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**Jonathan McWilliam,
Director of Public Health**

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By email to
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Dear Kanika,

Draft report “A pilot evaluation of health services for communities affected by FGM in Oxfordshire”

Thank you for forwarding an advance copy of the Healthwatch Oxfordshire report on the pilot evaluation of health services for communities affected by FGM in Oxfordshire. I have no comments on factual accuracy, but would like to comment on the overall content and on two of the recommendations prior to the publication of the report.

I was very impressed by the clarity and usefulness of the report. The research methodology seems very sound and well thought through, and therefore the findings and recommendations are both credible and welcome. This is a very timely report as much of the work to raise the profile of FGM locally has made good progress, and so it is valuable to get a pilot evaluation of how well known the services are at this stage, both from health professionals and service users. It is also very useful to get user views of the quality of these services and what more is needed. I welcome the report.

There are two particular recommendations that are directed to Public Health or the services we commission. I would like to comment specifically on these recommendations. They are:

Recommendation 4: More outreach work is required with affected communities to understand these communities’ need for support. It would be helpful, in the interests of reaching service-users that need the most support, to explore ways to connect with other communities, eg, the Middle Eastern or Asian communities. In addition, more work is needed to consider the role of men and include men in the dissemination of information about FGM/C. This might be addressed by Public Health as an outreach exercise as well as the OCCG. Organisations such as OAC, who have links with these communities, can also be supported to undertake outreach.

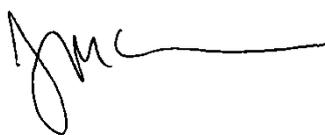
My response: I agree that outreach work should be ongoing. As you may know, the Participatory Action Research Project that was commissioned by Public Health is due to report in the next few weeks. This work is deliberately designed to give communities the skills and opportunity to address issues themselves and to enable discussion within the community. I am confident that this further report will also contribute valuable views from local communities affected by FGM. Once this report is published, it will be possible to plan the work of supporting communities in taking forward their action plans and to ensure the right agencies are involved in this.

Recommendation 5: Raising awareness among communities about other health services by the OCCG and organisations like Oxford Against Cutting. The Rose Community already exists for networking and sharing information amongst survivors of FGM/C and their respective communities, and might be used as a basis to share health information more widely. Some of the services requested by service users in the survey for e.g., help around sexual health, are already available and these services also need to be better publicised by the OCCG. Where the need exists, translated versions of these materials should be made available to the communities

My response: The sexual health services referred to in the report are commissioned by Public Health at Oxfordshire County Council, not by the CCG. I am pleased to see that a high number of professionals from the service took part in the research and will be happy to ensure that the recommendation for better publicity about these services will be taken forward. The dissemination of such information through the Rose Clinic, in appropriate languages, seems a sensible idea.

I look forward to the publication of the report and wish you success with the dissemination of this very valuable information and the implementation of the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan McWilliam
Director of Public Health

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