

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION & EARLY HELP

TO:	Health and Wellbeing Board		
DATE:	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	Update on Tackling Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Gavin	PORTFOLIO:	Children's Services
SERVICE:	Children's Services	WARDS:	All Reading
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**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To provide a summary of work planned and undertaken in relation to tackling Female Genital Mutilation since January 2016, when a previous report was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That Health and Wellbeing board notes the work undertaken so far and endorses the proposed next steps.
- 2.2 That a report from ACRE on progress against the creation of a community based education and preventative programme of support come back to the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2017.
- 2.3 That a report from Berkshire West CCG on the progress of establishing a clinical response for Adults who have suffered FGM come back to the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2017.

**3 POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- 3.2 FGM is performed on women and girls at different ages, depending on the community or ethnic group that carries it out. The procedure is traditionally carried out by women with no medical training.

- 3.3 It is recognised that women and girls may also be at risk of having FGM performed on them in the UK, or being taken from the UK to have the procedure performed overseas.
- 3.4 Research has shown that there are a number of different reasons why FGM is performed. The process is often seen as part of the family's culture, it is also seen as a rite of passage. FGM is often important for the cultural identity of girls and women and may also impact a sense of pride, a coming of age and a feeling of community. Those girls and women who refuse can often face being ostracised and condemned by their communities.
- 3.5 FGM is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 and is child abuse.
- 3.6 In the UK, FGM tends to occur in areas with large population of FGM practicing communities. The home office has identified girls from Somali, Guinean, Kenyan, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian, Eritrean, Yemeni, Kurdish and Indonesian communities as the most at risk of FGM. These are just some and not all of the communities at risk.
- 3.7 FGM can impact on the health of girls and women both long and short term. Short term health consequences of the practice can include infections, severe pain, emotional and psychological shock. Longer term consequences for women can be severe and wide ranging, including, chronic infections, renal impairment, complications during pregnancy and childbirth, psychological issues, including depression and post stress-traumatic stress disorder & increased risk of sexually transmitted infections.
- 3.8 More recently there have been new duties placed on teachers, social workers and GPs to report any concerns around FGM. This is particularly pertinent as a recent Barnados survey found that 75% of workforce feels uncomfortable about having or starting a conversation about FGM with families.
- 3.9 Finally the most recent Ofsted Safeguarding inspection framework has added criteria to understand the Local Authorities and partners approach to tackling FGM. This focuses on the identification of girls at risk and our protective responses and will measure the effectiveness of the LSCB holding partners to account for their practice in this area.

## 4 PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Two strands have been identified to organise our response to FGM. These are:
- Strand 1 - Prevention and Education
  - Strand 2 - Protect and respond
- 4.2 **Strand 1** has been led by ACRE with partnership support, including sponsorship from the Local Strategic partnership that accepted FGM as a priority in June 2015. Key achievements since last report in January 2016 are:
- 4.3 Community engagement work has continued with focus on awareness raising, engaging community leaders and young people to affect change.
- The community working group continues to meet, and is now looking at how to increase engagement with the forthcoming specialist FGM centre.
  - The men's group of 14 participants is established to discuss the importance of a male response to FGM within their communities.
  - ACRE in partnership with Utulivu organised an FGM focus on Zero Tolerance Day in February 2016 to continue the awareness raising but in the wider population.

Acre presented the findings of the 6 months needs assessment and our recommendations for a specialist local FGM service and led table discussions and consultation on the benefit of a local specialist service.

- Provided an assembly at Kendrick for some young people to raise awareness of what FGM is and its prevalence in Reading
- A new community group of FGM survivors has been created called Women of Vision, led by Midwife and survivor to which Acre lends support. They are meeting monthly, with around 30 members.
- An NCS group volunteered with Acre to create a canvass for the new Reading Rose Centre. The young people took the Reading Rose logo and gave it their own personal twist. This opportunity also facilitated increasing awareness amongst young people of FGM.
- ACRE, along with community activist and survivor presented at the LSCB Pathways Launch Event.

4.4 A plan of action has been drafted on how to best engage with practising communities in the run up to the opening of the forthcoming specialist FGM centre for the West of Berkshire, the Reading Rose Centre, to secure its optimal reach and value. ACRE needs to source start-up funding, to avoid engagement coming to a standstill until the opening of the clinic. It would be a considerable obstacle as community participation in the planning of the service would be exemplary and most advantageous.

- The top priority now is to raise awareness that the Reading Rose Centre is coming, what it will offer, and to tailor this offer to what the community want and need. The optimal time to do this at the planning stage before the clinic opens, thus making the centre more efficient in the long term. A consultation strategy has been drafted, to raise awareness and promote the Reading Rose Centre.
- An information leaflet has been developed, with community input, to disseminate to GPs, practising communities, any public or community bodies with an interest/responsibility re FGM. Funding is needed to print the leaflet.
- In partnership with Utulivu, a second 'Afternoon Out' for survivors and women from affected communities has been arranged for November. This is at the behest of attendees of last year's event for a further opportunity to meet and discuss, and a testament to the success of the first.

