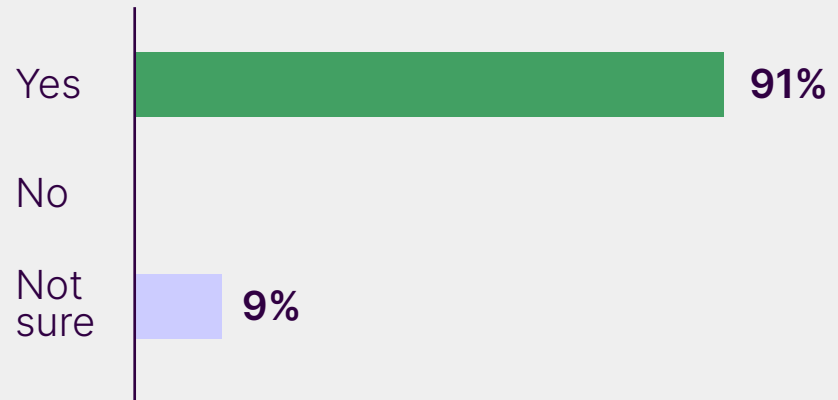
# Survey insights Parents **endline**

1. How worthwhile was your week of Safeguarding Workshops?

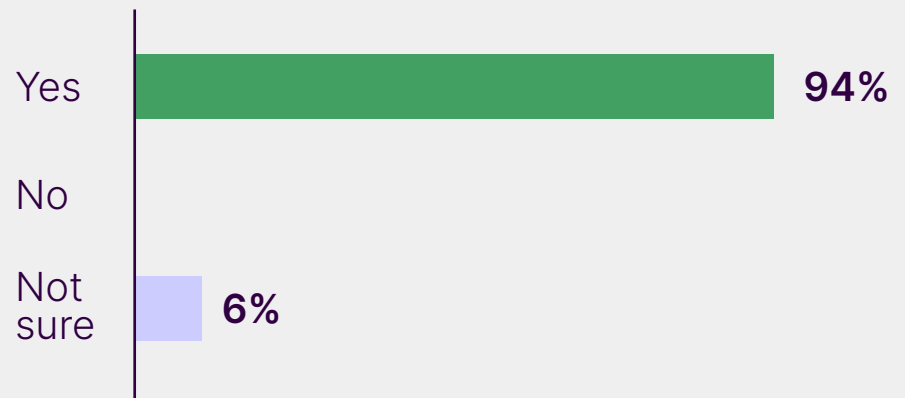
4.9★  
Average rating



2. Following the Safeguarding Week, do you now feel more confident in keeping your child safe online?



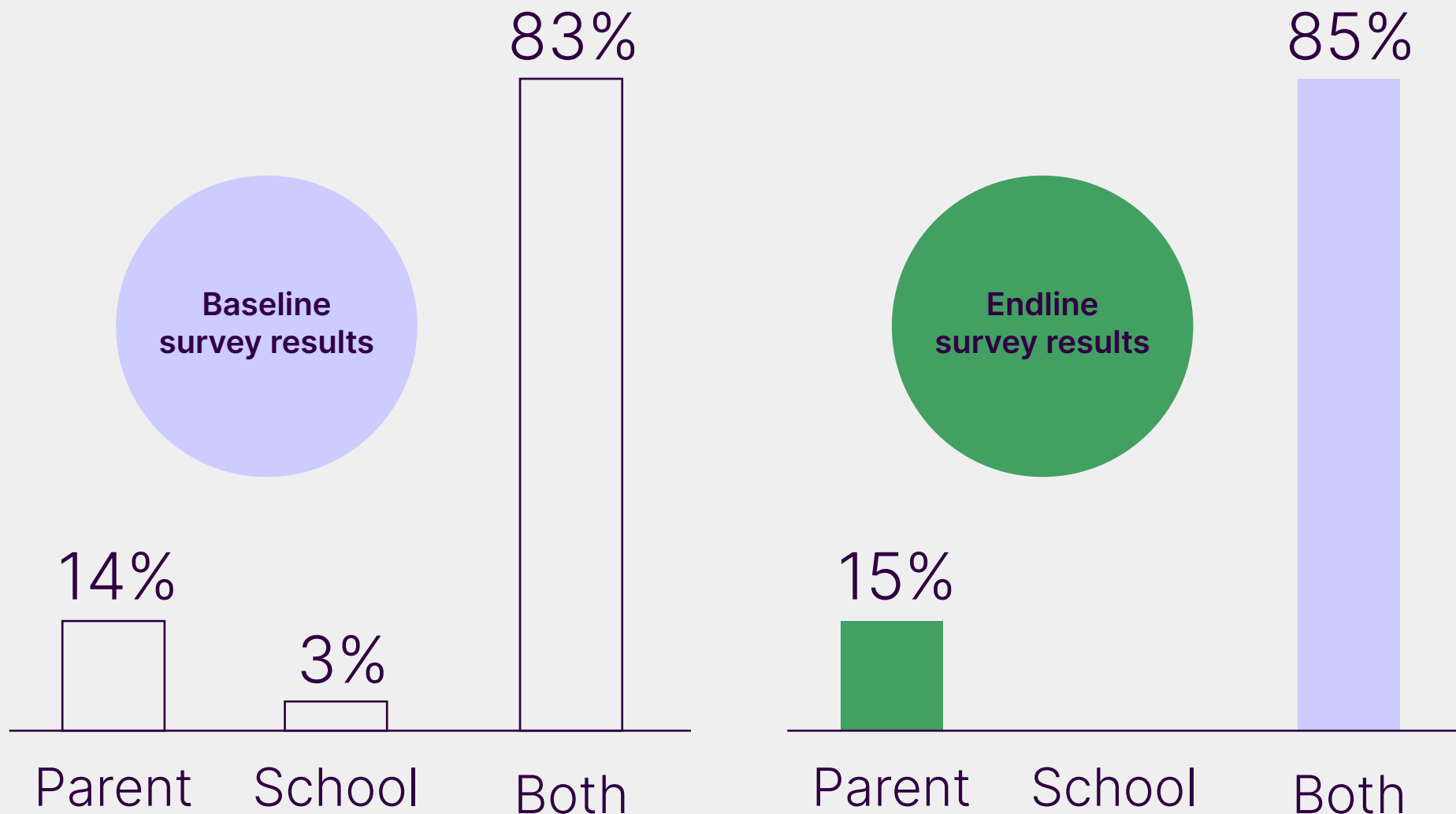
3. Are you able to remember the NSPCC's PANTS rule and remind your children about it?





# Survey insights Parents **endline**

## 4. Who do you think should be mainly responsible for educating children about Safeguarding and their rights?



# Survey insights Parents **endline**

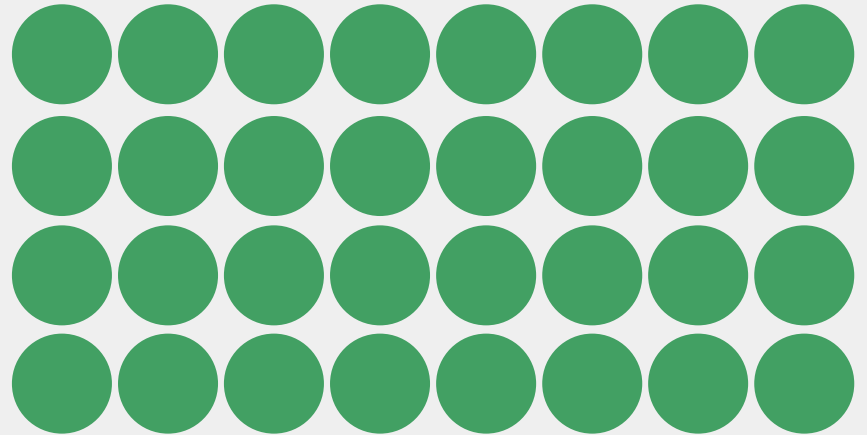
5. Will you share what you have learnt with those who might not have knowledge of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)?



33/34

6. Will you inform those who might not know that FGM/C is illegal?

Yes



No



Not sure



7. Do you feel more confident discussing FGM/C?

Yes  
100%

# Survey insights Parents **endline**

## 8. Did you find your facilitator, Hoda Ali, to be an effective educator on FGM/C?

The answers shown here are a selection.

“Hoda speaks with empathy and authority on the subject in a way that is very powerful and memorable”

“Big yes, she is good at it teaching”

“I have found that Hoda Ali is an excellent educator in demonstrating and explaining FGM by providing examples of real life cases of different cultures and countries that they have performed FGM to females and little children and the side effects of having it done. Also insisting that it is illegal and may result in all forms of sexual abuse and neglect.

