



# Home Office

Victoria Atkins MP  
Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and  
Vulnerability

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Councillor Shabir Pandor  
Kirklees Council, Leadership and Cabinet Office  
Civic Centre III, High Street  
Huddersfield  
HD1 2TG

HOCS Reference: MIN/0017733/18

Dear Mr Pandor,

21 DEC 2018

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 November about child sexual exploitation and in which you ask for an Inquiry to be established in accordance with the Inquiries Act 2005. I am replying as Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability.

Child sexual abuse and exploitation are despicable crimes and the Government is committed to keeping children and young people safe from all forms of abuse. We are clear that if child abuse of any kind takes place it must be thoroughly and properly investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

As you are aware, the Government established the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in 2015 with wide-ranging terms of reference to consider the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have failed in their duty to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The Inquiry operates independently of the Government and, within its terms of reference, decides for itself what it investigates and how. It has already announced a specific investigation into institutional responses to the sexual exploitation of children by organised networks, of the kind that has taken place in Kirklees. Further information can be found at: [www.iicsa.org.uk/investigations/child-sexual-exploitation-by-groups-and-gangs](http://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigations/child-sexual-exploitation-by-groups-and-gangs). I agree that these cases are a matter of national concern and, as is appropriate, we will look to the Inquiry to consider what has gone wrong and what can be learned on a national level.

The Inquiry is also running a Truth Project which will enable victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to share their experiences anonymously, in a supportive and confidential setting. The information supplied will be considered by the Chair and Panel members when reaching their conclusions and making recommendations for the future. Further information on the work of the Inquiry can be found at: [www.iicsa.org.uk](http://www.iicsa.org.uk).

I note from your letter that Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board has already commissioned an independent review into child sexual exploitation locally, with the outcomes being made public in due course, and welcome the Council's commitment to cooperate and to act on the lessons from this review.

Received  
28/12/18.

In terms of what the Government is doing to tackle child sexual exploitation, in February 2017 we published the 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Progress Report'. This detailed delivery of the ambitious programme of work set out in the 2015 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation' report and signalled a step change in our national response to sexual exploitation and violence against children and young people. The full report can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-progress-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-progress-report).

We prioritised child sexual abuse as a national threat to empower police forces to maximise their skills and expertise to tackle these crimes, one of only six such threats that require prioritisation by the police. We strengthened law enforcement capacity and capability and have provided significant extra investment through the Police Transformation Fund to transform policing to respond to changing crimes and threats, including crimes against vulnerable children such as child sexual abuse.

I would like to thank you for writing on this issue.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Atkins', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Victoria Atkins MP**