

**Cabinet Response to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission
Report Investigation into Female Genital Mutilation**

CABINET MEETING DATE

23 November 2015

CLASSIFICATION

Open

WARD(S) AFFECTED

All Wards

CABINET MEMBER

**Cllr Jonathan McShane
Health, Social Care, and Culture**

KEY DECISION

No

CORPORATE DIRECTOR

**Alan Wood
Children Services**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Female Genital Mutilation is a horrific act of abuse without any justification. It is an intolerable act that physically, emotionally and psychologically impacts its victims and we all have a responsibility to ensure that this act is eliminated.
- 1.2. As this response shows FGM and the results of FGM are taken very seriously in our borough. The Council and its partners in Hackney are working hard to help prevent incidents and to deal with the impact for those who have already suffered. This is ongoing work which is, along with other safeguarding issues, under constant review. The responses do not constitute the totality of all that the Council and its partners undertake but help illustrate the acceptance of seriousness of this issue.
- 1.3. I commend this report to Cabinet.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Cabinet is asked to approve the content of this response.

3. Executive Response to the Scrutiny Recommendations

3.1. Leadership

Recommendation One	
<p>a) The Commission recommends Cabinet ensures that there is more visible senior leadership around the different strands of FGM – prevention, safeguarding and supporting survivors, to help achieve the goal of embedding the protocol amongst the different partners. This needs to include a clear statement of what a successful multi-agency system looks like, with the action plan indicating clear accountability for the directors of relevant services to report on the actions in their areas.</p>	<p>The Council's Public Health team, in partnership with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Board (CHSCB) are developed "Tackling and Prevention FGM: City and Hackney Strategy". This will be a joint strategy with the City of London and it is due to be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in January.</p> <p>The strategy will outline how we aim to prevent FGM from happening, improve services and professionals' responses to victims and those at risk, and ensure sensitive support and advice is available and targeted to the right people.</p> <p>The strategy and its action plan will take stock of research, policy and legislation, and approaches to tackling FGM in order to promote the welfare of girls and women and increase knowledge and understanding locally.</p> <p>One of the three priorities being focused on is strong and effective leadership to ensure that key stakeholders embed tackling and prevention of FGM into existing safeguarding strategies, and to encourage our key partner agencies to adopt this strategy.</p>
<p>b) The Commission recommends more information is provided by Public Health to outline how the action plan will be monitored and measured, particularly around the effectiveness of the referral policy, and how survivors, men and faith leaders can be more visibly involved at strategic level.</p>	<p>Progress against the action plan will be monitored and updated annually to both the CHCSB and HWB with more frequent updates to relevant multi-agency steering groups.</p>

<p>c) The Commission requests an update in December 2015 on the progress against the action plan and an assessment of its effectiveness.</p>	<p>Part of the strategy will focus on boys and men, to help them understand the impact of FGM on the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of girls and women, to help them understand the role they can play in eliminating FGM. This will also include education influential men and women who condone FGM to ensure they understand it is an illegal and harmful practice.</p> <p>An update on the FGM plan can be provided when it has been approved and been launched.</p>
--	---

3.2. Partnership

<p>Recommendation Two</p> <p>The Commission recommends that Public Health and HCVS produce a joint directory of all known statutory support, specialist services and VCS organisations/individuals working in Hackney and across London to either prevent FGM or support women and girls, and ensures that this is disseminated to all relevant professionals working in Hackney.</p>	<p>Agreed. In addition Hackney CVS will be hosting a forum on community safeguarding and faith in Hackney.</p> <p>Participants will have an opportunity to discuss sensitive safeguarding issues and to understand the important role faith leaders' play in local communities, including in relation to FGM.</p>
--	---

3.3. Training

<p>Recommendation Three</p> <p>The Commission recommends further opportunities for joint training should be developed by City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHCSB) – particularly for health professionals who need to be certain of their role in identification and referral, and their statutory duties. This should involve survivors and campaigners, and seek to engage a wider range of stakeholders - to help improve the links and knowledge about what is taking</p>	<p>The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) provides a full programme of multi-agency training for our partners throughout the borough and the City of London, including health professionals. CHSCB believes that it is essential that professionals are equipped with the knowledge, skills and experience that will help them</p>
--	--