“Yes very thorough with explaining and you can see how much she cares about her job. Thank you!”

“She’s gave us the most important information that we need to know as a parent”

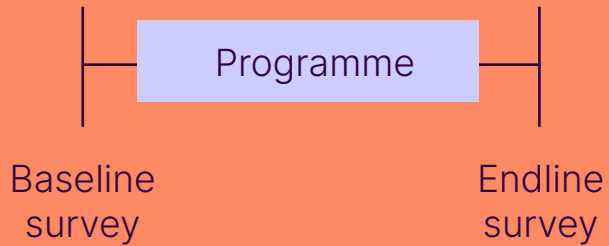
“I think Hoda is an incredibly engaging and knowledgeable person that I have learnt so much from and will carry with me”

“Yes she is a brilliant lady who can give us all the information in a good way.

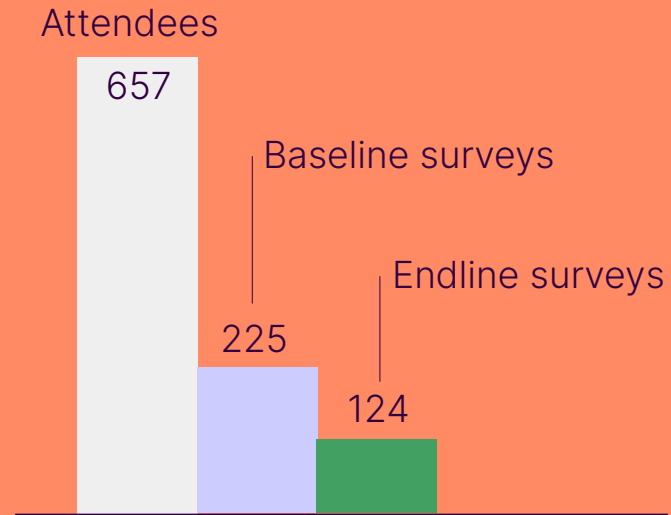
“Yes of course, Ms Ali explained it very nicely and made us aware of FGM and every person or child should have the right to know it’s wrong . Also Understanding how and why safeguarding can apply to my every day role, things to be aware of and the internal process for dealing with concerns.”

# Staff

We used Survey Monkey to ask staff 13 questions before the workshop delivery (baseline survey) and 11 questions afterwards (endline survey).



## Staff response breakdown





# Staff baseline summary

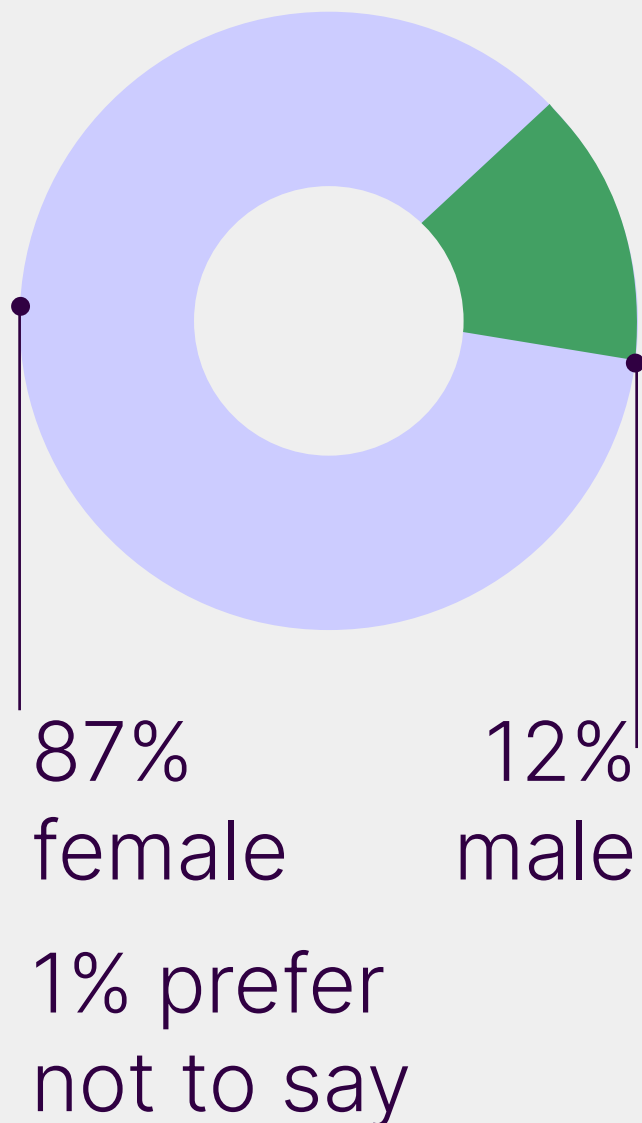
This survey followed roughly the same questions as the parents baseline survey so comparisons could be made and to best evaluate student's sources of information. We had 224 responses to this survey spread across 14 of the 17 schools which is a strong pool of data to pull insights from. Surveys were completed by any attendees of the workshop sent by the school – job roles that were represented are shown on p.37 but mainly included staff, heads and teaching assistants.

There were very unsurprisingly high levels of knowledge around Safeguarding and FGM/C but 26% of staff didn't feel confident talking about FGM/C. Similar to parents, the main reason was due to feeling uncomfortable. 100% of surveyed staff think it is important for children (including all boys) to know how to keep themselves safe and about FGM/C. This is interesting when compared with parents who weren't so unanimous when it came to the education of boys.

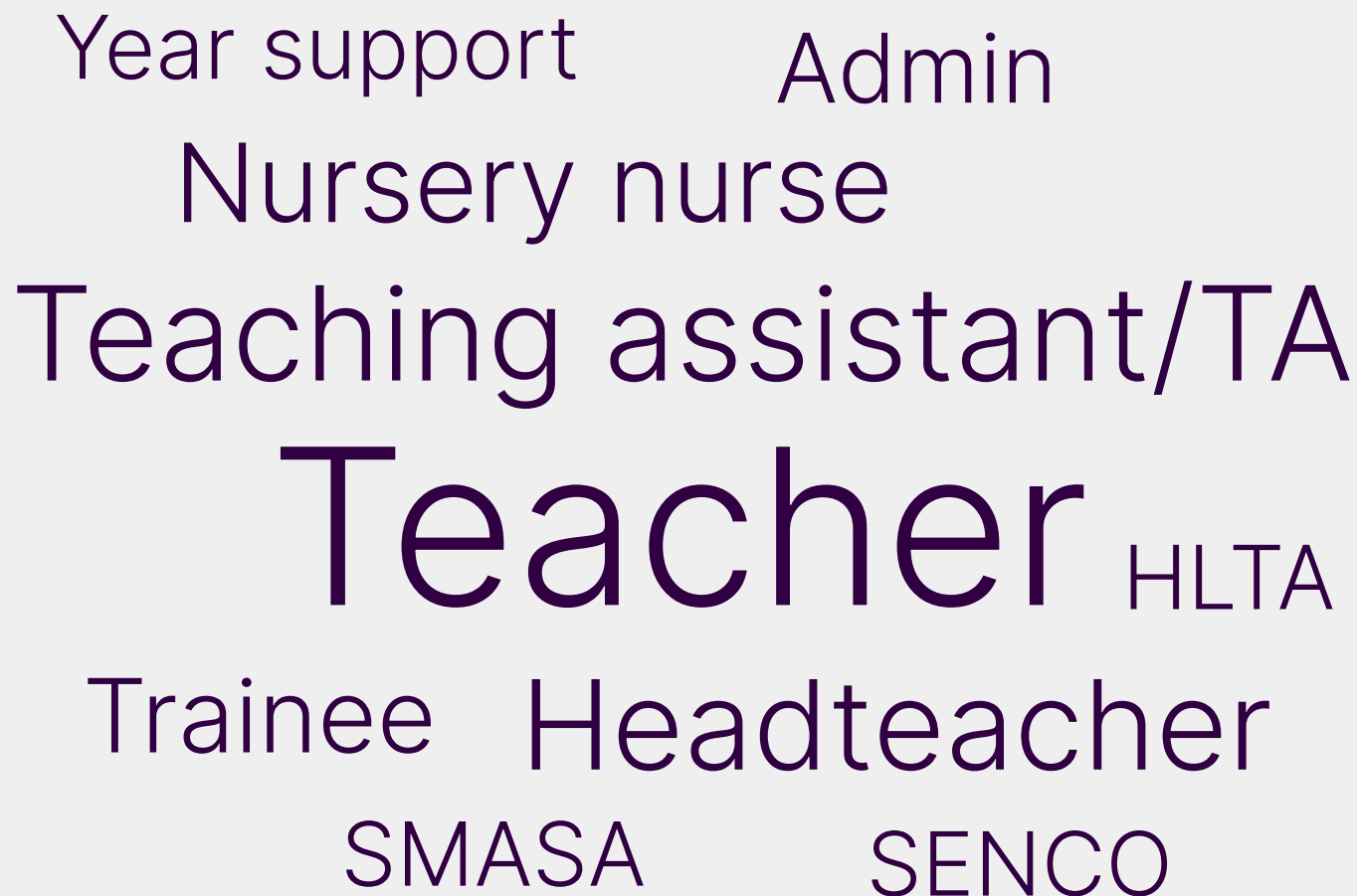
The quotes on page 41 were given after the first session with staff. Immediately we saw interest in the topics and compliments for Hoda's engaging delivery, a great way to start off the programme.

