



Update Report: Acre's Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Community Engagement Work & Progress towards Creation of the Rose Centre, Reading

This report provides a summary of developments in relation to Strand 1 since the previous report was submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2016.

Précis

In June 2015 Acre's 2 pronged proposal to start tackling FGM locally was adopted as a priority by the Local Strategic Partnership.

Strand 1: Prevention & Education led by Acre

Strand 2: Protect & Respond led by RBC.

Acre conducted in depth community engagement and needs assessment, the findings showed significant need and numbers of practising communities and a lack of understanding of FGM locally in general.

Our recommendation was for a specialist FGM centre in Reading.

Acre envisaged a holistic support programme: supporting survivors' wellbeing in addition to clinical needs; a prevention programme to safeguard girls at risk through tackling the taboo and generational cycle; and a resource centre with helpline to address the lack of confidence in dealing with FGM.

There are 2 Rose Clinics in operation, in Oxford and Bristol which support the medical needs of survivors. Both offer very successful and much needed services.

Acre created a Business Plan for the Rose Centre, Reading, for which the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups gave their support in June 2016. The parameters have been widened so in time the Rose Centre will service the whole of Berkshire.

The Rose Centre will be the first of its kind: Innovative and exemplary and a centre of excellence for Berkshire. The desired time frame for opening is April 2017.

Progress Achieved & Current Position

Acre has secured the funding to continue the community engagement work in the run up to the forthcoming Rose Centre and can now promote the Centre. Acre now has the funding to facilitate further community participation in the planning of the service, firmly placing community voice at the centre of the project. Funds have been given from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and NHS England.

The 'Plan of Action' referred to in 4.4 of the Report dated 7th Oct, is now in action! We have recruited 4 new community advocates who are taking the message into their communities. We have had a steady response to our questionnaires, and are now collating info of around 30 survivors by postcode area. There is no such local intelligence to date.

Within some of the practising communities accessing any type of service or support for FGM is incredibly taboo. In the beginning Oxford Rose Clinic saw 2-4 women a month. Understanding the slow burn nature of FGM services, the key is word of mouth, which takes time. By facilitating community participation in preparations for the Rose Centre this gives a sense of ownership to the communities it is meant to serve, plus ensures that the programme reflects what service users truly want and need. Thus securing the Rose Centre's optimal reach and value from the get go.

Securing the main body of funding for the Rose Centre is now pivotal. Two potential funds have recently opened under the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy: The Service Transformation Fund and the Tampon Tax Fund.

Acre will be applying in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups to the Service Transformation Fund, with the bid being led by one of the commissioning bodies. Acre will also apply for the Tampon Tax Fund. Successful grants will be awarded in Spring and Summer respectively.

If successful the Rose Centre will be fully funded for 3 years.

