

Our Ref: FOI 1335

27 May 2021

Dear

Freedom of Information Request – Reference FOI 1335

I refer to your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, received on 11 April 2021.

Set out below is the request you have raised and our response to it.

REQUEST

'Here is a Star article, which is one of several on the internet, e.g. The Times:

The Star 15/03/15

[usual Star letterhead]

"Sheffield officers investigating child grooming 'told to wind necks in' by bosses."

"After trying to notify the authorities of one of the worst crimes to have even [ever] been committed on British soil , they shouldn't have dared to 'notice something about the majority of the perpetrators."

Whilst you commented to the press at the time, citing priorities, the issue has remained an open sore.

Please provide the documents to which this article refers.

The second quote suggests that the reason for ordering council officers to 'wind necks in' was because of fear of creating racist or religious tension.

Therefore, the 'bosses' would have had directions from senior politicians.

There would be internal memos within your office relating to the political decision to cover up child sex exploitation, leading to the instruction to 'wind necks in' with respect to investigating child sex exploitation.

Therefore, information sought would include the memo from the " bosses " instructing the Sheffield officers who were 'told to wind necks in', and the directions from senior

management ordering that the instruction be given, as well as the memos from politicians directing that the investigation into child sex exploitation be wound down.

Please provide those memos.

It is inconceivable that local politicians and Council child welfare personnel would claim that they were not aware of what was going on.

For example, there would have been many joint meetings between South Yorkshire Police, the Police Authority, and senior council officers, attended by a representative from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and to which office information was shared.

Please provide the minutes of these meetings, and the associated briefings and memos, that will be found in your records.

Within your records will also be the name of the council officer who instructed The Star reporter to 'pull' the article from their web site.

Please provide copies of any / all input on this issue from past and present MPs, political party members, and / or senior public servants.

Following an initial search it appeared that the article on the Star website had been removed and was no longer accessible. On 12 April 2021, I asked you to provide a copy of the Star article that you were referring to.

On 14 April 2021, you provided the following information:

"A

You have claimed that the article that was referenced was no longer available on the Internet.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150315021344/http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/local/shffield-officers-investigating-child-grooming-told-to-wind-necks-in-by-bosses-1-7156412>

Please explain why you denied being able to access the article.

In any case, had you wished to do so, you could have found other articles with the same material.

Also, by asking you are indirectly inferring that the article does not exist and therefore I am lying.

I shall be contacting the Information Commissioner with respect to a possible Section 77 prosecution of the PCC.

B

The PCC asked for a report on this issue.

Please provide that report.

On the 14 April 2021, I thanked you for providing a copy of the article and offered my apologies as I had been unable to locate this.

I also provided the following:

From the information provided in your initial request I undertook the following internet search:

“Sheffield officers investigating child grooming 'told to wind necks in' by bosses.” This provided the following link:

https://www.google.com/search?q=Sheffield+officers+investigating+child+grooming+%27told+to+wind+necks+in%27+by+bosses&rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB846GB846&oq=Sheffield+officers+investigating+child+grooming+%27told+to+wind+necks+in%27+by+bosses&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64j69i60.2493j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

The Sheffield Star 15 March 2015 “Sheffield officers investigating child grooming 'told to wind necks in' by bosses.”, which provided the following results:

https://www.google.com/search?q=The+Sheffield+Star+15+March+2015+Sheffield+officers+investigating+child+grooming+%27told+to+wind+necks+in%27+by+bosses&rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB846GB846&ei=ppR2YK-HC4OG9u8Poby4qAo&oq=The+Sheffield+Star+15+March+2015+Sheffield+officers+investigating+child+grooming+%27told+to+wind+necks+in%27+by+bosses&gs_lcp=Cqnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BAghEApQ-P0JWMnrCmCZ-ApoBnAAeACAAYwCiAHcDZIBBjLxLjAuMZgBDKABAaoBB2d3cy13aXrAAQE&scient=gws-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwiv8tKtlv3vAhUDg_0HHSEeDqUQ4dUDCA4&uact=5

The Sheffield Star 15 March 2015, which resulted in a link to the

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/archive> I then clicked on 2015, 15 March which provided the following results: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/archive/2015-03-15>

None of which resulted in an article on "Sheffield officers investigating child grooming 'told to wind necks in' by bosses".