# Survey insights School baseline

## 1. Gender

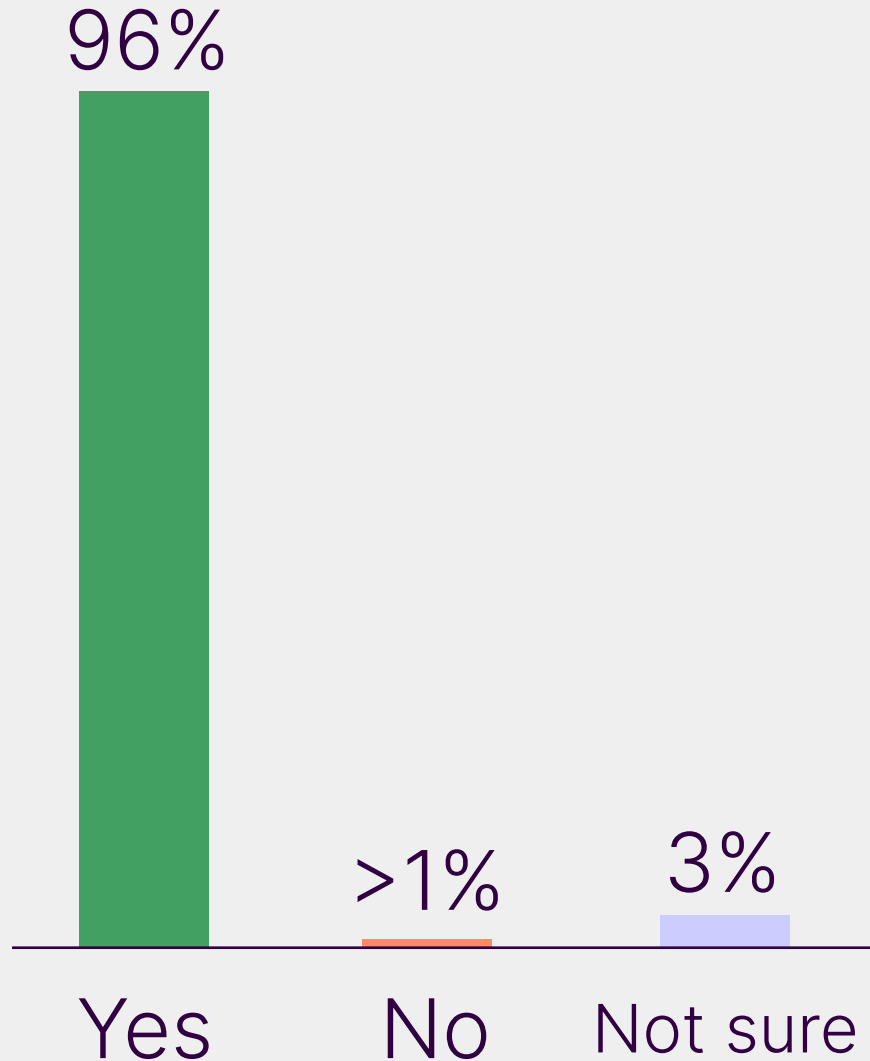


## 2. Job role

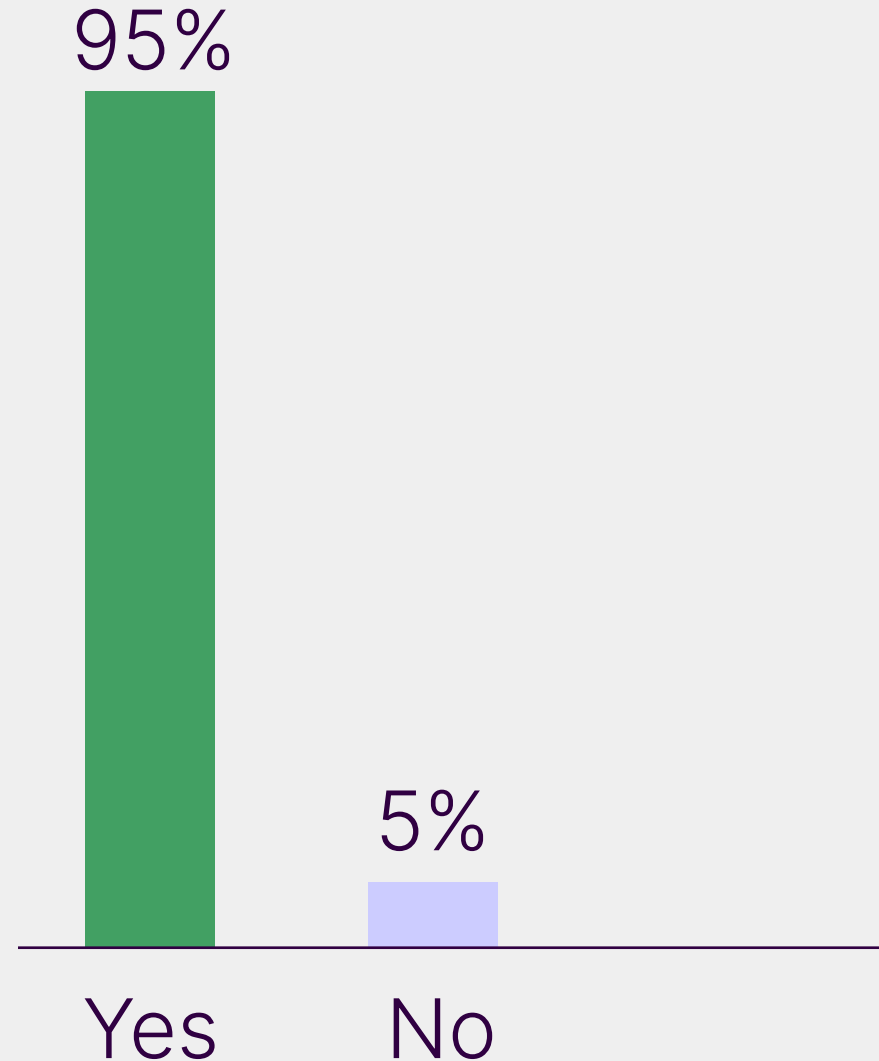


# Survey insights School baseline

3. Do you feel confident in your ability to safeguard children?

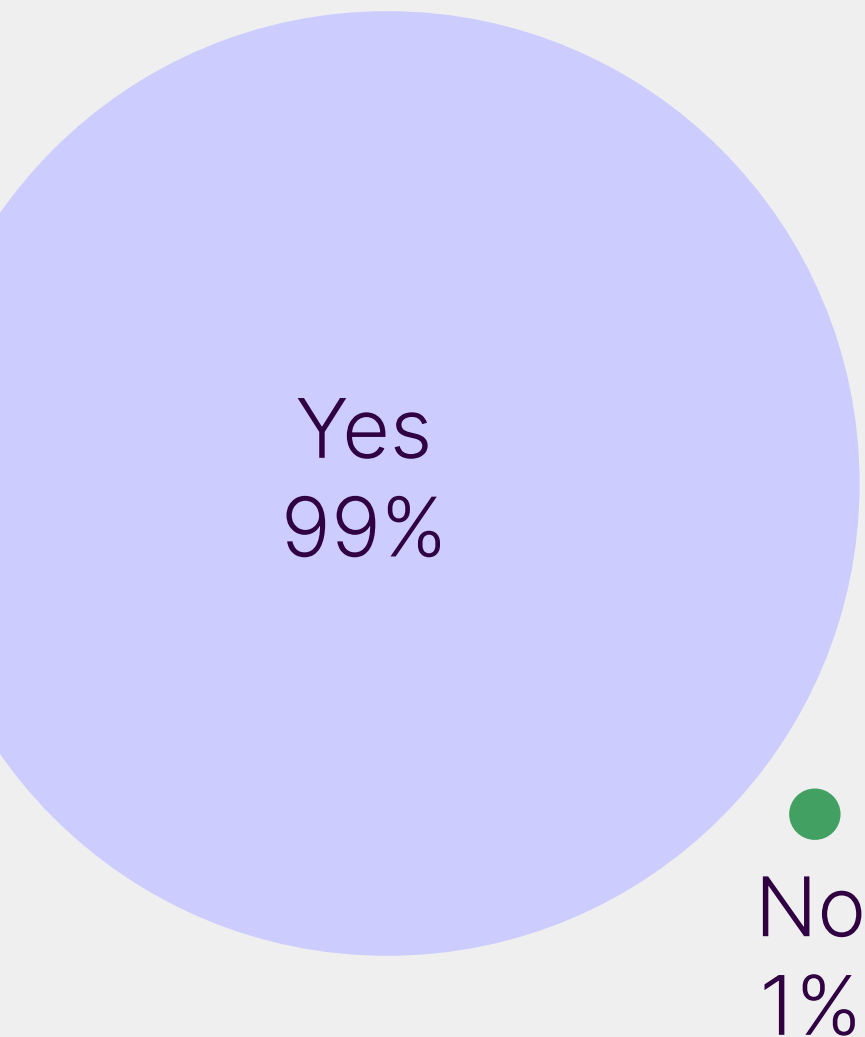


3. Do you believe you receive enough safeguarding training?

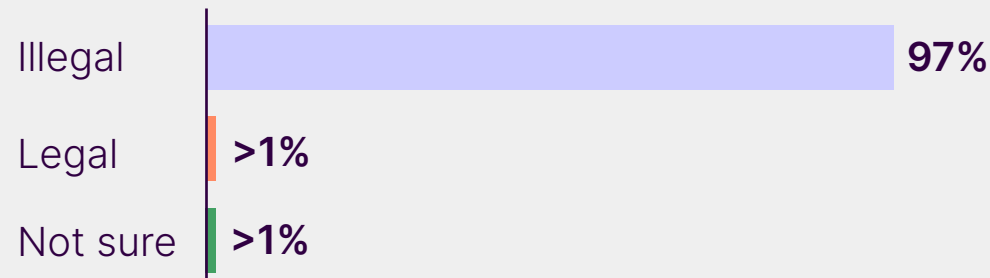


# Survey insights School baseline

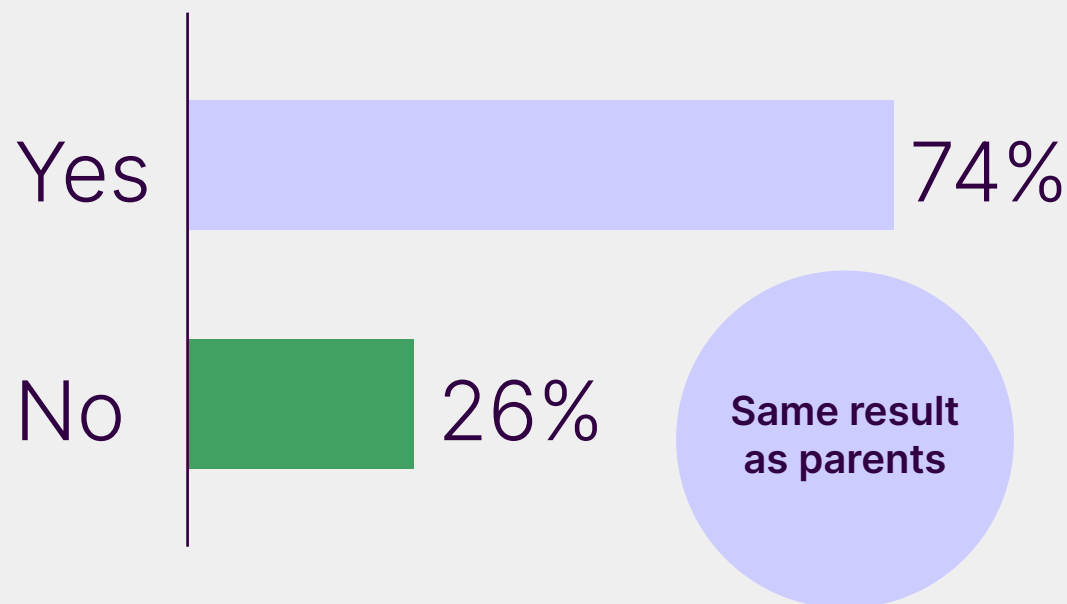
6. Do you know what Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is?



7. To the best of your knowledge, FGM/C is...

