



Release: Strictly embargoed until 06:00am on Wednesday, February 7th

FGM in London: Police failing to investigate thousands of cases identified by NHS, new figures show

- NHS identified 2,560 FGM cases in capital between April '16 and March '17
- Met logged just 199 reports during the same period
- No criminal charges brought for FGM crimes in that year
- Susan Hall AM says young women are being 'let down' by authorities
- Wants closer working between NHS and police

Victims of female genital mutilation (FGM) in London are being 'let down' by authorities, according to an Assembly Member, after it emerged thousands of cases identified by the NHS fail to be logged by police.

Existing NHS figures show health professionals identified 2,560 cases in young women between April 2016 and March 2017. But data obtained by London Assembly member Susan Hall found the Met recorded just 199 reports over the same 12 months.

It means police logged less than eight per cent of known FGM cases in London over that time – during which no charges were brought against any suspect.

The police data, up to December 2017, also showed just one person was charged by the Met in relation to FGM since April 2014 – despite police logging 603 reports of FGM in that time.

Commenting on the data, London Assembly member Susan Hall said: “The disparity between the number of cases recorded by NHS professionals and those logged by the police is frankly shocking. The young women subjected to this barbaric practice are being let down.

“The police must work more closely with the NHS to ensure all reports are criminally investigated. The law requires medical practitioners to put aside patient confidentiality relating to cases of FGM so that is not the issue here – it is a lack of co-ordination.

“One person charged by police in three years is simply not good enough when there were thousands of cases identified in 2016/17 alone.

“FGM ruins the lives of its young victims. If we are to give them the protection they deserve, the police must be more proactive and strongly scrutinise every instance of FGM when it rears its ugly head.

“There are of course obstacles to investigating and prosecuting a crime that largely takes place outside of the UK but there must be more scrutiny on the parents of these children if we are to have any impact.”

ENDS.

Notes

- Susan Hall is a London-wide Conservative Assembly Member
- A breakdown of the data mentioned in the release is below

Data obtained from the Met Police through a written question to the Mayor by Susan Hall AM:

Below is a breakdown of the number of FGM ‘flagged’ crime reports in the last three years. However, please note that these figures do not all relate to FGM crimes as they include reports which contain ‘concerns’ re FGM – i.e. reports that are recorded as ‘crime related incidents’(CRI);

These figures do not relate to charged/summonsed as the FM and HBA ones do.... For FGM the figures are of reports that have been flagged with FGM marker.”

Reports of FGM	2014-2015 (FY)	2015-2016 (FY)	2016-2017 (FY)	2017 – 31.12.2017
Total Reports	120	197	199	87
Charges	0	0	0	1

NHS Digital Data, published in July 2017: <https://digital.nhs.uk/media/31437/FGM-Annual-Report-2016-17-Supporting-Tables/default/fgm-apr-2016-mar-2017-exp-tab>

Summary:

NHS Digital have been publishing FGM data since the beginning of the 2016/17 financial year.

Stats for April 2016 to March 2017:

- 2,560 newly record instances of FGM by the NHS in London
- This represents 47.5 per cent of all instances recorded in England

Of the newly recorded instances in London by the NHS:

- 95 were under 18
- 245 were between the ages of 18 and 25
- 635 were between the ages of 25 and 30

Of the 2,560 NHS record instances of FGM in London, 870 said the procedure took place when they under 18:

- 115 had the procedure under the age of 1
- 195 had the procedure between the ages of 1 and 5
- 450 had the procedure between the ages of 5 and 10
- 100 had the procedure between the ages of 10 and 15
- 10 had the procedure between the ages of 15 and 18

The locations where FGM was undertaken was as follows:

- 2025 the location was unknown, not stated or not recorded
- 420 in Eastern Africa
- 60 in Western Africa
- 35 in Northern Africa
- 10 in Western Asia
- 5 in the UK

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact the press office below.

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