I then made enquiries with our Communications and Engagement Manager who undertook their own search and informed me that it looked like the article, along with other articles published at that time, had been removed.

In that same email of 14 April I asked you to further clarify your request as set out below:

1. That you still require the original information requested:
 - a. documents to which the article refers
 - b. internal memos within our office relating to the political decision to cover up child sex exploitation, leading to the instruction to 'wind necks in' with respect to investigating child sex exploitation
 - c. minutes of joint meetings between South Yorkshire Police, the Police Authority, and senior council officers, attended by a representative from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and to which office information was shared
 - d. Copies of any / all input on this issue from past and present MPs, political party members, and / or senior public servants
2. The time period you would like me to conduct a search for the above documents
3. A copy of the report commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

On 15 April 2021, you provided the following information:

My information request does not need any clarification.

Therefore, it stands as it is.

Because the first request for clarification was unnecessary, the original date for section 10 compliance also stands.

On 13 May 2021, I sent you the below email requesting further clarification:

I write in relation to FOI 1335/21 received in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on 11 April 2021.

I have now considered your request and whilst I acknowledge that you do not believe that further clarification is required, I am unable to respond to your request without further clarification and more defined parameters.

In your request you refer to:

- “Sheffield officers” please clarify who these Sheffield officers are.
- “bosses who would have had directions from senior politicians” please clarify who these “bosses” and senior politicians are.
- “copies of any / all input on this issue from past and present MPs, political party members, and / or senior public servants” please clarify who this refers to.

The OPCC does hold a large amount of information which may relate to your request but at the moment, without further clarification, I will have no alternative but to engage Section 12 (2).

Once further clarification is received, I will respond to your request.

On 13 May, you sent the below response:

“It was clearly stated that further clarification is not necessary.

This was not a matter of belief, as you have stated, but a matter of fact.

I object strongly to having statements of fact reduced to allegations of opinion, and in so doing making a futile attempt at casting doubt upon the sanity of myself, the requester, so as to avoid having to provide the information that is being withheld.

What you are doing is classic gaslighting.

It is significant that you originally claimed not to be able to find the article, which I had no difficulty finding, and that you were simply looking in the wrong place, and in so doing attempting to imply that the article did not exist, so as to create a reason for obfuscation and delay leading to eventual failure to comply with the requirement to provide the information requested.

The original request stands, and now that you have the article to which the original request refers, it remains self-evident as to what information is required.

No independent outsider could be criticised for concluding that you are in breach of Section 77 of the FoIA.

There is no possibility of engagement of S12(2).

*The article is dated, and my request included direct quotes from the article.
Therefore, the parameters are quite tight.*

The article refers to 'sheffield officers' and 'bosses' - if I had the names of those 'sheffield officers' and 'bosses' I would not be needing to ask, so asking me to name people that are not identified in the article is, at the very least, illogical, irrational and perverse, and in effect turning the issue on its head.

No clarification on these issues is required, or possible by myself, which is why I have asked you to provide this information.

I specifically asked: 'copies of any / all input on this issue...', which is again a very tight parameter relating specifically to the article.

Therefore, to refer to 'a large amount of information' which may include the information required and then quote S12 (2) is an irrelevance.

I have now provided the clarifications you require, and note that, given the clarifications were unnecessary, you are now in breach of S10 of the FoIA.

Accordingly, it is not unreasonable to expect all the outstanding information to be sent by return."