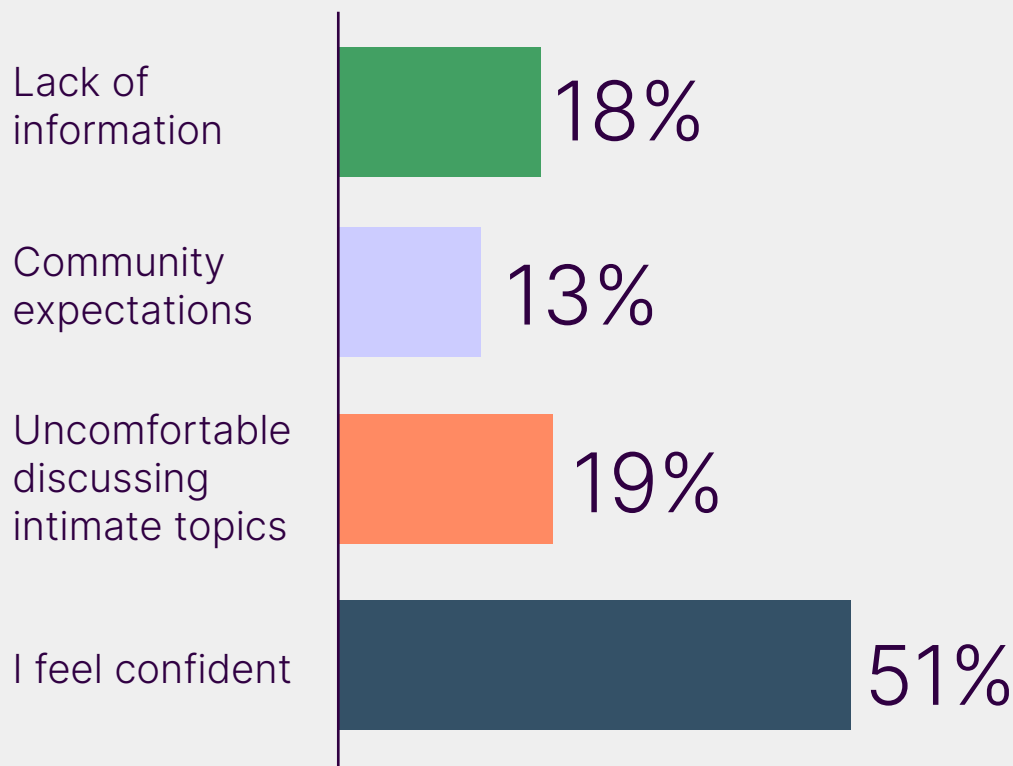


8. Do you feel confident discussing FGM/C?



# Survey insights School baseline

## 9. If any, what barriers stop you from feeling confident discussing FGM/C?



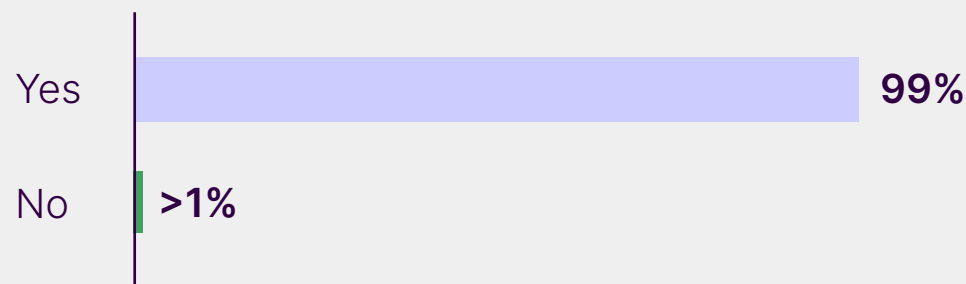
## 10. "It is important for children and young people to know how to keep themselves safe, including reporting information about FGM/C"

### Do you agree?

Yes  
100%

## 11. "Boys (assigned at birth) should learn about FGM/C even though they will not be subjected to it"

### Do you agree?



# Survey insights staff baseline

## 8. Any other comments?

The answers shown here are a selection.

