[redacted] [redacted]

Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: More victims empowered to have cases independently reviewed as Home Secretary unveils further action to tackle grooming gangs

Date: 16 January 2025 16:59:03

Attachments: image001.jpg

Hiya

I hope you're well. Today, the Home Secretary has set out new measures to tackle grooming gangs in an Oral Statement: Next steps to tackle child sexual exploitation - GOV.UK

Please also find a press release below with more information, which has also been issued to media. We would be very grateful for your support to amplify this news, including sight of any statements you have planned, media activity, and amplification of our social media content.

We have also shared a social media post outlining the measures, and we will continue to share links to content, including unbranded content.

If you have any questions, we are more than happy to have a call to discuss and provide you with further information.

Kind regards,

[redacted]



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More victims empowered to have cases independently reviewed as Home Secretary unveils further action to tackle grooming gangs

- More victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation given power to seek an independent review of their cases as Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel widened
- Chief constables of all police forces in England and Wales urged to reexamine historic and live cases of gang exploitation to increase prosecutions
- Baroness Louise Casey to lead a rapid audit of existing evidence on grooming gangs to help deliver quicker action to tackle the crime and help victims

Victims will be given more power to have their cases re-examined, the Home Secretary has announced today, as she unveils a £10 million action plan to tackle grooming gangs and child sexual abuse.

As part of this government's mission to halve violence against women and girls, deliver justice for victims and ensure more vile perpetrators of this crime end up behind bars, today the Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has set out new measures to finally deliver change and action for

survivors of the grooming gang crimes to get justice:

1. Survivors and victims will be able to ask for their closed cases to be reviewed by an independent criminal justice review panel where their previous investigations were not taken forward to prosecution by the police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
2. The Home Secretary is writing to the National Police Chiefs' Council requesting officers look again at these unsolved and closed grooming gangs cases, backed by £2.5m in funding for stronger investigations.

Since taking office the government has been engaging with victims to implement the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and this work provides further momentum to finally delver change for victims. Today the Home Secretary has pledged that by Easter 2025 the government will lay out a clear timetable for taking forward the recommendations in the final IICSA report.

We will also provide new national backing for locally-led inquiries, backed by £5m of funding. Working in partnership with Tom Crowther KC, the chair of the impactful Telford Inquiry into grooming gangs, the Home Office will develop a new effective framework for victim-centred, locally-led inquiries, and to work with Oldham Council and four other pilot areas to implement it. It will also develop new ways for councils to work locally with victims. Further work is underway as part of the forthcoming Hillsborough Law and the Duty of Candour to boost the accountability mechanisms that support and follow up on local inquiries, ensuring that public servants that fail victims are properly held to account.

At the same time, the Home Secretary has unveiled a rapid national audit to uncover the scale and profile of group-based offending in the UK today, including ethnicity.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has commissioned this audit led by Baroness Louise Casey to examine existing data and evidence to draw a comprehensive picture of the nature, scale and profile of group-based child sexual abuse offending identified by police and agencies, and equip law enforcement with the information and understanding they need to combat these crimes. This rapid analysis of data and evidence will allow us to deliver quicker change on the recommendations in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse report (IICSA).

Baroness Casey has a strong track record of carrying out successful and complicated pieces of work across the public sector, including the culture in the Met Police, cross-government reviews and is well-placed to conduct this audit, given her no-holds barred 2015 report following the Jay inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation committed by Pakistani-heritage gangs in Rotherham.

The audit will begin imminently and last three months. It will be supported by an expert advisory board and draw on the views of victims and survivors. This work – including the new Victims and Survivors Panel and work with Mr Crowther KC – will be backed by £2.5m of funding.

Giving an oral statement in the House this afternoon (16 January 2025), Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said:

> "Nothing matters more than the safety of our children. Yet for too long, this horrific abuse was allowed to continue. The victims were ignored. The perpetrators were left unpunished. Too many people looked the other
> way.
>
> "And even when these shocking crimes were brought to light, and national inquiries were commissioned to get to the truth, the resulting reports were too often left on the shelf as their recommendations gathered dust.
>
> "Under this Government, that has changed. We are taking action not just on those recommendations, but on the additional work we need protect victims, put perpetrators behind bars and to uncover the truth wherever things have gone wrong.
>
> "This is about the protection of children, the protection of young girls, and the radical

and ambitious mission we have set for this Government to halve violence against women and girls in a decade."

We have already announced we will introduce a mandatory reporting duty for those working with children to report sexual abuse as part of the Crime and Policing Bill and legislate to make grooming an aggravating factor when sentencing child sexual offences – so punishments properly fit the crime.

We will ensure police learn lessons from the past and make all 43 forces improve data collection on child sexual abuse – including ethnicity.

Of the 115,000 Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse offences recorded in 2023 by police, over 4,000 of them were group-based offending. Of those, around 1100 involved abuse within the family, and over 300 involved abuse in institutions, whilst over 700 of them were group-based grooming gang offences.

But the vast majority of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse goes unidentified and unreported and so we expect this to be a significant underestimate.

Safeguarding and violence against women and girls Minister Jess Phillips said:

"Child sexual abuse and exploitation is one of the most harrowing crimes anyone could face. I have dedicated many years of my life to tackling it, both before I was a government Minister, and now I have never been more steadfast in my resolve to protect more children and arrest more appalling perpetrators.

"But change is about deeds, not words. That's why we are working quickly to empower more victims to get justice by giving more the right to request their cases are re-examined, and making sure survivors are a core part of the rapid audit of existing evidence in these heartbreaking cases.

"Our work does not stop here. We are also urging police forces to look again at closed and unsolved cases on their files, to ensure they pursue criminals and put them behind bars so they cannot hurt anyone else."

In a joint statement, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigation ACC Rebecca Riggs and Director of the CSE Taskforce, said:

"We welcome the investment in the Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce and are encouraged by the ongoing commitment to protect children and address this critical issue.

"The ambitions set out will not be easy, it requires resource when demand on policing is high however, this new investment equips us with additional tools and resources to increase our impact in supporting victims and survivors. It enables us to strengthen collaboration with our partners and stakeholders to ensure we deliver the best possible outcomes for those who need it.

"Since its establishment, the Taskforce has made significant strides in improving policing efforts to enhance our response to CSE to ensure further meaningful action is taken to empower victims and survivors to come forward but there is more to do working closely with our partners, coordinating the national response, and maintaining continuous collaboration to ensure we meet the needs of victims and survivors with the utmost care and urgency."

Arooj Shah, leader of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, said:

"This government intervention today will transform the next steps for Oldham.

"These new measures will empower the victims to achieve the justice they deserve and support police in their vital work."

The Government is also working to tackle online predators of child sexual abuse, through our £11m investment in an Undercover Online Network of police officers and in £5m investment in

Child Abuse Image Database.

Investment continues to be made in a range of other work to strengthen law enforcement capacity and capability to tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation, including providing £6.5 million this year for the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme (TOEX), which brings together local, regional and national data to ensure police can effectively uncover and prosecute exploitation.

ENDS

****
This email and any files transmitted with it are private and intended
solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed.
If you have received this email in error please return it to the address
it came from telling them it is not for you and then delete it from your system.
This email message has been swept for computer viruses.
****

This message has been scanned for viruses by the Greater London Authority.

Click here to report this email as spam.