

Cabinet Secretary for Commonwealth Games, Sport, Equalities and Pensioners' Rights
Shona Robison MSP



T: 0845 774 1741
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Margaret McCulloch MSP
Convenor Equal Opportunities Committee
c/o Equal Opportunity Clerks
Room TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



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Dear Margaret,

I am writing to you to bring to your attention some of the recent work that has been taken forward by the Scottish Government in the area of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as part of the national strategy to tackle violence against women [Equally Safe](#), (published 25 June 2014).

A letter from the Chief Medical Officer/Chief Nursing Officer (CMO/CNO) was issued on the 11 July 2014 to update healthcare professionals on developments in Scotland related to FGM. It is aimed at raising awareness of the condition, the terminology commonly used, and the cultural issues. It also provides some information and resources to provide confidence to the healthcare professionals and enable them to recognise the condition, such as some of the presenting symptoms, the services that are most likely to come across the condition, managing some of at risk situations with sensitivity and the legal implications. In addition, it reminds healthcare professionals of the existing processes and guidelines for child protection and the updated guidance in the area of FGM.

Healthcare professionals have also been asked to record the diagnosis and types of FGM, together with any corrective procedures, in the appropriate clinical records, including the hospital discharge summary. The condition is then able to be coded and relevant codes for hospitals and primary care have been provided to encourage national consistency. This will assist in collecting baseline information regarding some of the aspects of FGM, starting with the healthcare services. The anonymised data, when available, will complement and add to the research findings by Scottish Refugee Council, funded by the Scottish Government, to produce baseline information to inform the work of FGM in Scotland, specifically, identifying and analysing existing data; reviewing past work undertaken to tackle, prevent or raise awareness; and drawing learning from best practices on what works and what does not in the UK and Europe related to service provision, prevention and prosecutions.

I have attached a link to the CMO/CNO letter for your information below.
[http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2014\)19.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2014)19.pdf)

I also sent a letter, co-signed by my colleague, Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning to Headteachers in February 2014, reminding them of the procedures to be followed and guidance available in relation to FGM as below.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00446674.pdf>

In May 2014, the National Guidance for Child Protection used by all children's services was updated and published. Within the guidance is a specific section providing advice on how to respond if there are concerns that a child may have been subject to, or may be at risk from FGM (link attached below) and referenced in the CMO/CNO letter.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/05/3052/0>

Since then Education Scotland, working with partners and the Education Authority has produced a short supported PowerPoint presentation, which authorities and head teachers can use to raise awareness of FGM in schools and early years settings. The resource has been developed to increase the knowledge and understanding of staff to enable them to better safeguard children from the abuses associated with FGM. Link attached below and included in the CMO/CNO letter.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/f/fgm.asp?strReferringChannel=educationscotland&strReferringPageID=tcm:4-713590-64>

Best wishes,
Shona.

SHONA ROBISON