“FGM training and information sharing should be a continuous process within all communities.”

“Very nice presentation thank you”

“Hoda is truly inspiration and role model for being a survivor and motivate everyone to be safe and keep other safe”

“It is an essential part of the curriculum.”

“By marking no to ‘enough safeguarding training’, we have robust training at 3B. However, I believe we can always have more on offer from the borough. Always have more up to date information, have refreshers that keep safeguarding front and centre. And have safeguarding on specific areas rather than a generalised approach.”

“Just wanted to say thank you to Hoda! You are a truly wonderful human and I appreciate the fight you are waging to keep women and girls safe. Thank you!”

“The training we received from Hoda was very enlightening and I now have more information regarding FGM/Cutting that I didn’t know before.”

“Fantastic training and for a women to got through such pain and trauma and have the confidence to share and support others is a blessing.”

“This was an amazing and thought provoking training session. I hope these sessions continue so all schools receive the same training.”



# Staff endline summary

We had 123 responses for the endline survey, covering 13 of the 17 schools. It was exciting to see that 99% of respondents felt more confident discussing FGM/C following the workshops.

85% of respondents would be interested in a refresher on the course, this and written feedback on p.45-46 suggest it was found very useful – most people felt a yearly refresher would do but there were also suggestions of bi-annually or every 6 months.

The written feedback was most insightful. Alongside a mass of positive notes on the content and delivery, there were constructive comments about what staff wanted more information on: reporting, spotting the signs, and talking with children about these topics.

# Survey insights Staff **endline**

1. Will you share what you have learnt with those who might not have knowledge of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)?



98%

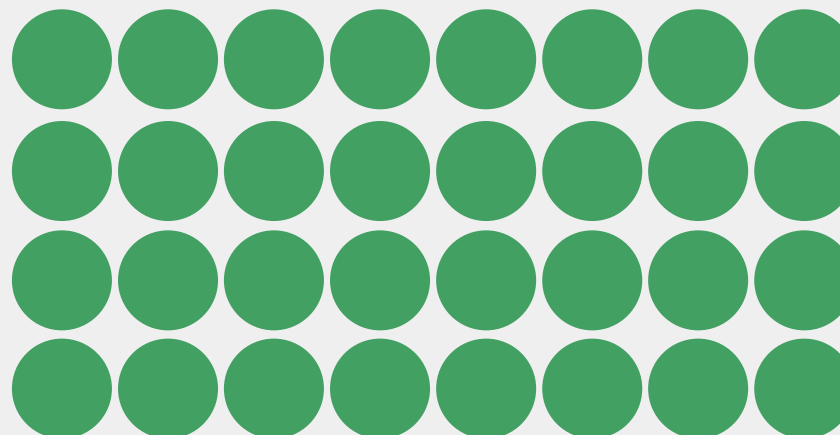
2. Please rate the content of the workshop

