



Susan Hall AM
Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee

The Baroness Longfield CBE
Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs
(Sent by email)

18 June 2026

Dear Baroness Longfield,

Grooming gangs in London

I am writing on behalf of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee regarding your national inquiry into grooming gangs, which is currently underway and expecting to announce the first tranche of local inquiries by 13 July at the latest.¹ We urge you to include London as one of these local inquiry areas.

Many previous inquiries and audits into these appalling acts have either had a national focus or concentrated on high-profile cases. This was necessary, but, has left London with a distinct lack of scrutiny into the scale and nature of grooming gangs² operating in our city; what is being done to stop them and how victim-survivors are being supported. To begin to answer these questions, on 3 June 2026, the Committee held a meeting with investigative journalists to increase our understanding of what is known about grooming gangs in London.³

¹ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: The Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs](#), 19 May 2026

² Here, the term ‘grooming gangs’ refers to a kind of child sexual abuse and exploitation, 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. Definition taken from: Home Office, [Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs: terms of reference](#), 31 March 2026

³ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

“London is massive and complicated”

The standout message was that London is different to other grooming gang cases in the UK. As Zak Garner-Purkis from the *Express* told us, London is not a town like Rochdale, or a village like Heywood – “London is massive and complicated.”⁴ This is mirrored in the grooming gang perpetrators, the way they operate and who they target.

This means that whilst some grooming gangs in London resemble those identified in towns and cities in the North of England, this is only part of the story. Journalists told us that there is “no one race or nationality in terms of the perpetrators” and that any child in London can be a victim of grooming gangs, “the only commonality you see is vulnerability”.⁵

What stood out to the Committee were the different methods of exploitation used by grooming gangs in London, and how they are also complex. This includes the well-documented “boyfriend” model of grooming, but also how county lines activity forms a significant part of London’s grooming gang landscape. Rachael Burford from the *Standard* told us that the criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation of children are “massively interlinked”.⁶ She explained that London’s drug gangs will “draw children in with gifts” and girls are then used as gifts themselves, or as payment, through sexual acts.⁷

We also heard that London is part of a national network of grooming gangs. Charlie Peters from *GB News* told us that “London is absolutely key” within the national network, with girls being trafficked in and out of London to be used as payment by criminal gangs.⁸ The *BBC*’s Sima Kotecha made similar points, stating that grooming gangs have “very active links” to towns across the country, and that grooming gang victims from other places are brought to London, “where the clientele sometimes is”.⁹ Rachael Burford also told us that young women being “trafficked from the capital” as gifts is “part of the grooming gang culture in the city”.¹⁰ This trafficking into and out of London, along with the diverse and complex nature of grooming gangs operating solely in the city, must be investigated as part of a local London inquiry.

“Overlooked and misunderstood”

All four journalists we spoke to were certain that the grooming gang activity they have investigated has been happening in London for decades and remains a serious concern today.¹¹ Instead of this being acknowledged, we heard that London’s grooming gangs have been “overlooked and misunderstood” for a long time.¹²

⁴ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

⁵ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

⁶ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

⁷ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

⁸ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

⁹ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

¹⁰ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

¹¹ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

¹² London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

We also heard that the Metropolitan Police Service's (the Met) response to these grooming gangs has "just not been good enough".¹³ Concerns were highlighted about victim-blaming language, inadequate support for victim-survivors, the criminalisation of exploited children, and the relatively low number of grooming gang convictions secured by the Met. Together, these factors have contributed to a lack of trust among victim-survivors. Understandably, this stops victim-survivors coming forward, creating a cycle in which offences remain hidden, evidence is harder to obtain, and perpetrators evade justice.

Further attention needed in London

The work these journalists presented to us has been collected through first hand interviews with victim-survivors and close examination of public records. Their testimonies are important and impactful, but most likely only scratch the surface of the full scale of grooming gang activity in London. They told us there is much they could not uncover due to what they described as a lack of transparency.¹⁴

We believe that further attention is needed to get a definitive sense of the scale and complexity of grooming gang activity in London, and any potential failures of the Met and associated safeguarding agencies in their responses to these crimes. We also need to understand how London's grooming gangs are linked to other parts of the country, and what role they play in the national grooming gang picture. Most importantly, we need to learn about the impact on victim-survivors and how they can be better protected and supported in the future.

Like you, the Committee is deeply concerned by victim-survivor accounts and experiences of child sexual abuse and exploitation by grooming gangs, from all parts of the UK. You have stated that there should not be another inquiry into grooming gangs after your current one, because this inquiry should have the momentum and evidence to deliver the results everyone needs.¹⁵ To achieve this, London must be a key focus of your work. Without a thorough examination of what has happened in the capital, significant questions will remain unanswered, and the experiences of countless victim-survivors risk being overlooked.

We therefore believe that your national inquiry must include a thorough investigation into how grooming gangs have operated in London, how they are linked to other parts of the country, and how agencies have responded.

I attach a copy of the transcript of our evidence session, for your information. We plan to hold more meetings on this subject and will keep you informed of any further evidence that we believe may be of use to your work.

I would be grateful if you could send a response to this letter to Janette Roker at Janette.Roker@london.gov.uk by 30 July 2026. The Committee will publish your response so that there is transparency about what the Committee has received.

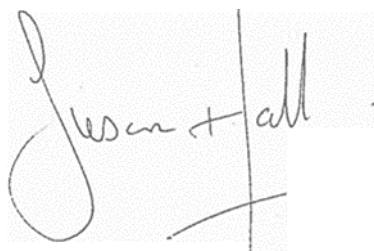
¹³ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

¹⁴ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Transcript – Grooming gangs in London – Part One](#), 3 June 2026

¹⁵ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: The Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs](#), 19 May 2026

Please contact Janette Roker if you have any questions about the investigation.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Susan Hall" in a cursive style. The first letter 'S' is large and loops around. The name "Susan Hall" is written in a smaller, more compact cursive. There is a horizontal line under the signature.

Susan Hall AM
Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee