News Release

HEADLINE: FGM – Government progress?

The mandate passed in 2014 by TG (Townswomen’s Guilds) on FGM “urged HM Government to enforce and extend the existing legislation regarding female genital mutilation.”

TG was therefore interested in recent reports from the Government on the progress they had made.

The Summer edition of the Violence against Women and Girls newsletter details the following:

Home Office FGM Unit

The Home Office’s Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Unit was set up in December 2014, to coordinate efforts across Government and provide outreach support to local areas. In addition, the Unit acts as a hub for effective practice, gathering and sharing examples across local areas and professional groups.

The FGM Unit does not handle individual cases. If you are worried that a girl or woman is at risk of FGM or is a victim of FGM, contact the police or the NSPCC helpline.

First Anniversary of the Girl Summit

On Wednesday 22 July, the Government marked the first anniversary of the Girl Summit – the first global summit to mobilise domestic and international efforts to end FGM and child and forced marriage within a generation. All of the commitments made at the Summit have now been delivered, including:

- strengthening the law on FGM significantly, including introducing FGM Protection Orders (further details below)
- providing resources for frontline professionals, including: a resource pack, e-learning, updated multi-agency guidelines and distributing over 440,000 communication materials.
- funding the £3m Department of Health national FGM Prevention Programme partnered by NHS England, with a package of measures to support NHS staff in preventing FGM, protecting girls at risk and caring for survivors.
- launching a force level inspection on the police response to Honour Based Violence with a focus on FGM and forced marriage.
Ministers signed a cross-Government declaration outlining this progress and reaffirming the Government’s commitment to tackling FGM:


The day marked progress but did not lose sight of the fact there is more to do. This was underlined by the publication of a Home Office and Trust for London funded report into the prevalence of FGM in England and Wales which concludes that while urban areas, and specifically London, have the highest estimated prevalence, every local area is likely to be affected in some way.

**Consultation on statutory guidance on FGM**

Also on 22 July, we launched a public consultation on new draft FGM multi-agency statutory guidance for frontline professionals.

**Consultation on statutory multi-agency guidance on Female Genital Mutilation**

**Annex A: draft multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation**

The consultation is to enable the Government to ensure that the guidance captures the full range of evidence, responsibilities, duties and good practice to support professionals in safeguarding women and girls from FGM. It seeks views on the content and detail of the guidance, which will come into force towards the end of 2015. The consultation closes on Wednesday 30 September. For more information, please contact: FGMconsultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

**New measures to tackle FGM**

The Serious Crime Act 2015, which received Royal Assent on 3 March, made a number of changes to the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 in order to strengthen the law on FGM.

On 3 May, three of these measures came into force:

- to extend the reach of the extra-territorial offences in the 2003 Act to habitual (as well as permanent) UK residents;
- to provide lifelong anonymity for victims of FGM; and
- to create a new offence of failing to protect a girl from risk of FGM.

The Act also introduces FGM Protection Orders which are new civil orders to protect victims or potential victims of FGM. An order could include, for example, a requirement for a passport to be surrendered to prevent a girl being taken abroad for FGM. The new orders came into force on 17 July; ahead of the summer holiday period, when girls may be particularly at risk.

In addition, the Act provides for a mandatory reporting duty which will require regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report known cases of FGM in under 18s to the police. The duty will come into force in October 2015.

**FGM Unit Outreach**

The FGM unit have spoken at a number of events across the UK, including at a number of training sessions and at local and regional awareness raising events, to support the development of the local response to tackling FGM and to raise awareness of the Unit and the work of the Government. The unit has also attended a number of events run by community organisations and met with a range of charitable trusts and FGM campaigners.
Contact Details

We are interested in hearing about effective practice to tackle FGM across local areas and professional groups. We would also like to hear about events and initiatives.

If you would like the Unit to attend an event you are holding, would like to share best practice and resources you have developed, or for more information, please contact us at: FGMEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

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Editors’ notes

Townswomen’s Guilds, (TG), formed in 1929 when all women won the right to vote, is the UK’s second largest women’s organisation and has a membership of 25,000.

TG members meet together regularly, regardless of politics, race, age, religion or circumstance,

• To exchange ideas,
• To develop new skills and interests,
• To lobby on various national and local issues
  and, above all,
• To have fun.

For further information about Townswomen’s Guilds or to find details of your nearest Guild contact 0121 326 0400 or visit www.the-tg.com

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