Excellent 96%

Very good 4%

3. Will you inform those who might not know that FGM/C is illegal?

Yes  
98%



No  
>1%

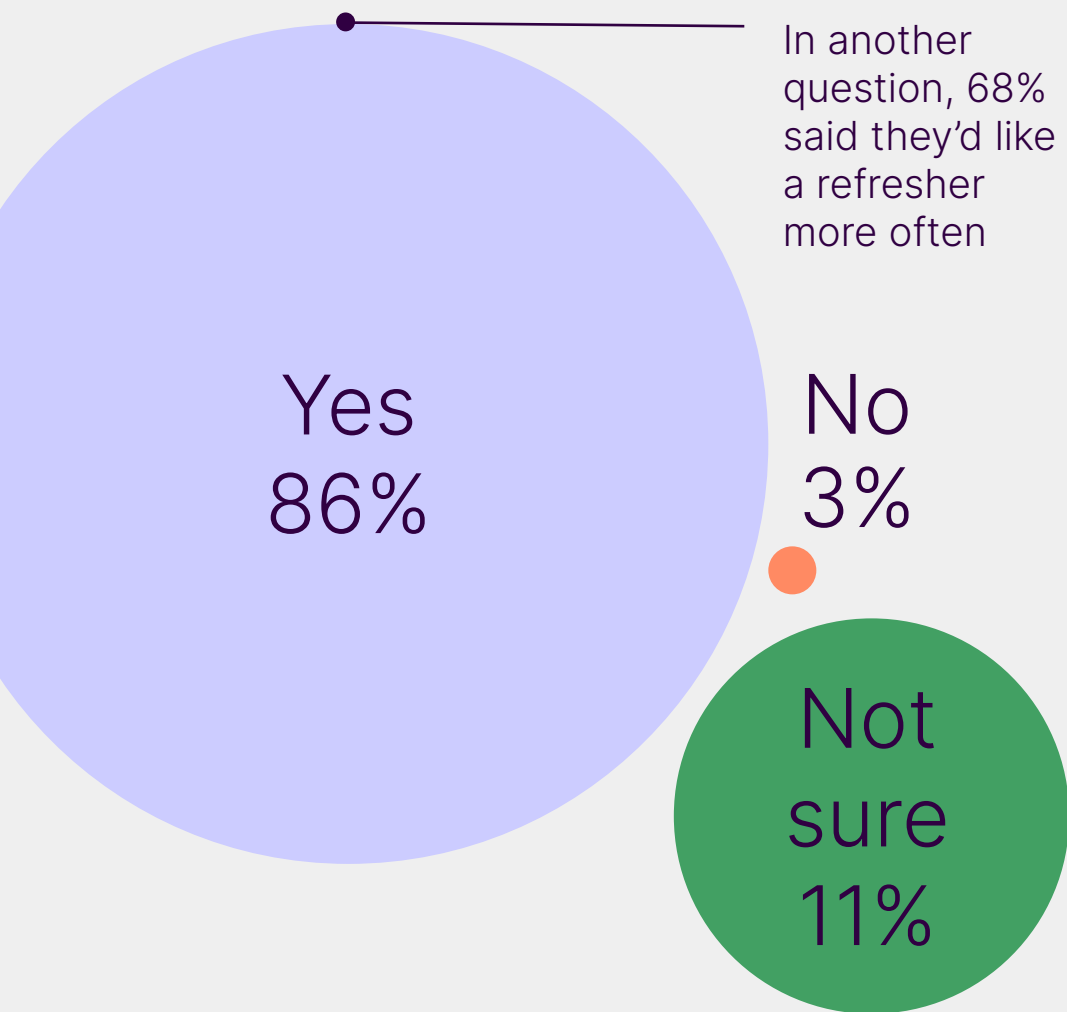


Not sure  
>1%

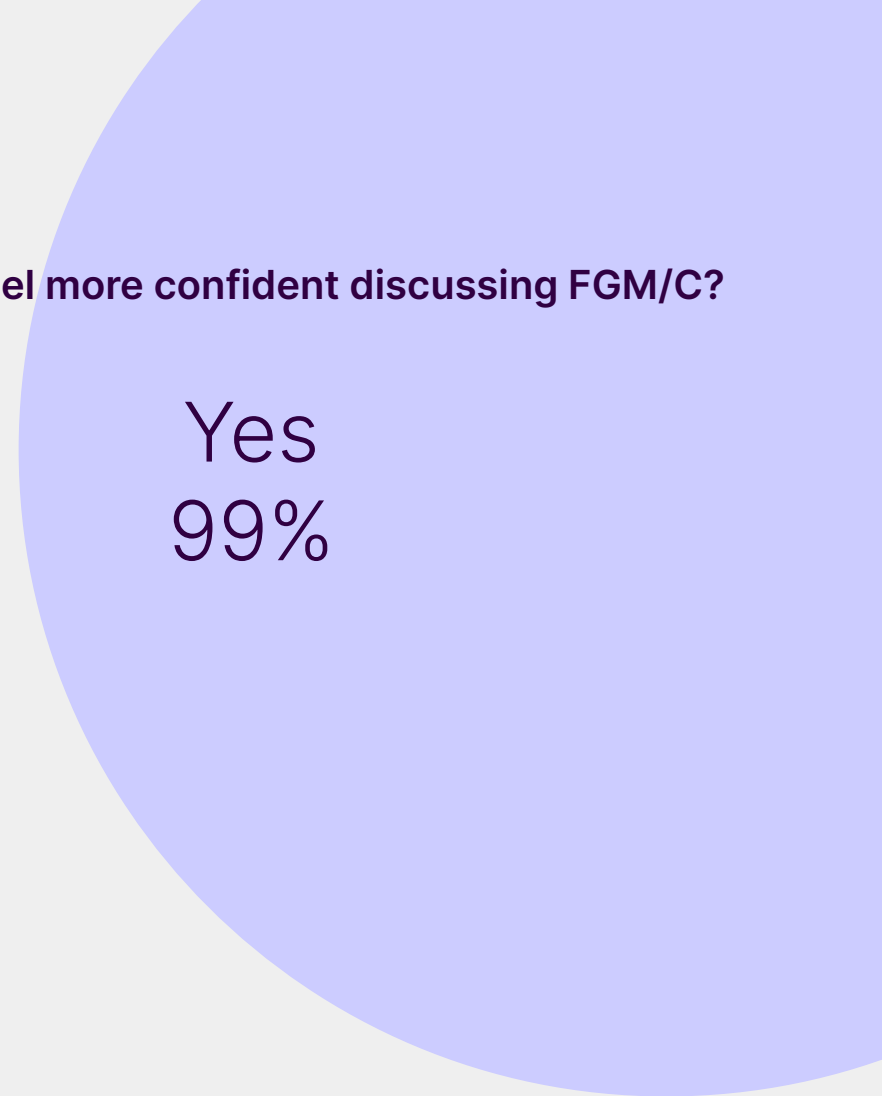


# Survey insights Staff **endline**

4. Should this be a training that you take part in on a yearly basis?



5. Do you feel more confident discussing FGM/C?



# Survey insights Staff **baseline**

## 8. Did you find your facilitator, Hoda Ali, to be an effective educator on FGM/C?

The answers shown here are a selection.

“Completely inspiring and such a powerful speaker.”

“Hoda is extremely knowledgeable and an inspiring facilitator.”

“She is brilliant and really hit home as she is a survivor.”

“Very effective in highlighting the possible long term issues associated with FGM and bringing awareness to a subject that many people are not fully aware of.”

“I found Hoda to be amazing educator as she imparted knowledge and spoke in a clear voice. It was clear to see how knowledgeable and passionate she is about educating on FGM .

“Inspirational and engaging delivery. Hard hitting and powerful. Everyone should hear her speak.”

“She is amazing and incredibly empowering.”

“She was personal and informative and she was open to sensitivity”

“Inspirational, sensitive, informative, deeply knowledgeable, authentic.”

“I’ve had the training from Hoda three times now and each time I always learn something new and remain inspired by her.”

“Outstanding. Great at sharing personal story making it a safe space.

# Survey insights Staff **endline**

## 9. Do you have any feedback or suggestions for developing the workshops?

The answers shown here are a selection.

“I thought I was already fairly informed based on what I had learnt during my time at school and from books I have read but the workshop taught me a lot more about it, including that it had spread more around the globe than I had realised.”

“The accompanying booklets were very useful, Hoda was an excellent speaker who made the information feel very relatable, relevant, and necessary with her knowledge and up to date information. The parent workshop component also makes it feel easier to deliver such a sensitive topic in schools.”

“The booklet. I’d never understood as I’d never seen diagrams/ drawings of FGM.”

“Should be shared more widely with other boroughs.”

More time...

“focused on how to report but aside from that I thought it was great.”

“spent on spotting the signs.”

“on how children may talk about this subject, and how we can help children to talk more about this, with each other and then on to a trusted adult. Something around a friend feeling safe and comfortable to talk about the risk another friend faces?”

“touching on what will be covered with parents and students.”

# Written feedback

Written feedback was also collected from schools to gain additional insights in the form of overarching comments. We haven't confirmed how these comments were informed, but consider them a good sense-check on how schools and their staff received the programme. Not all schools submitted written feedback.

## Summary

The creative activities with the students were very successful and popular, schools explained how effectively they engaged students and came away with a range of results including: raps, designed posters and drawings.

Generally it was shared that students felt safe sharing these topics with Hoda, including answering questions about the PANTS rule and discussing their bodies in a mature way. Hoda's delivery was very well-received by all participants. Compliments were made in how she unpacked complex topics, used her personal story to connect with people and made the sessions fun and engaging.

A few schools reported low parental attendance levels at the start or throughout the programme. Suggested reasons included: clashes, programme titles were too vague, not resonating with the topics, or feeling uncomfortable discussing them. Regrettably one school cancelled a week before the programme was due to start due to the inclusion of FGM/C in the curriculum and another opted to deliver the programme themselves following Ealing guidance – it could be interesting to compare the impact report with this latter school's experience.

The written feedback didn't reveal any positive results too dissimilar to the survey responses but the challenges with attendance were interesting and could be used to inform how schools engage with parents next time.



# Written feedback

## Derwentwater Primary School

- The **positive reception** at Derwentwater emphasised the need for tailored sessions catering to specific year groups, creating an open dialogue between students, parents, and school staff.
- Parent workshops **facilitated community** interaction and provided a platform for addressing concerns and sharing knowledge.

“The staff found the training very powerful and informative.”

“Hoda was a very **captivating speaker** who reached not only the staff, but parents and students as well.”

“The **students instantly felt very comfortable** with her and opened up during the discussion. We really appreciated that the lessons were tailored to specific topics for each year group.”

“Parent workshops were very beneficial as it helped to promote a sense of community and communication between the parents and the school.”

“It was really **helpful to have an expert deliver** these parent sessions so that all questions were answered with the most accurate information.”

## Gifford Primary School

- Engagement at Gifford showcased the effectiveness of the PANTs rule and age-appropriate terminology in educating children about personal safety.

“The **children were very engaged with the lessons** that Hoda delivered. They were comfortable when asking and answering questions related to the PANTs rule. They felt they were in a **safe space** and didn't feel inhibited from asking questions.”

“During the previous visit, there were more parents that had attended Hoda's workshop. This time, there was a lower turnout, this may be because of two things: 1) A large proportion of parents had previously attended, 2) Another workshop was happening simultaneously. Those that did attend enjoyed the workshop and received a certificate.”

# Written feedback

## Havelock Primary and Nursery School

- Despite initial setbacks with low attendance on the first day, the engagement gradually improved.
- Staff training was successful, with positive feedback on Hoda's training:

“Hoda's training and modelling of lessons has been invaluable in supporting our school, and equipping staff with the confidence needed to deliver lessons that contain quite sensitive content.”

“The information that she shared was so important, as we need to continue to work towards a mindset shift when it comes to FGM and prevent as many children as we can from exposure to the risks that the practice poses.”

“The parents who attended the workshops appreciated Hoda's straight- talking insights into safeguarding and the realities of the dangers that children are exposed to on a daily basis.”

## North Primary

- The initial days at North Primary faced challenges with low attendance, indicating potential communication gaps or scheduling conflicts. Strategies to enhance parental involvement and streamline communication may be necessary for future sessions.
- Challenges with initial attendance were noted, with ongoing efforts to engage parents.
- Staff found the session that Hoda held very powerful, and for those parents that did attend, they were engaged and felt informed.

## Three Bridges Primary School

- The project succeeded in increasing awareness and empowering children to speak up against FGM/C. There was positive feedback from students across year groups, highlighting increased awareness and confidence to speak up.
- The children were very engaged with the lessons that Hoda delivered. They were comfortable when asking and answering questions and were surprisingly mature when talking about bodies.

# Written feedback

## Ark Priory

- At Ark Priory, the children’s workshops resonated well, creating discussions on children’s rights and British values, alongside efforts to end FGM/C. The collaborative efforts of students in creating posters and letters demonstrated their active engagement and understanding of the issue.

“The children really enjoyed their workshops.”

“We found it was a brilliant way to discuss Children’s Rights, British Values and when we need to stand up and take action for others.”

“The children collaborated to produce some excellent posters, raps and letters voicing their want to end FGM.”

## Downe Manor Primary School

- Feedback from Downe Manor highlighted the impactful nature of the workshops, with staff and parents acknowledging the importance of clearer session titles and practical involvement of children to enhance attendance and comprehension.

“Staff found sessions powerful and informative, with suggestions for enhancing parent engagement.”

“Staff found the session that Hoda held at the school very powerful, and for those parents that did attend, they were really engaged and found the sessions informative.”

# Written feedback

## Brentside Primary Academy

- Testimonials from Brentside underscored the effectiveness of the training provided, empowering staff to address FGM/C with confidence and urgency.
- Important feedback to consider: “It was great that there were some parents present for the workshops. However I would have liked more, not quite sure why the numbers are low. Is it because they feel it doesn’t affect them? Embarrassment? Maybe that will be addressed if we get a member of staff trained to deliver the sessions, parents may feel more comfortable.”

