



House of Commons
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Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham

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Rotherham MP meets 300 survivors of Establishment child abuse

Sarah Champion, MP for Rotherham, has today spoken to around 300 survivors and whistleblowers of Establishment child abuse at an event in Parliament.

Sarah apologised to survivors for the lack of action by politicians over decades and the fact that few in authority even listened to them. She made it clear that nationally we are unprepared to deal with child abuse and the Government needs to address this. Sarah also drew from her experience of working with Rotherham abuse victims to state that unless victims and survivors are at the heart of a solution, child abuse will continue to blight this country.

The event was held by Bassetlaw MP John Mann and the WhiteFlowers Campaign Group to discuss the inquiry into organised and institutional child abuse. In an emotionally charged meeting, some survivors of child abuse also shared their experiences in the hope of further action to help survivors achieve justice.

Before the event Sarah joined survivors as they gathered at Westminster to lay white flowers in commemoration of victims and survivors of child abuse. A minute's silence was also held in memory of those victims no longer with us.

Speaking after the event, Sarah said:

"Meeting so many survivors of child abuse today has been an emotional experience and only serves to strengthen my belief that the Government needs to act urgently with its Child Abuse Inquiry."

"As Rotherham MP, I am well aware of the devastating impact that child abuse can have on victims and on the community as a whole. I am working hard to provide support to those victims within my constituency. Only this week I am sitting on the Serious Crime Bill Committee to try and change the law and better protect the most vulnerable children in our society."

"Child abuse is not just an issue in Rotherham, it is nationwide. The Government has failed to recognise just how unprepared this country is and we need to see more action from David Cameron than just the commissioning of flawed inquiries."

"I hope that today's meeting will go some way to opening the Government's eyes to how important it is that the National Child Abuse Inquiry delivers justice for victims and survivors and protects our children for generations to come."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- On September 3rd 2014 Sarah addressed the Prime Minister and encouraged him to heed the advice of the Jay report and move quickly to get the Government's overarching child abuse inquiry underway. She 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?”

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.”

- On September 10th 2014, Sarah met with Treasury Minister Priti Patel to request three quarters of a million pounds in new funding for support and justice for the 1400 Rotherham victims.

- On Wednesday 19th November 2014, Sarah Champion MP challenged the Prime Minister on the lack of support being directed to Rotherham victims of child abuse from Central Government. She said:

“Two Ofsted reports released today show that local authorities are not equipped to deal with child sexual exploitation. In addition, South Yorkshire police officers are being investigated for failing victims of abuse. I raised all these issues in April. I have raised them with Ministers and at PMQs. What will it take for this Government to help vulnerable people?”

He replied:

“First, let me commend the honourable Lady for the work that she has done on this issue. It is important that we learn the lessons from what happened in Rochdale (sic)—and, indeed, in the city of Oxford, near to my constituency, and elsewhere. The report released today is important, because the most important lesson that it draws is that we have to get every agency—whether it is the police, social services or schools—working together. That is not happening in enough of our towns and cities, and it needs to. In terms of what this Government are doing, the Home Office is leading this important effort and getting Departments to work together. I am convinced that we will make good progress.”

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