



House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham

Immediate release
22 January 2015

Rotherham MP tells Home Secretary 'we need a national task force to deal with child abuse'

Sarah Champion, Member of Parliament for Rotherham, has called for a national task force to support local police as they investigate and tackle child abuse across the country.

Speaking to the Home Secretary Theresa May in the House of Commons, Sarah stressed that local police forces simply do not have the capacity to cope with investigations and that a national task force is the only way forward to deal with the full range of child abuse.

Sarah also described the current Child Abuse Inquiry as a 'farce' and stressed the need for clear communication from the Government. The decision to hold the inquiry was made in July 2014. In that time there have been 2 Chairs appointed and subsequently leave the inquiry, with an announcement still to be made on who will now take the position. Over 6 months since the inquiry was created we have yet to see any action or results.

After an urgent question from Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to Theresa May asking her to make a statement on the Child Abuse Inquiry, Sarah said:

"I am afraid that this whole inquiry has now become a farce. It is very frustrating that my right hon. Friend the shadow Home Secretary has had to call the right hon. Lady to come to the House, because what we need are transparency and clear communication. We also need not just an inquiry but a national taskforce, because this is a national issue and the regional forces do not have the capacity to deal with it."

In reply, the Home Secretary Theresa May said:

"I commend the hon. Lady once again for the work she has done, particularly on the child sexual exploitation that has taken place in Rotherham, but also the way in which she is using that experience to inform others to try to ensure both that we put in place the necessary support mechanism and that the terrible things that happened in Rotherham do not happen elsewhere."

"I made it clear in my statement that I will come to this House once a decision about the chairmanship has been taken, and I was very clear in the letter I wrote to the panel inquiry members in December that that decision would be taken by the end of January."

Speaking after the debate, Sarah said:

"We need a national child abuse task force to support local police when a large scale case of child abuse is first identified. Local police forces simply can't cope with the scale of reports they are receiving and in many cases are not specialists in this field."

"It would mean when the police are approached with a complex case the task force can immediately be deployed to shape the investigation, bringing in specialists and hitting the ground running. I believe this will provide the best support for victims and survivors and give them confidence to come forward and get justice."

"I can't believe that the Child Abuse Inquiry was announced in July yet we are still in the same position we were 6 months ago. The victims and survivors deserve urgent action and justice, yet we are still to see anything happen other than Chairs for the Inquiry come and go. The Government need to act and get this inquiry underway as soon as possible."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

For full transcript: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/todays-commons-debates/read/unknown/199/>

For more information please contact:

Nick Fromont

Parliamentary Assistant (Press and PR) to Sarah Champion MP

Member of Parliament for Rotherham

Telephone: 01709 331037

Website: www.sarahchampionmp.com