<p>place at operational level.</p>	<p>meet their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.</p> <p>The training courses on offer in this programme are open to all practitioners working with children and young people and are designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they need in order to contribute positively to multi-agency working and to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>This programme includes a specific module on FGM awareness and seminars on understanding the professional response to FGM. They, like all the parts of the programme are kept under review and change to reflect the changing needs of our partners, and feedback received.</p>
------------------------------------	--

3.4. Specialist Therapeutic Support

<p>Recommendation Four</p> <p>The Commission recommends that City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) reviews whether existing specialist psychosocial support is fit for purpose (for example, whether therapists having received specific training relevant to FGM, and how many women have used the service), and then consider commissioning specialist psychosocial support that other professionals can refer women and girls under 18 to. The Commission recommends the CCG should also consider support for peer led approaches, given the need for community specific and very locally based responses.</p>	<p>The City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) keeps all the services it commissions under review to ensure that they are providing the services that are required and providing value for money.</p> <p>This includes the services that provide specialist support to victims of abuse, including FGM. Consideration will be given to the recommendations made by the commission.</p>
--	--

3.5. Building the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector

Recommendation Five

a) The Commission recommends that the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Culture consider reviewing existing Council third sector funding such as the VCS grants programme, to understand what work around FGM is currently being funded and how. The Commission would like to see assurances that FGM projects are able to apply for the grants that are available and are supported to do so.

The Council in the process of accepting bids for the second year of the Healthier Hackney Grant Fund (HHF).The Fund is open to organisations in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors and is for projects and services that will help the council achieve its public health ambitions, to increase healthy life expectancy, and to reduce inequality between different communities.

One of the areas of priority relates directly to sexual health and in 2015/16 funding in this area was awarded to organisations to test innovative ideas to improve sexual health amongst high-risk groups. One recipient awarded with funding has developed a project that specifically developed to engage with parents, girls, women, men and community leaders such as imams and pastors on the emotional physical and legal issues related to FGM.

Any organisation with a suitable proposal seeking funding from the HHF will of course be considered against the established and previously agreed approval process.

b) The Commission recommends that funds should be directed towards building the capacity of existing projects, and funding any known gaps in provision (particularly focussing on the areas listed in 8.10 of the report)

As agreed by the Executive, there is an existing process that considers every individual bid against a set number of criteria that applicants must comment against. All bids will be measured against this before they are submitted for approval.

c) The Commission recommends consideration be given by the Council

The Guidance available to perspective bidders lays out who is

<p>as to how a FGM consortia can be better supported to develop its role, including being able to bid on behalf of smaller organisations in order to make available funds more accessible to those working at grassroots level.</p> <p>d) The Commission recommends that the Council considers how it might help to provide safe spaces for grassroots organisations to meet, for example, by maximising the use of existing council buildings and community spaces.</p>	<p>eligible to bid for grant funding.</p> <p>In order to be eligible for funding the majority of people benefiting from the project must be Hackney residents. Organisations applying must be value-driven and principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives.</p> <p>Voluntary organisations or third sector organisations include community groups, faith and equalities groups, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, mutuels and housing associations. Social Enterprises and Community Interest Companies are only eligible to apply for a grant if they operate on a wholly not-for-profit basis.</p> <p>The Council would welcome any interest from any organisation or consortia that fulfils those criteria.</p> <p>The Council makes space available for use by the community across the whole borough including at our libraries and also via Hackney Home's network of community halls.</p>
--	---

3.6. Health

<p>Recommendation Six</p> <p>a) The Commission would like to receive an update from Public Health in December 2015 on how the new protocol is embedding in Hackney and what issues have arisen. Furthermore we request that the update includes an analysis of whether the number of</p>	<p>Agreed. An update will be prepared in order to be shared with the Commission.</p>
---	--

referrals to Children's Social Care have increased which would give an indication of whether conversations about FGM, and alerts about possible risk are being translated into referrals. We would also like to see the results of the analysis of referral routes and seasonal patterns of FGM.

