

Council – 29 January 2025

Labour Group Amendment to Motion 5b – Full National Enquiry into the Rape Gang Scandal

This Council notes that:

- In 2013, a Home Affairs Select Committee found that the failure to protect children in Rochdale fell to the police, social workers and **Child Crown** Prosecution Services (CPS). This is one of multiple examples of findings of institutional failure.
- In June 2022, the Greater Manchester Independent Assurance Review in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) published its second report which looked into the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in the borough of Oldham.
- This report was part 2 of a multi-part Assurance Review, with each part covering various areas across Greater Manchester. The first part was published in December 2019 and involved a review of Operation Augusta, a police and social services investigation into CSE in South Manchester following the tragic death of 15-year old Victoria Agoglia.
- It is inaccurate and naïve to describe CSE as an ‘historic’ problem, as the GMP acknowledged in the December 2019 Part 1 Assurance Review:
 - ‘As of March 2019, there are 49 multi-victim or multi-offender live CSE investigations across GMP, where there are multiple suspects/victims, or where there is a single suspect with a number of victims, or a single victim with a number of suspects... Of the 49 live investigations, 31 are recent, 16 are historic, and four investigations are a mix of both recent and historic allegations.’ pp. 143-144
- That Oldham Council have called upon the Home Office to request a further national enquiry into CSE in the borough of Oldham. That a national enquiry was undertaken, authored by Professor Alexis Jay, and published in October 2022, however:
 - this review is intensely focused around a series of victim interviews, which whilst appreciated, consequently it does not cover institutional failings in a particularly detailed manner.
 - the review only covers institutional failings as described by victim interviews, it does not detail any specific institutional failures, nor did it have the power to compel interviews with:
 - Police Officers: who were responsible for a wide variety of Operations involving CSE
 - NHS workers: particularly those working in sexual health clinics as numerous reports have arisen of contraceptive services being issued to underage girls when there were very clear patterns of child sexual abuse however reportedly safeguarding procedures either weren’t followed, were non-existent or reports were ignored
 - **Social Children’s** Services: those involved in the care of vulnerable children have not been queried as to the nature of safeguarding

procedures at the time or whether these were followed and properly implemented

- Council Officers: there are no reports from local authorities as to the extent of their response on child sexual exploitation, despite whistleblowing from social workers alleging utterly inadequate responses from local Councils
 - Consequently- the Jay enquiry does not provide a detailed analysis of the precise nature of institutional failings.
- The review does not cover the totality of the 50 towns and cities where we now know there have been reports of grooming gangs in operation

This Council further notes:

- The recent announcement by the Home Secretary of a number of local inquiries that will be victim-centred, including a local inquiry in Oldham.
- The Home Secretary's announcement of a rapid audit to be led by Dame Louise Casey that will look at ethnicity data and demographics of gangs involved in exploitation and their victims, as well as cultural and societal drivers.
- We do support the recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published in October 2022 by Baroness Jay in full and wish to see them enacted.
- The failure of politicians and institutions to respond to this issue properly. Political parties and public institutions have failed to properly listen to the victims of CSE, and to concerns raised by whistleblowers and at times have acted to play down incidences.
- With the upmost admiration and respect, ~~the following~~ individuals who have tirelessly fought campaigns on CSE ~~., including:~~
 - ~~Ann Cryer, former Labour MP for Bradford~~
 - ~~Sarah Champion, Labour MP for Rotherham~~
 - ~~Councillor Sara Rowbotham, Labour Councillor in Rochdale~~
 - ~~Jayne Senior MBE, Social Worker Whistleblower~~
 - ~~Maggie Oliver, GMP Whistleblower~~
 - ~~Andrew Norfolk, chief investigator at The Times~~

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Write to the Home Secretary, The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper, ~~acknowledge her statement to the House of Commons on Thursday 16 January and to support liaison with~~ Oldham Council's regarding ~~their previous call~~ for a National Enquiry into CSE. ~~We also acknowledge along with~~ the multiple other calls for a National Enquiry into CSE with a widened scope that includes but not limited to:
 - The 50 towns and cities where we now know there have been reports of grooming gang operations.
 - A scoping review into the responses and failings of institutions and individuals that turned a blind eye to these crimes including police forces, but not limited to, the following set of institutions:

- Local authorities
- **Social Children's** services
- The NHS
- The Civil Service