



House of Commons
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Press Release – For immediate release

**Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham
20th November 2013**

Children’s charity and MP team up to tackle child sexual exploitation

Barnardo’s is teaming up with MP for Rotherham Sarah Champion to conduct a parliamentary inquiry into child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the UK.

The inquiry aims to shine a light on these terrible crimes and what the authorities are doing to protect and support victims.

Evidence will be collected from victims and professionals involved with protecting vulnerable children including the police and members of the legal profession.

The inquiry is being launched to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the Sexual Offences Act and will test how effectively the legislation is working.

Barnardo’s has been tackling child sexual exploitation since 1994 and is the leading provider of support for sexually exploited children with 23 specialist services in the UK.

The number of sexually exploited children known to Barnardo’s rose by 22 per cent to 1,452 in the UK last year and 37 per cent during the past three years.

Sarah Champion MP for Rotherham said:

“Recent high profile cases have shown us the terrible human cost of child sexual exploitation. The stories of trafficking and abuse heard in courtrooms across the country have been shocking.

“It is vital we have a justice system that places the needs of victims at its very heart, supported by robust legislation that is fit for purpose. This inquiry will shine a light on how effectively we are currently working together to fight these awful crimes.”

Barnardo’s UK director of strategy Puja Darbari said:

“Through our work with sexually exploited young people we see first-hand the devastating impact of these terrible crimes.

“Children who are sexually exploited are uniquely vulnerable and we must listen to what they are telling us if we are going to protect them.

“We must relentlessly strive to keep all children safe and bring about justice for the young victims of sexual exploitation.”

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Notes to Editors:

1. This media release is relevant to England and Wales.
2. For more information contact media officer William Davies on 07584 347 290.
3. Barnardo's is supporting Sarah Champion with the inquiry and acting as policy and practice experts on child sexual exploitation.
4. The inquiry will test the efficacy of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 with a particular focus on the legislations specifically created to combat the trafficking of children within the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
5. The inquiry will consist of at least four evidence sessions beginning with a session for victims of child sexual exploitation and trafficking on December 17. There will follow evidence sessions with the police, legal professionals and partnership working (other sessions may be added).
6. Child sexual exploitation is used to cover a broad spectrum of activity from seemingly 'consensual' relationships or informal exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation, gifts or cigarettes through to serious, organised crime.
7. Barnardo's has been tackling child sexual exploitation since 1994 and has 21 specialist services in England and Wales.
8. In 2011-12 Barnardo's worked directly with 1,268 exploited or at risk children in England and Wales.
9. To read the most recent Barnardo's report on child sexual exploitation 'The tangled web' click [here](#).
10. Barnardo's works with more than 200,000 children, young people and their families each year. Barnardo's runs more than 900 services across the UK.
11. We believe in children and we believe every young person has a right to thrive. Our vision is to realise Thomas Barnardo's dream of a world where no child is turned away from the help that they need.
12. We work to transform the lives of the UK's most vulnerable children and every year we help thousands of families to build a better future. But we cannot do it without you. Visit www.barnardos.org.uk to find out how you can get involved and show you believe in children.
13. Follow Barnardo's media team on Twitter [@BarnardosNews](https://twitter.com/BarnardosNews).