b) The Commission requests that the Local Medical Committee discuss how the new mandatory recording for GPs and mental health trusts of incidences of FGM, and reporting to the police for girls under 18 is being addressed locally, and whether any further training is required for health professionals.

c) The Commission recommends the Local Medical Committee considers the role that local GPs can play in ensuring that when they meet new arrivals from at risk countries that they know what questions to ask to assess risk of FGM. The Commission requests the Chair of the Local Medical Committee and/or the CEO of the City and Hackney GP Confederation report to the Commission on progress being made here.

The City and Hackney Local Medical Committee (LMC) is the organisation that represents individual GPs in our local area. Working with the City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the LMC has a full appreciation of the importance of the work that the commission has highlighted in their report on FGM. GPs from Hackney and the City of London are aware of their responsibilities. These new responsibilities have been discussed by both the LMC and the CCG and will be kept under review.

All health care workers in Hackney are regularly briefed on issues related to safeguarding, including FGM. This includes briefing via the Hackney Resource Guide, which is part of the resource guide for Professionals.

The resource guide has been developed by the Council's Children and Young People's Service to assist professionals working within the borough to navigate the diverse range of services for children and families with support needs.

Health care workers are also briefed on the Government's FGM Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines, which includes clear guidance on recognising at risk individuals, and the role that professionals have to

<p>d) The Commission recommend that Public Health consider and explore the impact of good practice models, such as the model used in Newham (at 5.2.3.) to ensure health professionals (in particular those in sexual health) have enough time for assessment and support of girls and women.</p>	<p>play to prevent FGM.</p> <p>They also have access to a helpline specialising in responses to FGM, operated by the NSPCC, supported by the Metropolitan Police, and in association with a number of voluntary and professional groups.</p> <p>The aim of this specialist helpline is to improve the safeguarding of children in the UK by increasing the detection and protection of children at risk or who are already affected by female genital mutilation. It will also facilitate the sharing of information with police and relevant agencies so that intelligence can be gathered and appropriate action taken against those who facilitate female genital mutilation against children.</p> <p>Agreed. Good practice, such as the model used in Newham, is constantly shared amongst professionals. This is especially the case when the lessons learned are from areas the have similar demographic characteristics to Hackney and the City of London.</p>
---	---

3.7. Schools

<p>Recommendation Seven</p> <p>a) The Commission recommends that Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) encourages schools to bring in support to develop FGM teaching in Year 5 and 6, using their staff development budget.</p>	<p>The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board provides training and information for primary schools and child protection leads throughout Hackney. The Council would advocate that our schools take advantage of all the options available to ensure that our teachers are fully aware of this issue and the important role that</p>
--	--

<p>b) The Commission recommends Hackney Learning Trust disseminate and actively promote learning from the evaluation of the CWP pilot, as well as ensuring that all schools in Hackney have clear guidance in place for teachers around assessing risk of FGM.</p> <p>c) Given the importance of schools also working with parents and the local community around prevention, the Commission recommends Hackney Learning Trust consider delivering a training event for primary schools, with input from HCVS and survivors on what approaches schools might take to support this agenda.</p> <p>d) The Commission recommends HLT consider opportunities to raise awareness of FGM for parents and staff in early years settings.</p>	<p>they have to play.</p> <p>Agreed. Hackney Learning Trust ensures that the results of the evaluation of pilots, such as the CWP pilot are circulated to schools. The Trust also signposts schools to relevant guidance on all matters related to safeguarding.</p> <p>The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, in association with Hackney Learning Trust, has developed and delivered specialist training on FGM for Child Protection leads and disseminated training for all staff.</p> <p>In addition it has also provided multi-agency training, produced a short film using local survivors and a faith leader to increase awareness of FGM and delivered training at primary schools and presentations for head teachers.</p> <p>Information about safeguarding issues, such as FGM, is already made available to professionals dealing with young children in their early years to alert them to the signs of risk. Consideration will be given to how awareness can be increased amongst our professionals and amongst parents.</p>
---	--