4.5 Forward UK carried out a training session primarily for Schools on 8th March 2016. This was provided free of charge, through DFE funding. There were 20 attendees from Reading - 8 Secondary School representatives, 10 Primary School representatives and 2 members of staff from RBC. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the knowledge of the trainers and how to apply it in school particularly noted.

4.6 **Strand 2** has been led by Children's Services in Reading Borough Council, with support from all 3 LSCB's across the West of Berkshire.

4.7 The action plan has 5 actions relating to protection. These actions primarily focus on:

- Improving professional knowledge and confidence in FGM
- updating safeguarding guidance,
- creating assessment and service pathways for adults and children,
- set up information sharing agreements,
- identify a common risk assessment tools for all professionals to use

There has been good and timely progress against the action plan, of which key highlights is;

4.8 A range of tools for the workforce is now available on our LSCB website, that include:

- A FGM Fact Sheet and a link to home office FGM awareness training that aims to raise awareness for professionals
  - A professional's tool kit that provides clarity on four pathways for children and adults at risk or having undergone FGM.
  - A FGM risk assessment tool for professionals to use to understand and decide on the course of action required as directed by the 4 FGM pathways.
- 4.9 A launch event has taken place in July 2016, that was very well received. Over 65 Professionals from a range of agencies, across the 3 participating Local Authorities attended and feedback The event supported professionals to understand the scale and impact of FGM and introduced the tools, inviting them to disseminate this information to colleagues in their agencies Feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive, stating that the mix of detail, hearing from survivors, men from effected communities and a review of the risk assessment tool and pathways, was motivating.
- 4.10 An update on the safeguarding procedures has been completed in the online tool that all agencies and professionals use. This is now consistent with both national and local guidance.
- 4.11 An audit of prevalence based on work in the hospital with public health was completed in July 2016. The key learning and insights have been shared and discussed at the LSCB quality assurance and performance sub group. Over an 18 month period 29 cases were identified at the Royal Berkshire Hospital of which 24 were Reading residents, approximate half of what would be expected based on national estimates. The results of the audit indicate that the nationality of the women concerned and the types of FGM they have been subjected to are in line with national statistics. All cases identified were appropriately referred to the hospital safeguarding team for scrutiny and referrals to Children's Social Care for assessment were made when appropriate (i.e. the unborn child was known to be female or there were female siblings).
- 4.12 Going forward up till Jan 2017 the expectation is to
- To set up a West of Berkshire online training for professionals to improve use of the FGM risk assessment tool
  - Explore a method of intelligence sharing between community groups/ leaders as well as key statutory reps (Police, CSC, Hospital/ Health, Education)
- 4.13 A significant gap in provision has been confirmed for Adults having undergone FGM. As noted in the January 2016 report on FGM to this board, Berkshire does not have a specialist clinic similar to Oxford and Bristol. In designing the four pathways and discussion with primary care colleagues it has become very clear that without a specialist clinic, such as the Oxford Rose Clinic then many women will not be able to seek the help they need.
- 4.14 ACRE with the support of Children's Services in RBC have written a proposal that provides an option to create a single West of Berkshire provision of a specialist clinic alongside the extension of the preventative community work that ACRE have already been providing. The Reading Rose Clinic would be the centre point for health, education and affected community activists and leaders could use to educate, enable and support girls, women, their wider families and communities to stop FGM.
- 4.15 This proposal was presented to Nurse director CCG Berkshire West federation and the Police and Crime Commissioner in June 16 to gain their support. Both key partners are in principle committed to establishing a specialist clinic with a level of wrap around preventative work led by ACRE.

- 4.16 The CCG are currently building a business case to consider funding a start medical clinic and ACRE is in discussion with the PCC office to explore potential funding options for the preventative work. The current target is to set up a clinic by April 2017.

## **5 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 Readings Health & Wellbeing plan identifies 'The promotion and protection of good health of disadvantage communities' in goal 1, creating a clear link to tackling and responding to FGM.
- 5.2 Tackling FGM in Reading contributes to these RBC corporate aims;
- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
  - Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;
- 5.3 In addition the Police and Crime Commissioner priorities for the Thames Valley include 'Protecting vulnerable women & girls from FGM' as a specific item under objective 2 of their plan.

## **6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 ACRE is continues to effectively leading a community engagement process with affected women, families and communities. This takes time, but there has been real progress already achieved as noted above.

## **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Not completed for this report.

## **8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None for this report.

## **9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 To note, the funding to ACRE from the LSP has ended. The key risks are:
- Community engagement will effectively come to a halt, at a critical time. This creates a real barrier to functional planning, promotion and opening of the Rose Centre.
  - There is the further risk of invested community members disengaging, when ACRE does, and closes the opportunity to broaden the Centre's reach, at a pivotal time for garnering support and sowing the seed of the Rose Centre in community psyche.

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None