



House of Commons
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Press Release for Immediate Release

Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham
Shadow Minister for Preventing Abuse and Domestic Violence
Thursday 4th August, 2016

Responding to new official statistics on historic child abuse in England and Wales, Sarah Champion MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Preventing Abuse and Domestic Violence, said:

"This new study paints a frightening picture of endemic child abuse in England and Wales.

"The figures reveal the true extent of child abuse in our country, including thousands of previously unreported crimes dating back to the 1960s. It exposes the trauma that so many people have silently lived with for decades.

"As a society we have to wake up to the extent of child abuse taking place in our communities. While these figures relate to historic abuse, thousands of children continue to be abused today and the indications are that things are getting worse rather than better. As worrying as these figures are, they are likely to be merely the tip of the iceberg.

"This data must shock the Government into action. Much more needs to be done to prevent child abuse before it happens rather than responding only once a crime has been committed.

"If we are to prevent another generation growing up with the consequences of widespread child abuse, we have to teach children how to protect themselves from abuse. My research with survivors, experts and charities all shows that compulsory age-appropriate resilience and relationships education for every child is the biggest single step we could take to prevent abuse, but this was reportedly blocked by David Cameron.

"Theresa May and Justine Greening now have the opportunity to take note of these stark figures and act immediately to help protect more children from the horrors of abuse."

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Notes

1. The statistical study 'Abuse during childhood: Findings from the year ending March 2016 Crime Survey for England and Wales' is published by the Office for National Statistics today and can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/abuseduringchildhood/findingsfromtheyearendingmarch2016crimesurveyforenglandandwales>

2. It is the first time that questions relating to childhood abuse have been included in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The results show:

- One in 15 people surveyed had been the victim of childhood sexual abuse. The same proportion had suffered physical abuse in childhood, while one in 11 had endured psychological abuse.

- An estimated 6.2 million people aged 16-59 are living with the effects of childhood abuse, including 2.2 million having suffered childhood sexual assault, 2.2 million who were victims of physical abuse and 2.9 million who suffered psychological abuse.
- Almost three quarters (74 per cent) of survivors of childhood sexual assault by rape or penetration did not tell anyone about their experience at the time, while a third (33 per cent) have still not told anyone.

3. Official crime statistics released last month show that in the last year there were:

- 11,352 reports of sexual activity involving a child under 16
- 5,965 reports of rape of a child
- 1,073 reports of sexual grooming
- 563 reports of abuse of a child through sexual exploitation

4. Data suggests that sexual abuse against children is on the rise, with the total number of reported sexual offences against children having increased by 23 per cent in the last year alone.

5. Sarah Champion is the Labour MP for Rotherham and Labour's Shadow Minister for Preventing Abuse and Domestic Violence. Since her election in 2012 she has led the campaign to prevent child sexual exploitation and child abuse. She launched the Dare2Care campaign in January 2016 to bring together different strands of the campaign against child abuse and violence in young people's relationships and to focus on prevention. Later this year she will be publishing a national strategy for preventing child abuse and relationship violence: www.dare2care.org.uk

6. It was reported in February that David Cameron had personally blocked plans for compulsory relationships education in schools. Reports at the time suggested that both Theresa May, the new Prime Minister, and Justine Greening, the new Education Secretary, had been in favour: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/david-cameron-just-blocked-compulsory-sex-education---and-the-wo/>