You then sent the below further email:

"Whilst not required to do so, here is the text of another article that will help you:

- - -

Sheffield officers investigating child grooming 'told to wind necks in' by bosses

Chris Burn

14:58 Saturday 14 March 2015

Police officers investigating child sexual exploitation in Sheffield were told to 'wind your necks in' by bosses after warning about the scale of the problem, a retired detective has claimed.

A BBC investigation has alleged that senior officers thought car crime, burglary and robbery were bigger priorities than child sexual exploitation, despite detectives in the city warning it was a major problem.

Retired detective Tony Brookes, who spent 30 years with the force, worked on inquiries in 2007 which led to six abusers being convicted, and he wanted to build on the case as he recognised the size of the problem.

He said the issue of child sexual exploitation in Sheffield was ‘massive’ and bigger than in neighbouring Rotherham, where at least 1,400 children were abused over a 16-year-period.

Mr Brookes said his team was told by a senior officer to ‘wind your necks in’.

He said: “I don’t think the force wanted to pay. The priorities are robbery, burglary and car crime.

“They are the ones the Government said we want you to tackle, and the resources were spent on that.”

The allegations from Mr Brookes have prompted Police and Crime Commissioner Alan Billings to call for a wide-ranging inspection of the force.

Dr Billings wants it to be similar in scope to the recent Louise Casey review of Rotherham Council, which resulted in Government-appointed commissioners taking control of the running of the council and the entire cabinet of the local authority resigning.

Dr Billings said: “Public confidence in South Yorkshire Police has been severely damaged by these most recent allegations that the force failed to listen to hundreds of abused young people in Sheffield as we know they failed in Rotherham.

“If I am to do my job, I need to be sure that everything that can reasonably be known about the past is known. This is the first and crucial step if the force is to get itself into a better place.

“However, in the light of what has now been revealed I cannot be certain that we are at that point.

“Reluctantly, therefore, I now believe that a full ‘Casey-like’ county-wide inspection of South Yorkshire Police is necessary to get to an accepted understanding about the past and whether things have changed - which is the first step to restoring public confidence.”

Dr Billings has met local MPs, the chief constable and city council officials and is in negotiations with the Home Office about how to proceed.

He said: “The inspection needs to be thorough but not drawn out, sufficiently resourced, and recognise the investigations currently being conducted by the Independent Police Complaints’ Commission and National Crime Agency.

"The inspection needs to proceed alongside work the force is already doing with partners to address recommendations in the Professor Jay and Louise Casey reports.

"It also needs to work alongside the group I have established to listen to the views of victims, survivors and their families which I am feeding into the force in relation to reports of CSE now."

In a statement in response, Chief Constable David Crompton said: "There has been a high level of scrutiny around the way South Yorkshire Police handled child sexual exploitation in the past and I completely understand and accept this needs to take place.

"This scrutiny includes an ongoing independent investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission, inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and being held to account by the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Dr Alan Billings.

"Nevertheless, in view of the most recent allegations about child sexual exploitation in Sheffield I accept that a further inspection may be necessary in order to deal with these issues once and for all."

It would now be much appreciated if you would provide all outstanding information by return."

RESPONSE

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides two distinct but related rights of access to information, which impose corresponding duties on public authorities. These are:

- Section 1(1)(a) the duty to inform the applicant whether or not information is held by the authority, and if so,
- Section 1(1)(b) the duty to communicate that information to the applicant.

The OPCC does hold information relating to your request, however I am unable to supply all of that information. The information I can provide is set out below:

1. *"Sheffield officers investigating child grooming 'told to wind necks in' by bosses."*

“After trying to notify the authorities of one of the worst crimes to have even [ever] been committed on British soil, they shouldn't have dared to 'notice something about the majority of the perpetrators.’”

Whilst you commented to the press at the time, citing priorities, the issue has remained an open sore.

Please provide the documents to which this article refers.

To respond to your request I contacted the Community Engagement & Communications Manager who informed me that the article was written following a BBC report. The OPCC was contacted by BBC Look North in relation to the programme on 12 March 2015 to ask for an interview with the PCC in relation to the claims made.

