



Home Office

Appendix 2e

Jess Phillips MP
Minister for Safeguarding and
Violence Against Women and Girls

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Mr Harry Catherall
Chief Executive, Oldham Council
Level 3, Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham
OL1 1UG

DECS Reference: MIN/1205645/24

29 October 2024

Dear Mr Catherall,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July to the Home Secretary relating to a public inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. I am replying as the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence against Women and Girls and I am very sorry for the delay in responding to your letter.

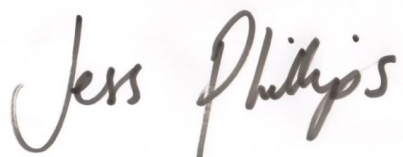
I understand the concerns of Oldham Council regarding the second report of the Greater Manchester Assurance Review, and I recognise the strength of feeling that a further inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham should be undertaken.

Inquiries play an important role in improving our response to child sexual exploitation and abuse. At a national level, the Government is working quickly to identify how we can move forward with delivery of the recommendations in the Final Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Beyond that, there are some great examples of independent reviews and inquiries that have been locally commissioned and delivered, such as the Jay inquiry into Rotherham and the more recent Telford inquiry, which have exposed previous failures and driven real change in local frontline services. The success of these inquiries is due, in part, to the commitment shown by the areas in commissioning them, giving them legitimacy from the outset.

That is why I believe it is for Oldham Council alone to decide to commission an inquiry into child sexual exploitation locally, rather than for the Government to intervene. I welcome the Council's resolution to do so, as set out in your letter, and to continue its important work with victims and survivors. Should the Council choose to proceed, I would look forward to the inquiry's findings and ensuring that any lessons that can be learnt to improve the frontline response are adopted at a local and, where applicable, at a national level.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us on this important matter and I wish you every success in your endeavours to improve the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham's response to this horrific crime.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jess Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jess Phillips MP
Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls