

Laptop theft stuns Edinburgh based charity

✘ Today, Scotland's FGM charity Dignity Alert Research Forum (DARF) discovered the loss of several laptops, apparently stolen late last week. It is currently unclear how the thieves accessed DARF's office, in Edinburgh's UN House, but the theft comes as a severe blow for the small charity.

DARF is the only organisation in Scotland focusing solely on female genital mutilation (FGM). The charity is staffed solely by volunteers, committed to tackling this particular form of violence against women and girls. DARF's work is invaluable in raising awareness about the realities of FGM in Scotland. On the theft, DARF's chair Kara Brown said 'It's gut-wrenching news. We were trying to do a lot with such limited resources already. It's a real setback for the team.'

Recognised as a violation of the fundamental rights of women and girls, FGM can be carried out on children from infancy, with often severe physical and mental health consequences. There are potentially affected communities living in every local authority area in Scotland. DARF's youth-led team provide advocacy and training on FGM, awareness-raising for professionals and affected communities; and supports research in the area of FGM in Scotland and Africa.

Although FGM has been illegal in the UK for thirty years, nobody has ever been convicted for the crime. An increase in awareness is vital if girls and young women are to be safeguarded from this brutal practice.

DARF have issued a plea for the return of the laptops and police are currently seeking the culprits. It is currently unclear whether insurance will cover the loss. If anyone is able to give an old laptop to the charity, contact Kara Brown

at dignityalert@hotmail.co.uk.

Anyone wishing to donate money to DARF is invited to attend the organisation's fundraising quiz night at The Outhouse bar on the 5th of March or [click here](#) to donate.

Submitted by [Ceris Aston](#)