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Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham

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Sarah Champion MP and Seema Malhotra MP host the first Girls Safety Summit in Rotherham

Sarah Champion, Member of Parliament for Rotherham, held her first Girls Safety Summit this week with local students, asking if young women feel safe in modern society.

Sarah welcomed the Shadow Minister for Preventing Violence against Women and Girls, Seema Malhotra MP, to Rotherham. Together they went to Thomas Rotherham College to hear the views of a group of sixth formers on the safety of girls and young women. In the confidential meeting, the students were able to share their experiences in a safe environment with their peers.

Nationally, almost one in three 16-18 year old girls has experienced "groping" or other unwanted sexual touching at school, and 1 in 10 women in the UK has experienced non-consensual sex since the age of 13. Close to 90% of parents want SRE (Sexual and Relationship Education) to be compulsory, including tackling the dangers of pornography.

This is the first of a number of private summits which Sarah plans to hold at schools across Rotherham in the coming months. It's all part of her work to further understand the steps needed to help prevent violence against women in the future.

Speaking about the day, Sarah said:

"I'd like to thank the students at Thomas Rotherham College for being so open and honest with us. I was taken aback by some of the accounts we heard and I sincerely believe that summits like the one we held today are incredibly beneficial to young people. I plan to organise regularly confidential meetings to offer further support for young women."

"There are many potential dangers in modern society for teenagers, mainly around social media. It is vital more education is given so they better understand exactly what those dangers are and how to recognise them. From what we've heard today, I don't believe young people properly understand the implications of their actions."

"I hope to take these discussions to different schools within my constituency as it offers an incredible insight into the lives of young people today. Figures that show nationally one in three 16-18 year olds has experienced groping or other unwanted sexual touching at school are quite frankly staggering."

"A legacy of domestic and sexual violence should not be passed on to a new generation and I hope that my continued work can help to make that a reality."

After her visit to Rotherham, Seema Malhotra MP said:

"Labour is committed to introducing national standards for police, prosecution and support services and a Commissioner for Domestic and Sexual Violence who will sit at the heart of Government and champion the needs of victims. These were announced by Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper as some of the first women's safety measures if Labour come to power in May. My visit with Sarah

Champion MP has only served to underline the need and urgency for this to happen, and I thank all the young women who took part in our roundtable discussion."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Audio of Sarah Champion MP attached available for broadcast.
- Attached pictures of Sarah Champion MP and Seema Malhotra MP at the Girls Summit and with Thomas Rotherham College Principal Dr. Richard Williams.
- Almost one in three 16-18 year old girls has experienced "groping" or other unwanted sexual touching at school (YouGov)
- 88% of parents want SRE to be compulsory to tackle the dangers of pornography (NAHT)
- 1 in 10 women in the UK has experienced non-consensual sex since the age of 13 (Natsal, 2013)

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If you would like to receive Sarah's E-newsletter to learn more about her work representing Rotherham - please click [here](#) to subscribe