

MAYOR OF LONDON

Andrew Boff AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MQT

Date: 12 OCT 2017

Dear Andrew,

At Mayor's Question Time on 10 August you asked about the lack of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) prosecutions by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Please be assured that I recognise the importance of these prosecutions, which is why my Police and Crime plan outlines that we will work closely with the Ministry of Justice to encourage more victims of FGM to come forward and report their experiences, so that support services can be offered and perpetrators can be caught.

I have been advised that there are many complex reasons as to why a successful prosecution has not been achieved by the MPS. This is a particularly difficult crime type to prosecute due to the age and vulnerability of the victim; the legislation; and the lack of specialist clinicians. I also understand that the single biggest barrier to prosecutions is that most FGM cases referred to the police took place prior to arrival in the UK and as such do not fall within the jurisdiction of UK legislation. However, the changes to FGM legislation in 2015 should assist the police and CPS in taking cases forward in the future.

The MPS continues to work positively with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to explore learning in each case. In the last financial year, approximately 24 cases were referred to the CPS nationally, and no charges were brought in those cases due to insufficient evidence. I am aware of your concerns but from viewing those cases, I understand that there is no evidence to suggest any hesitation or cultural sensitivities were employed by either the police or the CPS.

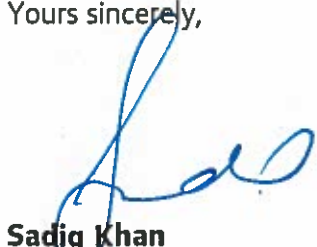
Finally, a National Working Group has now been established which met for the first time last month. Prevention; supporting survivors; ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice; and finally developing intelligence to improve understanding of prevalence are key priorities in the MPS revised FGM strategy.

In the Police and Crime Plan, Harmful Practices (which includes FGM) is a key area of focus. I have placed a particular focus on increasing and encouraging the reporting of these heinous crimes and prosecuting perpetrators where there is evidence to do so. My Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and my Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime continue to work and support the MPS with their ongoing efforts to tackle FGM and other harmful practices. You will be aware that MOPAC is currently working on the refresh of the London VAWG strategy. The issue of FGM and prosecutions will be addressed in the refresh of the strategy.

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Thank you for your continued interest in this area and ensuring that this issue remains in the public eye. Please do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime should you have any ideas to address this very serious issue.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London