“Hoda is an inspiring teacher and training provider. Her passion is shown through her work.”

“All of the lessons were well thought out that are delivered through the school and provided tools to make me feel confident to deliver FGM in an age appropriate way.”

“Staff training highlighted the urgency with which these lessons need to be shared with our young people. “

# Student insights

As aforementioned in the methodology, we chose softer approaches to measuring the impact on students. We have presented task-based outcomes from the workshops themselves as well as anonymous anecdotes and stories of individual students experiences.

## Children's booklet final page



# Tasks

At the end of each presentation, Hoda set the group a creative activity, differing slightly for each year to be age-appropriate (right, from top to bottom: year 3, 4 and 5 and 6). As aforementioned these were really well received, and worked to facilitate further conversations between students. It also gave them another chance to process the content as well as document the information they had learnt.

The following pages show a selection of the outcomes – a quick look and you get a feeling for the energy that was given by many students. It was notable that most outcomes used positive messaging, themes arose around empowerment, love, using their voices, and working together. These are exactly the kind of messages we hope to instil in young people, especially when talking about difficult topics. The character from the students booklet was also replicated a number of times suggesting it was a memorable and popular visual tool.



**Task: Make a poster**

It must be child friendly  
It must include Childline's number:



The slide features a light blue background with a white border. At the top right is a purple jagged starburst icon. On the left side is a purple starburst icon. The text is centered. Below the text is a white box containing the ChildLine logo, which includes the text 'ChildLine' in green, '0800 1111' in black, and a small icon of a telephone handset.



**Option 1:  
Write a speech**

Like Malala, write a speech explaining why you believe FGM must end and how can we end it.

**Option 2:  
Make a poster**

It must be child friendly  
It must include  
Childline's number:



The slide features a light blue background with a white border. At the top right is a purple jagged starburst icon. On the left side is a purple starburst icon. The text is arranged in two columns. Below the text for Option 2 is a white box containing the ChildLine logo, which includes the text 'ChildLine' in green, '0800 1111' in black, and a small icon of a telephone handset.



**What can we do to raise awareness of FGM?**

Work in groups and make one of the following:

- Rap or song
- Posters
- Self-help cards
- Poem or story
- Speech
- Letter to the Government

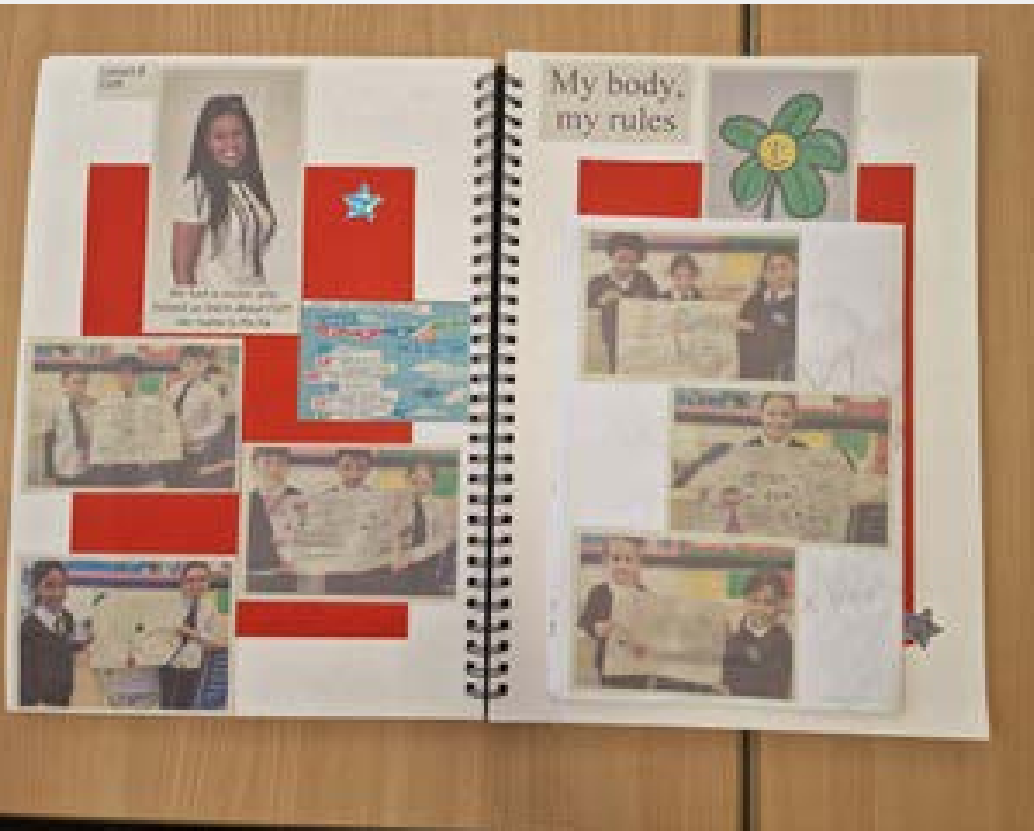


The slide features a light blue background with a white border. At the top right is a purple jagged starburst icon. On the left side is a purple starburst icon. The text is arranged in a list format. Below the list is a white box containing the ChildLine logo, which includes the text 'ChildLine' in green, '0800 1111' in black, and a small icon of a telephone handset.



