



## Department of Health

Our ref: TO-1058686

Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 4850

Mr Mike Buchanan  
Party Leader  
Justice for Men and Boys  
Kemp House  
152 City Road  
London EC1V 2NX

30 NOV 2016

Dear Mr Buchanan,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November to Amber Rudd about male genital mutilation. As your letter relates to healthcare, it has been passed to the Department of Health and I have been asked to reply.

The Freedom of Information Act only applies to recorded information such as paper or electronic archive material. As your correspondence asked for general information, rather than requesting recorded information or documentation, it did not fall under the provisions of the Act.

The practice of male circumcision is legal in the UK and is not regarded as genital mutilation. It is not comparable to female genital mutilation, which is illegal. There are significant differences between the two practices, with very different risks and outcomes.

The role of the NHS is to identify anyone at risk, as well as to offer protection and to make people aware of relevant agencies. It is essential that everyone who works in the health and social care system does their part to support this vital work to safeguard vulnerable children. In England, the Government has no plans to change the law in relation to male circumcision. However, mutilation of the male genitalia, other than circumcision and legitimate body piercing, could in some circumstances be covered by laws that cover offences against the person.

Non-therapeutic circumcision is not routinely carried out by the NHS, which normally performs circumcision for medical reasons only. The Department of Health agrees with the General Medical Council, the British Medical Association and the British Association of Paediatric Surgeons that the welfare of infants who are

circumcised must be paramount, whatever the reason for undertaking the procedure. Any medical procedure must be undertaken in hygienic conditions, with appropriate pain relief and aftercare. In some areas clinical commissioning groups, particularly where they feel children are at risk of unsafe procedures, will work with local providers and communities to ensure that a safe and affordable service is available.

Male circumcision, where it is carried out by a healthcare professional, is regulated by the Care Quality Commission and included under the regulated activity of surgical procedures.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a series of connected loops and a final upward stroke.

< NAME REDACTED >

Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries