

Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting
Wednesday 12 February 2025
(Request for National Inquiry)**

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,
CIVIC CENTRE, OLDHAM**

- 3 Request for a National Public Inquiry that Investigates the Scourge of Child Sexual Exploitation'

Letter issued to the Home Office from Acting Chief Executive, on behalf of the Council

This page is intentionally left blank



The Rt. Hon. Yvette Cooper MP
Home Secretary
The Home Office,
2 Marsham Street,
London, SW1P 4DF

Acting Chief Executive
Oldham MBC
Level 3, Civic Centre
West Street, Oldham OL1 1UG
Tel: 0161 770 4190
14th February 2025

Dear Home Secretary,

Re: Oldham Council Resolution – Request for a National Public Inquiry that Investigates the Scourge of Child Sexual Exploitation

The full Council at its extraordinary meeting on 12th February 2025 unanimously approved the following motion:

‘We humbly request that this Council call upon His Majesty’s Government to ensure a statutory public inquiry that investigates the scourge of both historic and current child sexual exploitation in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham. Any national investigations into the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland must not relegate an examination of Oldham into a paragraph in another report.

We request that a full statutory public inquiry is held urgently, as villages, towns and cities up and down the spine of the country have been affected by child sexual exploitation and abuse which was carried out by evil criminal gangs on an unprecedented scale, and the even more widespread levels of sexual and sexually motivated violence that are endemic in British society, across people of all colours and creeds.

This Council further notes:

1. The employment by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council of the ringleader of the gang that sexually abused so many girls in Rochdale which was stated in the 2022 Assurance review quote: “Offender A worked for Oldham Council between 1988 and 2006. He was employed as a welfare rights officer in the welfare rights unit of the council seconded to the Oldham Pakistani Community Centre. In May 2012 he was found guilty of two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, and sentenced to 19 years’ imprisonment. In June 2012 he was found guilty of a further 30 rape charges and was jailed for an additional 22 years. Offender A lived in Oldham and was a member of the Oldham Labour Party. We believe there were serious failings in how both the council and Greater Manchester Police investigated concerns in respect of Offender A.”

2. That this Council voted down multiple requests from 2020 to 2024 for inquiries of different kinds until it was agreed to hold a non-statutory local inquiry in July 2024 following the Council falling into no overall control.

3. That no Council officers who worked or currently work at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council have been disciplined or lost their job for professional failures in protecting children from rape gangs and child sexual exploitation to date.

4. Notes the comments made by the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Yvette Cooper MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; “Ten years ago, two reports by Alexis Jay and Louise Casey in Rotherham found that 1,400 children had been sexually exploited, raped by multiple perpetrators, trafficked across other towns, ... Those reports a decade ago identified a failure to confront Pakistani heritage gangs and a “widespread perception” that they should “downplay’ the ethnic dimensions” for fear of being seen to be racist. When those reports came out, those failings in Rotherham were condemned across the board by both Government and Opposition in this House. As I said at the time: “It is never an excuse to use race and ethnicity or community relations as an excuse not to investigate and punish sex offenders.”— [Official Report, 2 September 2014; Vol. 585, c. 169.]”

5. Notes the comments made by the Shadow Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon, Chris Philp MP, which is noted in Hansard quote; “Instead of those victims being protected and the perpetrators prosecuted, those girls were systematically failed. Many cases were covered up because of absurd concerns about so called community relations. Often, the police did not investigate. Local councils covered things up. The Crown Prosecution Service frequently failed victims.

6. That no individual or political group should ever seek to exploit the tragedies of sexual violence that have been committed, Everyone must at all times ensure that they listen to what survivors want, to ensure their voices are at the heart of all proposals, and to ensure that they are heard, supported and empowered,

7. That for too long governments of all colours have rejected this much needed statutory inquiry. It is time to hear from the survivors and victims who have been affected, and to expose those organisations, individuals and institutions that either covered it up, colluded in this scandal or stood by and did nothing.

8. That following repeated calls for a local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham, the Council voted in July 2024 to establish a non-statutory local inquiry. This decision came after years of resistance, despite multiple reports highlighting institutional failures. However, concerns remain that without statutory powers, this inquiry will lack the ability to compel key witnesses, access crucial documents, or hold individuals and organisations fully accountable.

9. That survivors, campaigners, and members of this Council have consistently argued that only a statutory inquiry can deliver full transparency and justice. A statutory inquiry would ensure that all survivors and individuals who have given testimony are legally compelled to provide evidence, while also creating a safe and supportive process for new witnesses and survivors to come forward.

10. That the credibility and effectiveness of the local inquiry depend on an independent panel determining the terms of reference, ensuring that the investigation is free from political influence and fully focused on uncovering the truth.

This Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Home Office to demand that His Majesty's Government initiate without any further delay a national public inquiry into the scourge of child sexual exploitation by rape gangs both historic and current in Oldham, Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

2. Write to the Home Office to request that His Majesty's Government grants statutory powers to the local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. This would ensure the inquiry has the authority to compel witnesses, demand full disclosure of evidence, and hold those responsible to account.

3. Request that an independent panel is appointed to set the terms of reference for the inquiry, ensuring that it is survivor-led, transparent, and robust.

4.. Seek confirmation from the inquiry leadership on the actions that will be taken to ensure that all survivors and individuals who have previously given testimony are compelled to provide evidence, while also establishing a process to invite new witnesses and survivors to come forward.'

Therefore, further to the resolutions, above, that were approved by Council unanimously, I am writing to request the following:

1. That His Majesty's Government initiate without any further delay a national public inquiry into the scourge of child sexual exploitation by rape gangs both historic and current in Oldham, Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
2. That His Majesty's Government grants statutory powers to the local inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. This would ensure the inquiry has the authority to compel witnesses, demand full disclosure of evidence, and hold those responsible to account.
3. That an independent panel is appointed to set the terms of reference for the inquiry, ensuring that it is survivor-led, transparent, and robust.
4. Seek confirmation from the inquiry's leadership on the actions that will be taken to ensure that all survivors and individuals who have previously given testimony are compelled to provide evidence, while also establishing a process to invite new witnesses and survivors to come forward.

I look forward to being able to report back to Council with your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Shelley Kipling

Acting Chief Executive

Email: shelley.kipling@oldham.gov.uk