The PCC issued a statement (see attached at Appendix A) at the time and did radio and TV interviews.

Further information on the independent review of South Yorkshire Police's handling of child sexual exploitation 1997 – 2016 is available on the OPCC's website. Therefore, Section 21 – 'Information reasonably accessible by other means' is engaged.

However, to assist you in your request, the following information has been provided.

The announcement of the commencement of the review was undertaken in June 2015, the statement is available here: <https://southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news/pcc-announces-drew-review/>

The review was launched in September following the scoping exercise and the press release is available here: <https://southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news/police-and-crime-commissioner-launches-independent-review-of-south-yorkshire-police/>

The review was completed and published in March 2016 and the press release, which contains the link to the report, is available here: <https://southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news/independent-review-of-south-yorkshire-polices-handling-of-child-sexual-exploitation/>

2. *The second quote suggests that the reason for ordering council officers to 'wind necks in' was because of fear of creating racist or religious tension.*

Therefore, the 'bosses' would have had directions from senior politicians.

There would be internal memos within your office relating to the political decision to cover up child sex exploitation, leading to the instruction to 'wind necks in' with respect to investigating child sex exploitation.

Therefore, information sought would include the memo from the "bosses" instructing the Sheffield officers who were 'told to wind necks in', and the directions from senior management ordering that the instruction be given, as well as the memos from politicians directing that the investigation into child sex exploitation be wound down.

Please provide those memos.

To enable me to respond to your request, an email search using the key words of 'Operation Glover', 'Op Glover', 'Wind your neck in', Tony Brookes and / or Antony Brookes was carried out between 7 February 2007 (when Operation Glover, the Operation that the article refers, commenced) and 15 March 2015 (when the Star article was published). No information was found that related to your request.

A search on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) electronic folders was also undertaken. I was unable to specify a specific timescale for this search as the search facility searches on words rather than dates. This search resulted in 567 files in 53 folders relating to child sexual exploitation.

A further search was undertaken using the key words of 'Operation Glover', 'Op Glover', 'Wind your neck in' and Tony Brookes and / or Antony Brookes. Again, I was unable to specify a specific timescale for this search. Two documents were found, although these documents did were outside of the dates identified (7 February 2007 and 15 March 2015). These documents did relate to your request, however, the following exemptions are engaged (see below for further explanation):

Section 31 (1) (a) (b) (g) - Law Enforcement
Section 38 (1) (a) (b) - Health and Safety
Section 40 (2) - Personal Information
Section 41 – Information Provided in Confidence

As mentioned previously, the OPCC holds 567 files of varying sizes relating to child sexual exploitation.

Your request mentions "the bosses" and "senior politicians" but without any idea of who the "bosses" or "senior politicians" may be, or what exactly to look for, the search is too vast to determine what may be held.

To confirm whether the OPCC holds further information falling within the scope of the request would require each email and document to be read to identify whether it contained any relevant information.

An estimate of the time it would take to undertake this search is set out below. This is based on a random selection of 10 electronic files of different sizes.

The time taken to review those 10 files was 1 hour 15 minutes (75 minutes) an average of 7.5 minutes per file.

7.5 minutes x 567 files = 4252 minutes = 70 hours and 52 minutes.

Therefore, I am unable to confirm whether or not the OPCC holds any further recorded information described in your request and to establish whether it does or does not would exceed the appropriate costs limit.

3. *It is inconceivable that local politicians and Council child welfare personnel would claim that they were not aware of what was going on.*

For example, there would have been many joint meetings between South Yorkshire Police, the Police Authority, and senior council officers, attended by a representative from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and to which office information was shared.

Please provide the minutes of these meetings, and the associated briefings and memos, that will be found in your records.

Memo from the "bosses" instructing the Sheffield officers who were 'told to wind necks in', and the directions from senior management ordering that the instruction be given, as well as the memos from politicians directing that the investigation into child sex exploitation be wound down.

