

Laura Beattie
Civil Law Reform Division
Victoria Hall
12 May Street
Belfast

BT1 4NL

4 March 2014

Dear Laura

Re: Consultation on Draft Multi-Agency Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to respond to the named consultation, The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is the UK's leading children's charity specialising in child protection, we recognise the procedure of female genital mutilation (FGM) to be a serious form of abuse which has devastating physical and psychological consequences for victims. The NSPCC has been able to input into the process of developing the draft multi-agency guidelines on FGM and as such, we are pleased with the content and believe it to be a useful, timely and an informative document for practitioners, professionals and volunteers.

This area has been an emerging priority within NSPCC; in July 2013 we launched our specialised FGM Helpline which provides 24 hour advice, information and support to improve the prevention and detection of safeguarding risks for any one worried that a child may be at risk of FGM. Since its launch, the dedicated FGM helpline has received 154 calls, we know that three contacts (two under five years old) related to young people in Northern Ireland; one referral was made from a professional relating to a child who was under five years.

We would like to highlight that of the total 154 calls made to the FGM helpline; 40% had been referred to social services/local authorities and in the remaining 60% of cases specialist FGM advice had been issued. Of these calls, 41% came from worried

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professionals, particularly midwives, doctors and teachers, while some 22% were from worried parents, carers and other relatives.

We are supportive that FGM is targeted with a co-ordinated multi-agency response and a wider education approach. We believe it is vital that the Multi-Agency Guidelines should be consolidated with specialised training for professionals and a wide public awareness raising campaign.

If it would be helpful, NSPCC would welcome meeting with you to discuss the issues we have raised in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Neil Anderson
National Head of Service - NI