



## **Female Genital Mutilation Sub Group Annual Report**

**2016 - 2017**

**June 2017**

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## **1. Introduction/context/background**

This annual report enables Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB)'s FGM Sub Group to be held to account for its work during the year 2016/17, covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. It is a narrative of the work undertaken by the FGM Sub Group focussing specifically on successes, current developments, learning and challenges during the reporting period.

The Sub Group was established in August 2015 and met eleven times in the financial year 2016-17, including four joint meetings with the FGM Community Association (CA).

The Chair of the FGM Sub Group, Emma Hildreth, left NCC in March 2017 and a new Chair is yet to be identified.

From July 2017, the FGM Sub Group will no longer be a sub group of the NSCB but move to become a working group.

Whilst these two events may cause some instability in this area of work, with the commitment of partners the FGM Working Group will seek to continue to deliver effective change to safeguard children and young people from FGM through the Action Plan.

## **2. Governance and accountability**

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board works under the guidance of Working Together 2015, and specifically DfE Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (1<sup>st</sup> April 2016).

The FGM Sub Group works to an Action Plan based on the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) Business Plan priorities for 2016-2017. While some of these actions remain outstanding, the group has made some steady progress in other areas. The Action Plan has been reviewed and updated to demonstrate a staged approach to each action, giving a clearer picture of all the work that has gone into the completion of actions or working progress. The Terms of reference for the FGM Sub Group have also been subject to review during the reporting period.

## **3. Outcomes/performance/successes/achievements**

The **FGM Strategy** has been completed with input from the Sub Group and the CA and was signed off by the ESG in September 2016.

**The FGM CA** was established in October 2015 to ensure that the work to tackle FGM is community led. Each quarter there is a joint meeting between the NSCB FGM Sub Group and the FGM CA. The CA have successfully been constituted as the FGMCA. A Chair, Secretary and Treasurer have been appointed for a 6 month period. A full election was held and a committee established for one year. The new committee has developed Sub Groups for media and communications, training and development, policies and governance and finally funding and research. The group consists of seventeen members but this fluctuates as issues arise from within communities. Members include representation from the Somali, Kenyan and Zimbabwean communities and there is work ongoing to recruit members of other communities perceived to practice FGM. In addition to community members there are also three Councillors who have a particular interest in FGM. Two represent Northampton Borough Council with the third representing both the Borough and the County.

Northamptonshire Rights and Equalities Council, the BME SRP, Creating Equalz, Northamptonshire Flower, and Refuge providers are represented for the county and Community Police also support the group. A key achievement has been the establishment of two male community members on the group one of which has received training to deliver the anti-FGM message to men.

Local assessment of FGM as an issue in Northamptonshire is that there is a dissonance with what is being said in the community and what is said and understood in the statutory sector. FGM CA has built a report based on Freedom of Information Requests to all the Health agencies in the county. That report demonstrates that women surviving FGM and at risk of FGM are not receiving services, particularly in the north of the county. FGM CA has published a report on these findings and are due to repeat the exercise in the forthcoming year.

Unfortunately the FGMCA were unsuccessful in the bid to the DfE for funding for the community based FGM on Trial project & wider Community Champion work. The work that went into this bid will now form the basis of a Business Plan to take forward the aspirations of the group. Funding is the biggest issue for the FGMCA to progress with work. As a result the momentum within the group is suffering and more work from the Sub Group is now needed to support this group to take some of this project work forward. Small bids are also being sought by the group.

FGM CA has been successful in receiving the following external funding:

- Awards for All are running focus groups to identify how to get information to women and girls who most need it;
- The Gathering Ground, a group member of FGM CA, have been successful in gaining funding to run a Community Reporter Programme which will be launched on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017;
- Creating Equalz have been awarded funding to carry out research with women with FGM and maternity disclosure services; and
- FGM CA were successful at the Northampton Soup in gaining funding for the members to obtain DBS checks to enable them to reach into schools.

### **Communications:**

The FGM Sub Group is committed to raising awareness of FGM, including how to identify and support victims and those at risk. Awareness raising of FGM and how victims can access support is driven forward by a Task and Finish Group, enabling representatives from the Police, OPCC, County Council and Voluntary Sector to provide a partnership approach to campaigns and events in Northamptonshire.

A successful multi-agency awareness campaign funded by Northamptonshire Police took place in May 2016. The aim of the campaign was to send out a clear message - FGM is illegal and will not be tolerated in this county. The campaign had a wide reach (The five-day campaign earned 343,000 impressions on Twitter and 8,500 Facebook shares).