# Tasks Gallery

Year 5



Year 6

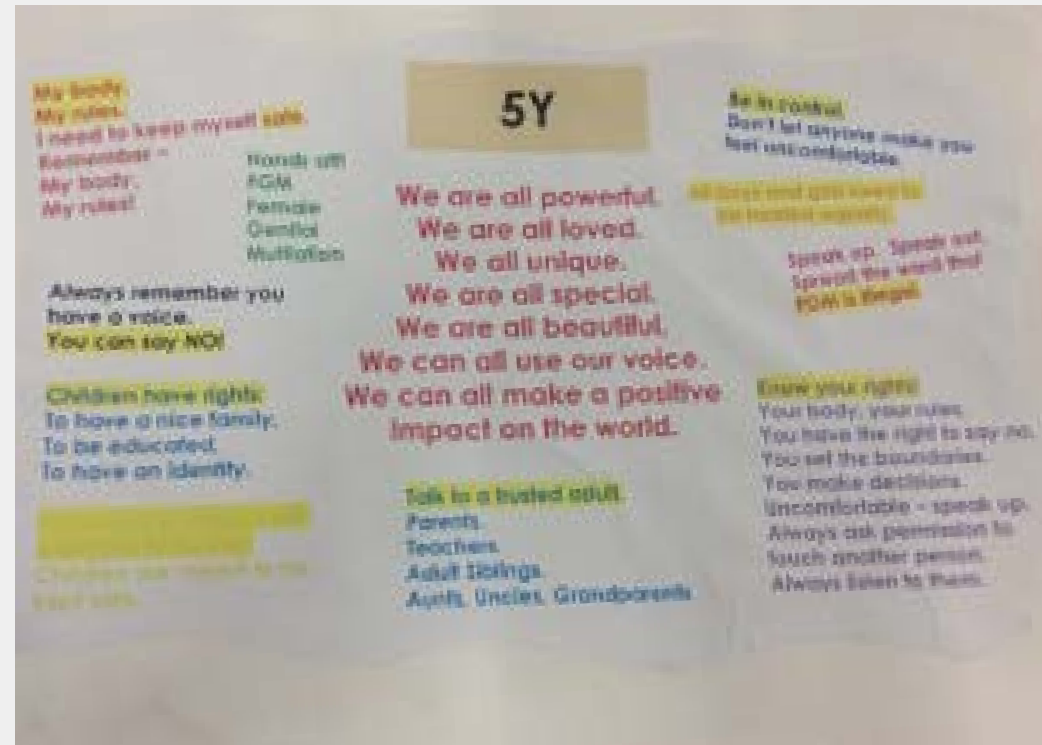


# Tasks Gallery

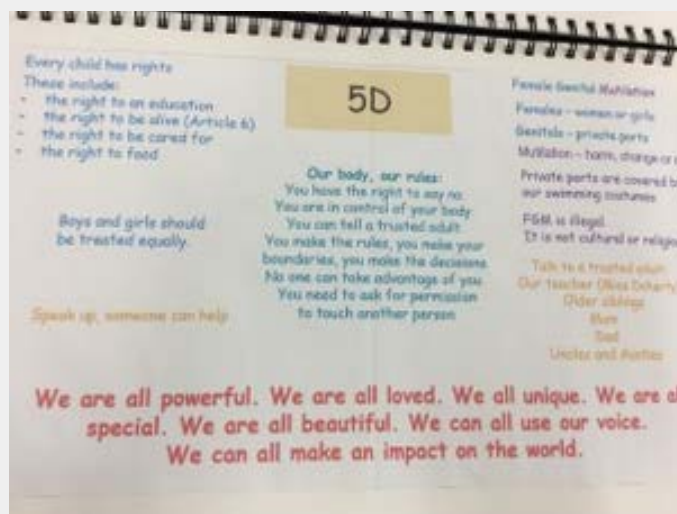
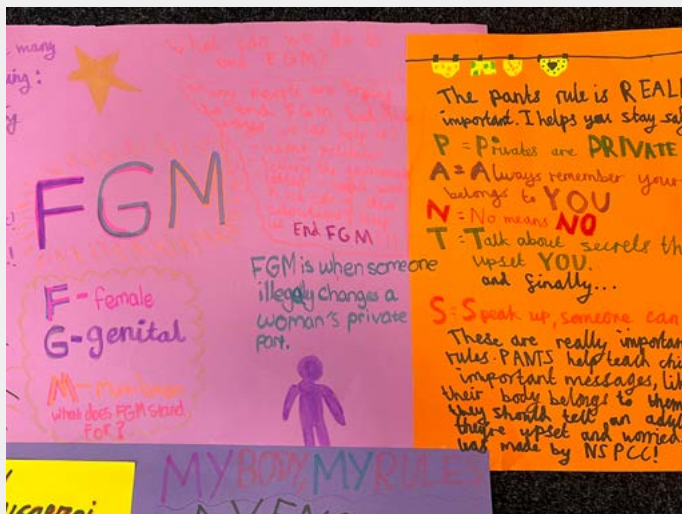
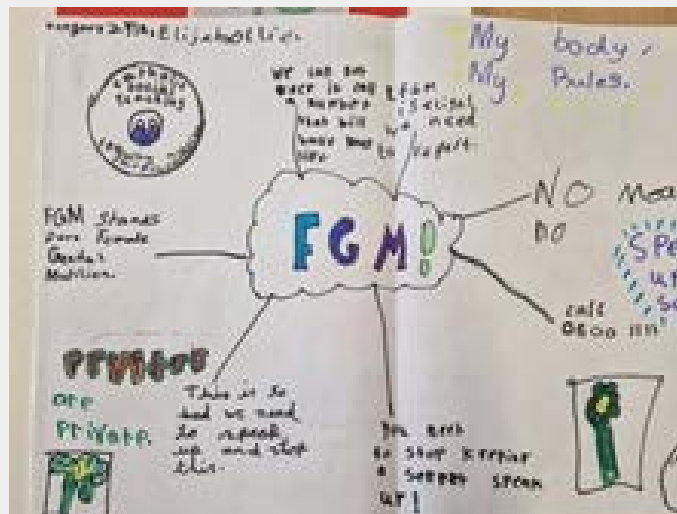
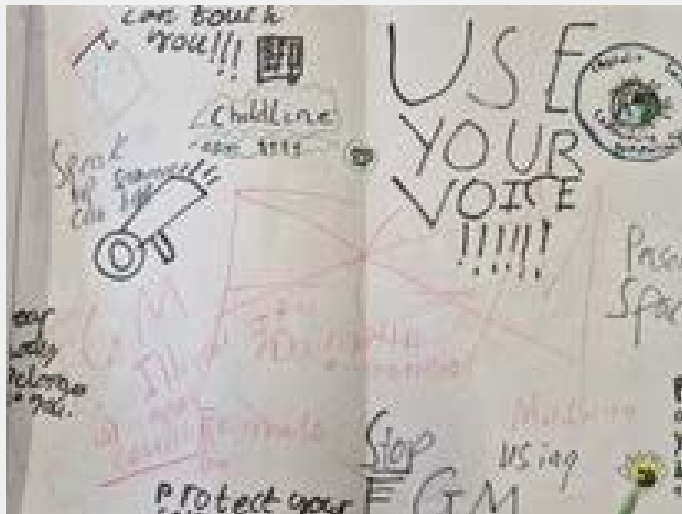
Colourful, illustrative information pages by year 4



A selection of spoken word pieces by year 5



# Tasks Gallery





# Conclusion



*“This was an amazing and thought-provoking training session. I hope all schools receive the same.”*

Staff feedback

# Conclusion and recommendations

The End-FGM/C project has significantly raised awareness, empowered communities, and fostered proactive engagement in safeguarding efforts. This feedback that we have received from participating schools highlights the importance of survivor-led training and ongoing support in combating FGM/C and VAWG. The redesigned project model has tripled our yearly intake of schools to 17; Hoda has reached over 4,000 children with safeguarding and FGM/C awareness lessons and trained over 1000 parents and staff members. This increase represents a significant step towards eradicating FGM/C across London, made possible by the strong support of a borough council, and everyone involved in this project should be very proud.

This impact report is especially poignant in the current educational context. The Department of Education's consideration of raising the age that FGM/C is discussed in schools to year 9 directly contradicts the insights we have gained here and within the sector. When delivered appropriately, young children are more than capable of discussing their bodies and rights. Arming children with the knowledge and confidence to advocate for themselves will help set them up for a life of open communication – something that is proven to prevent Gender Based Violence and improve support-health.

By year 9 many girls have already been cut. Discussing FGM/C as early as possible creates space for survivors to be seen and gain support as early as possible. Without specialist programmes like this, thousands of girls will be left to navigate FGM/C and their bodies alone.

Without specialist programmes like this, thousands of girls will be left to navigate FGM/C and their bodies alone.

A special note to celebrate Hoda – her openness, personality and joyful energy makes this programme what it is. Several disclosures were made during the Ealing Council commission.

These were made possible through Hoda's presence and the safe space creates, her personal character and experiences as a survivor are key to this.

It's clear that work of this kind is essential and the education model Hoda has built is unique and impactful. Together we can end FGM/C and protect all children's mental and physical health, we just need to prioritise creative, human and survivor-led initiatives.

Thank you to Ealing Council for funding this important work. To schools, staff and parents for committing time and attention to ensure the children in your care are kept safe. And finally the students, for being so open to Hoda's words and pledging your creativity and voices towards ending Gender Based Violence.



Commissions:  
Bringing this programme  
into *your school*

**I'M A VAVENGER**

# Bringing this programme into your school

Hoda's programme is available for commission for all Academies and Maintained schools.

## Description

Committed to ending female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Focused on schools, it enhances safety by raising awareness and empowering staff, parents and children. The project fosters collective commitment, ensuring children's wellbeing and safety.

## Package 1: full delivery

Design and planning  
1 staff CPD  
4 parent workshops  
4 children's lessons  
Impact report

20hrs of development, support and delivery

Total **£1950\***

\*Commissioning price for the Academic year 2024/25

## Package 2: train the trainer

Hoda is passionate about empowering and training other survivors and educators to deliver her materials. To discuss this option, tailored to your educators, please contact [hello@hodamali.co.uk](mailto:hello@hodamali.co.uk).

# Bringing this programme into your school

## Project outcomes:

- The project facilitates comprehensive education and awareness of FGM/C and VAWG, empowering individuals with knowledge to recognise and prevent girls from being subjected to violence.
- Being a survivor-led project, it ensures a supportive environment for communities affected, promoting healing and resilience, and ultimately positive change.
- Enhances safeguarding guidelines, bolstering measures to detect and address instances of FGM/C and violence against women and girls.
- By leveraging schools as hubs for community engagement, it cultivates a culture of accountability and advocacy, mobilising parents, staff members, educators, and students alike to actively combat FGM/C and VAWG.
- Through sustained implementation, the project engenders a long-term shift in societal attitudes, empathy, understanding, solidarity, and a community who safeguards their children.
- The project contributes to the creation of safer, more inclusive communities where individuals can thrive free from the threat of FGM/C and violence.

**The programme is led and guided by Hoda M. Ali.** Now taking commissions for the Academic year 2024/25.

Contact Hoda M. Ali for more information at [hello@hodamali.com](mailto:hello@hodamali.com)



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Hoda M. Ali

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Ealing Council

[www.ealing.gov.uk](http://www.ealing.gov.uk)



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The Vavengers

[www.thevavengers.co.uk](http://www.thevavengers.co.uk)

[info@thevavengers.co.uk](mailto:info@thevavengers.co.uk)

"WHEN *women*  
RISE, WE *all rise*."