You refer to 'joint meetings' and the likelihood of there being a number of meetings conducted that may have discussed this. To search through all documents relating to meetings held by the OPCC around the dates identified would again be too onerous, and Section 12(2) is engaged.

However, to assist you in your request, the following information may be of assistance.

A large number of public documents, including minutes from public meetings from the South Yorkshire Police Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner can be found

on the UK Web Archive website which can be accessed by clicking on the following link <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/en/ukwa/index>

Hard copy documents relating to South Yorkshire Police Authority, including minutes, agendas, draft minutes and papers are held in the Sheffield Archives.

4. *Within your records will also be the name of the council officer who instructed The Star reporter to 'pull' the article from their web site.*

Please provide copies of any / all input on this issue from past and present MPs, political party members, and / or senior public servants.

See response to question 2. Section 12(2) is engaged.

5. *The PCC asked for a report on this issue. Please provide that report.*

The report referred to is 'An independent review of South Yorkshire Police's handling of child sexual exploitation 1997 – 2016' and is available on the OPCC's website. Therefore, Section 21 – 'Information reasonably accessible by other means' is engaged.

To assist you in your request, the following link has been provided
<https://southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/11/SYP030-Final-report.docx>

EXEMPTIONS APPLIED

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt), to provide you, the applicant, with a notice which:

- a. states that fact,
- b. specifies the exemption in question and
- c. states (if that would not otherwise be apparent why the exemption applies).

The following exemption applies to the disclosure of information:

Section 12(2) - Requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit

Section 21 - Information reasonably accessible by other means

This is an absolute exemption and therefore a Public Interest Test is not relevant.

Section 31 (1) (a) (b) (g) - Law Enforcement

31(1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would likely to prejudice –

- (a) the prevention or detection of crime
- (b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders
- (g) the exercise by any public authority of its functions for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2)

This exemption is qualified and prejudice based. The authority has to consider and describe the harm that would occur if a full disclosure of information was released.

Section 31 provides a prejudice based exemption which protects a variety of law enforcement interests. It is subject to the Public Interest Test.

Section 38 (1) (a) (b) - Health and Safety

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to –

- (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
- (b) endanger the safety of any individual

This exemption is qualified and prejudice based. The authority has to consider and describe the harm that would occur if a full disclosure of information was released. It is subject to the Public Interest Test.

Section 40 (2) - Personal Information

This is an absolute exemption and therefore a Public Interest Test is not relevant.

However, for clarity, I will explain my rationale for engaging this exemption. Section 40(2) provides that information is exempt if it is the personal data of someone other than the applicant and disclosure would breach any of the data protection principles. The term 'personal data' means data that relates to a living individual who can be identified.

Section 41 – Information Provided in Confidence

This is an absolute and class-based exemption. Although not qualified, there is a requirement to conduct a Public Interest Test on whether the common law duty of confidentiality can be overcome. This differs from the usual Public Interest Test applied under FOI insofar as the default position favours non-disclosure unless overwhelming evidence is provided favouring disclosure.

Document One

Overall Harm

In considering whether or not this information should be disclosed, consideration has been given to the potential harm to members of the public and police officers that would be caused by disclosure.

The police service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities it serves. The general public are also aware that modern day policing is intelligence led and changes on a day to day basis. Some of the information you request relates to operational policing tactics which if released would impact negatively on future law enforcement responsibilities. There would also be a future impact on the ability of South Yorkshire Police to keep the general public and police officers safe affecting its ability to fulfil its core function of law enforcement.

Due to the nature of investigation into non recent child sexual exploitation, there may be individuals named within the document, who may still feature in a live investigation being led by the National Crime Agency (Op Stovewood). We have not pursued enquires in this regard as it is not deemed necessary and proportion given the other exemptions claimed. However, we reserve the right to revisit this at a later stage should it become necessary to do so.

