

Grooming gangs in London

Key information

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Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

The national Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs is focused on group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse committed by grooming gangs. It defines group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse as “a kind of child sexual abuse, involving two or more perpetrators who are connected through formal or informal associations who are involved in or facilitate the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. This involvement may take many forms, including introducing children to others for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child for sexual exploitation, taking payment for sexual activity with a child, or allowing premises to be used for such activities.”

This **Police and Crime Committee** investigation will:

- Seek to understand what is known about grooming gangs in London
- Explore the Met’s response to grooming gangs, including prevention, investigation, victim support, and partnership working
- Examine how the Mayor and MOPAC have held the Met to account for its approach to identifying, investigating, and preventing grooming gang activity in London

Key issues

- The Government announced an Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs, chaired by Baroness Anne Longfield CBE, in June 2025. This follows the Jay Report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, the

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales, and Baroness Casey’s National Audit on Group-Based Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

- The Met has said it is reviewing 9,000 historic cases of group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse from the last 15 years, where the outcome was no further action by police or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This includes cases of intra-familial, peer-on-peer, and institutional abuse, as well as those commonly understood as grooming gangs. This is being carried out as part of Operation Beaconport, a national policing operation into group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse which is running alongside the Independent Inquiry, led by the National Crime Agency. As of November 2025, the Met had found 1,200 historic cases to be in scope.
- Separate to the review of historic cases of group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse, Met Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley QPM told the London Assembly in November 2025 that the Met’s current caseload includes tens of complex group-based cases closest to what the public may understand by the term grooming gangs.
- The Met has also stated that “Our data shows the group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation picture in London is more varied than in other parts of the country and does not neatly align with patterns of methodology, ethnicity or nationality seen elsewhere and reported on extensively.”
- There have been several media reports of survivors of grooming gangs in London. Journalists have published the findings of investigations in which they have spoken to survivors, social workers and charities, on their experience of grooming gangs and also reported that there is evidence of grooming gangs in London based on Freedom of Information requests to local authorities, or reports published by local authorities.

Key questions

1. What is known about the scale and operation of grooming gangs in London?
2. What is known about any patterns of behaviour that could allow authorities to identify past and present grooming activity?
3. Are there any barriers in identifying and investigating those involved in past and present grooming gangs in London, and if so, what is the Met doing to overcome them?
4. How are the Met and MOPAC working with London’s safeguarding partners, victims and survivors to seek intelligence and support victims and survivors?
5. How have the Mayor and MOPAC held the Met to account regarding its response to grooming gangs – is this oversight strong enough?

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