

# ZERO TOLERANCE TO FGM

## FORWARD'S COMMUNITY VALUES



"We are at a pivotal moment. **The demand for our services has grown by over 22%, with cases becoming increasingly complex.** Over the past four years, we have supported more than 1,500 women. While the need continues to rise, so does our ability to meet it—especially with your support."

-TOKS, HEAD OF UK PROGRAMMES

### COMMUNITY-LED SUPPORT AND CHANGE

FORWARD is an African Diaspora women's organisation registered in 1985. We operate in the UK, Europe and Africa. We focus on female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and obstetric fistula. Our vision is a world in which African women and girls live in dignity, are healthy and enjoy equal rights.

### THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM: REAL BARRIERS, REAL LIVES

Imagine fleeing conflict or oppression, only to land in a society where you remain unseen and unheard. Where language barriers, social stigma, and immigration restrictions isolate you from the support you desperately need. For many Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women, particularly those from African and refugee communities, this is not a scenario; it is their lived experience.

These women face a web of trauma, systemic inequality, and exclusion, made worse by their immigration status, limited resources, and a system that is rarely designed to understand their cultural context. They arrive carrying scars; physical, emotional, and cultural; yet full of potential. At FORWARD, we work to unlock that potential.

### CONTACT

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### OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

To respond effectively and sustainably, our strategy includes:

- **Holistic & Client-Centred:** Tailored support to the individual needs of each woman
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** We work with over 30 BME-led organisations across the UK
- **Capacity Building & Empowerment:** Training community educators, mentors, and Champions
- **Sustainability & Funding:** Leveraging partnerships to sustain and scale our impact
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Adaptation:** Using data and feedback to strengthen and adapt our services
- **Advocacy & Policy Engagement:** Influencing systemic change through evidence-based campaigning and training professional/frontline service providers to better respond and provide sensitive and culturally competent services that meets to needs of African, Black and minoritised women

### OUR GOALS: TOGETHER WE CAN

- Reach and support the most vulnerable BME women: refugees, survivors, those with no recourse to public funds
- Equip women with skills, confidence, and tools to access services and claim their rights
- Support 350+ women annually through community outreach, counselling, and training
- Build a stronger, sustainable network of community champions across the UK
- Create spaces where cultural barriers are broken, and women are no longer silenced

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*"I had come across FORWARD, and ever since then, my life has changed significantly. For three years, each time I went to apply for education for my children, applications for council housing, GP appointments, I was ignored simply because of my language barrier, which hurt me very deeply.*

*Overtime, this made me extremely insecure about my speaking, which along with the trauma from my abuse, made me very depressed. However, in FORWARD, they were grateful enough to bring me an interpreter and a session worker. They led me step-by-step through the entire process! Fortunately, I am now settled with my toddler in temporary accommodation and I finally have a bidding number to bid for council properties. He now is on the list for therapy for his speech impediment.*

**For the first time in a few years, I finally feel seen; as if I actually have a voice".**

-SERVICE USER

### THIS #ZEROTOLERANCE TO FGM 2026 - JOIN US!

Together we can build a future where African women and girls live in dignity, safety, and free from violence.

#### SUPPORT US

**Donate** - Whether you give £50 or £500, your support helps us stand with affected communities to create lasting, transformative change. Ending FGM depends on sustained investment and locally driven resources.

[\*\*Donate Today!\*\*](#)

#### RAISE AWARENESS:

**STATEMENT:** Sustained Investment and Community-Led Action to End FGM by 2030 - [\*\*FORWARD STATEMENT\*\*](#)

**Watch:** #ZeroTolerance to FGM Video, Naana Otoo-Oyortey Executive Director - [\*\*Towards 2030: No End To FGM Without Sustained Commitment and Investment.\*\*](#)

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### THE PROBLEM IS DEEP - BUT NOT UNSOLVABLE

The challenges affecting BME women are multi-dimensional and interconnected, compounded by both external pressures and internal resource constraints:

- **Political:** Unstable funding, strict immigration laws, and complex regulatory requirements
- **Social:** Cultural stigma, language barriers, and social isolation hinder access to support
- **Technological:** Digital exclusion and the need for secure, accessible tech solutions
- **Legal:** Navigating safeguarding laws, protecting rights, and gaps in legal support
- **Environmental:** Need for sustainable, safe facilities and preparedness for crises
- **Economic:** Limited financial resources, rising living costs, and economic downturns affecting both service users and delivery
- **Internal:** Recruitment and retention difficulties, staff burnout, financial strain, and morale challenges within the organisation



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