



House of Commons
London
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Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham

Immediate Release
03 September 2014

Sarah Champion MP raises plight of Rotherham victims with Prime Minister

Rotherham's Member of Parliament, Sarah Champion, has made an impassioned plea to the Prime Minister to heed the findings of Alexis Jay's recent report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. Sarah told David Cameron that the widespread abuses that took place in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 should never have been allowed to happen, and encouraged him to move quickly to get the Government's overarching child abuse inquiry underway.

Speaking at Prime Minister's Question Time, Sarah said: "The horrific, vile and disgusting abuse suffered by children in my constituency should never have been allowed to happen. The victims still have not got the support they deserve and the criminals are still on the street. Child sexual exploitation is not only a Rotherham issue, but a national issue, so when will the Prime Minister appoint the chair to his inquiry into child abuse so that no child will be let down by statutory agencies again?"

David Cameron's response held assurances that he would move to announce a chair of the Government's overarching child abuse inquiry in the coming days. He also expressed broader concern about the failures in Rotherham, stating concerns about the attitudes of the police and social services.

The Prime Minister responded: "She is absolutely right to speak as she does. This has affected not just Rotherham of course: there were the dreadful cases in Oxford, near to my constituency, with similar failings in the systems. The announcement of the person to lead the broader child abuse inquiry will be made in the coming days."

With respect to Rotherham, he continued: "We have to ask ourselves a series of questions about how these individual services failed. Yes, of course there is the issue about whether these problems were ignored because of concerns about racism and political correctness. But there is also a big concern that sometimes the police and other agencies ignored these people because they felt they were beyond the pale. None of these children and young people should be ignored or left behind by our society."

Commenting afterwards, Sarah added:

"It is vital that lessons from Rotherham are learned more widely. As a country, not just a town, we must never again allow a child to suffer like this. That is why I pressed David Cameron to get moving with his child abuse inquiry – to make sure that no police force or Local Authority fails a child again."

“The recommendations I made in my parliamentary inquiry into child sexual exploitation gives practical measures to prevent the crime happening and help secure prosecutions. I will be pressing the Government to adopt these”.

“Our next step must now be to turn our attention to the victims of these horrific abuses, and ensure that they are offered the support that they need to rebuilt their shattered lives.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The full transcript from the exchange at Prime Ministers Questions can be found here:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/todays-commons-debates/read/unknown/89/>
2. The report from Sarah Champion's Parliamentary Inquiry into child sexual exploitation can be found here:
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/cse_parliamentary_inquiry_report.pdf

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