



## What is breast ironing?



The practice of using heated stones, straps, hot pestles and other instruments on girls 9-15 years to stop their breasts developing.



It is an abusive act- it is a form of physical child abuse and also recognised as Gender and Honor Based Violence.



It is often carried out by mothers or grandmothers as they believe they are stopping her from getting married and keeping them in education and thus protecting her. It makes them remain a child and less like a woman



Breast ironing is also known as Breast Flattening.

There is no law against the practice of Breast Ironing in the UK!



### Signs that Breast ironing has been practiced?

- Absence from school
- unhappy about medical examinations
- Unhappy about changing in class
- A range of emotions- embarrassment, fright, anxiety, withdrawn.

### Where does it happen?

- African communities, Cameroon, Kenya and Zimbabwe
- They want the girls to maintain a good literacy rate by keeping girls in Education.
- Research has shown it is also happening in West African communities in the UK.

### What are the effects?

- Can cause girl to feel; anxious depressed, withdrawn, embarrassed, frightened.
- Chest pains
- Malformed breasts
- Breast cancer and cysts
- Infection
- Difficulty breast feeding; producing milk

### What can we do as practitioners?

Follow our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

**RECOGNISE, RESPOND, REFER**