

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Health Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION – UPDATE**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Health Scrutiny Panel (HSP) with an update regarding Slough Borough Council's (SBC) work with partner organisations to combat female genital mutilation (FGM).

2. **Recommendation**

The Panel is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Work to ensure that FGM is prevented in the Slough area supports the following Joint Wellbeing Strategy priority:

- Protecting vulnerable children

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Effective measures against FGM will also help to deliver the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful
- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications to the information in this paper beyond those currently included in SBC budgeting.

(b) **Risk Management**

There are no recommendations in this report requiring risk management.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

FGM is covered in the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985, Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (which was amended by Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.)

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An EIA test of relevance was completed and strongly indicates that a full EIA is not required. The work on FGM will offer stronger protection to girls and women. The legislation that supports the detailed FGM work was assessed for EIA at the time of its drafting.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018, the Panel received a report on the actions arising from previous meetings. One of these involved FGM and the upcoming Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel (which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018). As this meeting has now considered such matters, the Panel has requested that it receive this update on progress being made to prevent FGM in Slough.

5.2 In Slough the majority of cases of women presenting with FGM have been of East African origin. In February 2017 the Council, including Community Safety and Public Health, in partnership with the Care Commissioning Group and Wexham Park & Frimley Health Trust supported an event hosted by Slough Integration Service (formerly Slough Somali Sisters) where a group of 40 women living in Slough were asked to consult on FGM and help inform our local partnership response. Without exception all of the women in attendance had had the procedure carried out in their country of origin as children or teenagers. The women shared openly the problems this had caused them both psychologically and physically and how they wanted their children to be protected from the procedure. At the coffee morning we learned that the women were under strong pressure from female relatives (mothers, aunts & grandmothers) still residing in their country of origin to have the procedure and this pressure was creating issues within their family units. The group requested support with creating a counter narrative to FGM to help them explain to relatives back home the harms of the procedure. The overwhelming request was also that they were able to access psychological support to address the trauma and life changing physical and emotional impact of FGM of their lives.

**Violence Against Women Group – Partnership Delivery**

5.3 In March 2017 the national Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy was adopted by the Safer Slough Partnership to focus the efforts of all partners across Slough, and to help identify, eradicate and support victims of harmful practices. The Safer Slough Partnership via the Performance Management Group have commissioned a multi agency group to hold a quarterly FGM Progression Group chaired by the lead safeguarding midwife from Wexham Park Hospital in partnership with Thames Valley Police, Clinical Care Group, YPS, Slough Integration Service, Garden Clinic, Solutions4health, Public Health, Slough Refuge Support and SBC. Group priorities are to create & advise on pathways & procedures, training and education as well as data and reporting in

relation to FGM. A current objective is to support Slough Integration Service in applying for funding to provide a 'Family Centre' (non clinical). The objective of the family centre would be to allow women to attend on a weekly basis to access support from professionals, ensuring any obstacles to essential support are overcome. The aims of the family centre will be to build resilience for women and provide education, and also empowerment ensuring women can safeguard their female children from risk of FGM.

In addition the group has coordinated the following interventions:

- Continuing the development of the Slough FGM Strategy (2016)
- Slough Multi agency pathway ratified & published
- East Berkshire FGM Pathway for Children & Adults ratified & published
- Regular practice & pathway training for Slough GP's
- Established the FGM Progression Group (Community & Clinical Focus)

### **5.3 Work In Partnership With Schools**

- During 2017 training was made available to all childminders and early years providers across Slough, 84 practitioners were trained. A follow up session for staff is planned during the Autumn term of 2018
- Schools incorporating FGM training on inset days for staff including mandatory reporting
- Thames Valley Police via the PCC send out a letter to all early years settings, schools and colleges advising on indicators of risk ahead of summer holidays and the action required
- Schools across Slough have added an FGM policy to their wider safeguarding policy which is available to parents via websites.
- Oxford Against Cutting (an Oxford based charity) has provided FGM literature to all Slough schools

### **5.4 Community Work**

The FGM Progression Group is working closely with the Oxford model allowing us to draw on the expertise and lessons learnt as well as local Slough based voluntary & statutory partners. The FGM Group has split the FGM focus into two segments, a clinical response and a community response, bringing the two together at regular intervals to ensure seamless delivery.

### **5.5 Potential Model for Slough – “Oxford Against Cutting”**

Slough are working closely with Oxford Against Cutting who are providing literature and services to schools in Slough. In addition the FGM Progression Group is working with Oxfordshire maternity and obstetrics in terms of best practice for clinical services, with a view to applying the learning at Wexham and in other Slough settings

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

This report has not been considered by any other SBC committee. However an update has been prepared for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Safer Slough Partnership

7. **Conclusion**

There is a strong and committed partnership response across Slough to protect girls and young women from risk of FGM. The partnership is dedicated to effectively deal with the identification and safeguarding of referrals in relation to FGM including improved processes, procedures, training and best practice for professionals.

In addition, community groups are being supported to take a proactive stance in the protection of their own children, and requesting appropriate support from agencies to send clear messages back to country of origin that FGM is not only unacceptable it is also illegal.

8. **Appendices Attached**

None

9. **Background Papers**

Minutes, Health Scrutiny Panel 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018