A media day took place on Monday, 20 June 2016. The Gathering Ground produced a new awareness raising film on FGM with the chair of the FGM Community Association featuring as part of this film. The film was shown at the media day. Key representatives of partner agencies were interviewed and members of the FGM CA took an active part in the day with interviews of victims of FGM from Northamptonshire. A social media campaign took place throughout the day aimed at raising awareness, generating discussion and offering help and support for anybody affected by FGM.

A further phase of a communications activity campaign is now planned which will maximise opportunities provided by campaigns such as International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation and International Women's Day. It will also focus on key dates in the school calendar year. A rolling calendar of activity is planned which will become part of the communications diary on an annual basis.

An FGM Leaflet has been produced by the Northamptonshire Police Communications Team, with consultation and support from the FGM Sub group and CA. The leaflet can be found in the Appendices.

### **Pathways:**

The development work for referral pathways across all partner agencies is in progress. There are clear pathways at point of reporting, and a flow chart has been devised jointly with Social Care, Police and Early Help to provide professionals with clear direction on their roles and responsibilities when reporting, right through to the implementation of intervention from each agency. Within the pathway, hyper-links have been identified to provide guidance to practitioner's at each stage of the process. The pathways are currently with the CA for consultation.

### **Data collation:**

An FGM Data Working Group has been established with the aim of:

- ascertaining how and where data on FGM is recorded across the partnership agencies; and
- seeking to establish a system whereby FGM Data can be accurately and consistently recorded, maintained and shared so that an up to date and accurate profile of FGM within the County can be easily accessible. The Working Group is in its early stages and ESG will continue to be updated on its progress.

### **Audits:**

An audit of eight cases involving FGM between April 2015 and April 2016 was undertaken and the findings shared with Sub Group members in August 2016. The audits raised a number of concerns regarding case management. Among the key issues highlighted were:

- Families were generally not previously known to Children's Services;
- A number of cases were closed without further investigation when parents stated that they were against FGM;
- Little or no attempts were made to access external agencies to support or act as mediators to families;
- Referrals to statutory agencies often resulted in a breakdown in the relationship between schools and the family following disclosure – families need to be made aware that disclosure is now mandatory; and
- Information needs to be shared better to avoid gaps and duplication of services.

To date there have been two FGM Protection Orders issued in the county. Audits of the FGM PO's are currently in process, the outcome of which will be reported to ESG.

#### **4. Participation and Engagement with service users**

The FGM Sub Group has continued to work alongside and support the CA, working and consulting directly with victims of FGM and agencies involved in supporting those vulnerable to FGM.

One of the aims of the audits referred to in paragraph 3.13 above was to assess the experience of the families involved with FGM and to ensure that any learning taken from the audits can be used to improve services going forwards.

#### **5. Challenges/issues/developments/opportunities**

Whilst enormous progress has been made working in partnership with the CA, lack of funding has inevitably meant that members of the CA have had to work voluntarily unpaid for their time. Whilst recognising their invaluable input to Local Authority processes, this has sometimes meant that delays have been experienced in progressing certain areas of work (for example : pathways and FGM leaflet). The CA has made great progress with recent successful funding bids and it is hoped that this, coupled with the recent appointment of a new Chair, will provide a more focused and timely collaboration going forwards.

The challenge of data collection across the partnership presents difficulties in establishing an accurate profile of FGM in Northamptonshire. The FGM Data working group will continue to consider the issue and seek to find a resolution to it.

How the partnership can work effectively with schools to provide age appropriate education for children at risk of FGM and engage young people to ensure their voices are part of the dialogue locally is an ongoing challenge. The NSCB section 11 statements for schools and partnership agencies have been amended to request information on what training has been delivered on FGM across the county, to whom and by whom on FGM. It is hoped this will provide a more accurate picture on what training is being delivered and identify any gaps in provision.

Membership of the group has continued to fluctuate over the reporting period with a number of organisations no longer able to provide regular representation.

#### **6. Next steps/plans/priorities/actions**

The Sub Group has developed and been working to an Action Plan that will allow the NSCB Business Plan priorities to be achieved. The plans for the next year include:

- The Sub Group's performance will continue to be monitored and reviewed on a six monthly basis;
- The Sub Group's Action Plan, in line with the NSCB Business Plan priorities, will be monitored and reviewed at each Sub Group meeting;
- Progression of the work of the FGM Data working group with a view to developing an FGM Local Profile inform services across Northamptonshire;
- Complete the mapping of existing support services in Northamptonshire for victims of FGM and work in partnership to strengthen support available across pathways and the Criminal Justice System;
- Finalise pathways (including Clinical Care Pathways);

- Completion of the FGM PO audits;
- Ensure a comprehensive Communications Campaign is in place that links in with opportunities to work locally to complement national campaigns; and
- Continue to strengthen relations and work with the CA.