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Tuesday 6th January 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Introducing mandatory reporting for female genital mutilation – A consultation

4Children welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Home Office's consultation on introducing mandatory reporting for female genital mutilation.

4Children is the national charity all about children and families. We have spearheaded a joined-up, integrated approach to children's services and work with a wide range of partners around the country to ensure children and families have access to the services and support they need in their communities. We run Sure Start Children's Centres as well as family and youth services across Britain. We develop, influence and shape national policy on all aspects of the lives of children, young people and families.

In this short response, we will focus specifically on the issue of mandatory reporting in the early years sector, which is discussed in Part A of the consultation document.

4Children is highly supportive of the direction of travel set out in the consultation, and of the principle of introducing mandatory reporting for female genital mutilation. We know that, as set out in paragraph 2.14 of the consultation, female genital mutilation is sometimes practised on very young girls and it is therefore important to consider how cases should be reported in early years settings.

In our view, one essential aspect of this will be to ensure that the assigned safeguarding lead in a setting feels empowered through the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to report concerns about female genital mutilation. We therefore feel that it would be beneficial to amend Section 3 of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework on "The safeguarding and welfare requirements" to include a direct reference to the reporting of female genital mutilation, in order to ensure that early years practitioners are left in no doubt regarding the position of the Framework on this issue.

If you have any further questions regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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Chief Executive, 4Children

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