Harm and Public Interest Test

Section 31 - Considerations favouring disclosure

- Accountability and Use of Public Funds: There is a legitimate public interest in knowing that the Force fulfils its policing functions effectively and efficiently in dealing with particular type of offences and incidents
- Some information is already in the public domain
- The public would be able to take steps to protect themselves

Section 31 - Considerations favouring non-disclosure

- Police resources and the Force's ability to operate effectively and efficiently, would be directly affected. This information would be manipulated by those with criminal intent and compromise police deployment, tactics and capabilities
- A fear of crime will be realised; the document provides detailed information on the crimes which have allegedly taken place
- Individuals will be placed at risk; the document contains personal information (see exemption Section 40(2))

Section 38 – Considerations favouring disclosure

- The public would be reassured that safety in the community is important to the police

- Disclosure would lead to a better awareness of the community in relation to the policing of child sexual exploitation, and more people may be prepared to come forward with further intelligence

Section 38 – Considerations favouring non-disclosure

- Disclosure would provide people intent on criminal means the knowledge to be able to find alternative ways of committing further offences. This would compromise safety of the public and officers
- Future operations would be compromised

Balancing Test

I have carefully considered your request for information. The key test when considering the public interest is to establish whether in all the circumstances of the request, the public interest in disclosing the information is not outweighed by that in maintaining the exemption.

The police service is charged with enforcing the law, the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the public. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing functions and operations and also providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively resourced in order to enforce the law, there is also a strong public interest in safeguarding the public in the communities they live and work.

I am of the opinion that a strong reason for withholding information is that of compromising police tactics and capabilities in relation to child sexual exploitation for the future.

Document Two

In order for Section 41 to be engaged, the following criteria must be fulfilled:

- the authority must have obtained the information from another person,
- its disclosure must constitute a breach of confidence,
- a legal person must be able to bring an action for the breach of confidence to court, and;
- that court action must be likely to succeed.

Section 41(1)(b) stipulates that disclosure must constitute a actionable breach of confidence, 'otherwise than under this Act'. This means that an authority cannot rely on the FOIA as a justification for releasing confidential information if to disclose it under any other circumstances would give rise to an actionable breach of confidence.

I am satisfied that the document identified is a record generated by the OPCC of information given in confidence, is not trivial, nor is it available by any other means. It is also my view that disclosure of this information would constitute an actionable breach of confidence and so disclosure would also be unlawful under the Act. In these circumstances, Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act confers an absolute exemption on disclosure and there is no public interest test to apply.

However, I have considered whether there is a public interest defence for the breach of confidence.

Considerations in favour of maintaining the confidence

- The information was provided in confidence for a defined purpose
- Individuals and organisations may be discouraged from confiding in the PCC if they do not have a degree of certainty that this trust is respected. This could diminish the flow of information, making it more difficult for the PCC to carry out his statutory functions effectively i.e. holding the Chief Constable to account
- The disclosure of information would be an infringement of privacy
- The material also contains information about identifiable individuals (see Section 40 (2) - Personal Information)

Considerations in favour of disclosure

- Disclosure would lead to a better awareness of the community in relation to the policing of child sexual exploitation, and more people may be prepared to come forward with further intelligence

I am of the opinion that it would be detrimental to the provider of the information if the information were disclosed and that disclosure would constitute an actionable breach.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request an internal review by emailing this office.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Telephone: 08456 306060 or 01625 545745

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Carbrook House, Carbrook Hall Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 2EH
Tel: 0114 2964150
Email: Info@southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk
www.southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk



Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Parkin
South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Carbrook House, Carbrook Hall Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 2EH
Tel: 0114 2964150
Email: Info@southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk
www.southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk

APPENDIX A - Confidential Statement of

Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner - 13 March 2015

Public confidence in South Yorkshire Police has been severely damaged by these most recent allegations that the Force failed to listen to hundreds of abused young people in Sheffield as we know they failed in Rotherham.

If I am to do my job, I need to be sure that everything that can reasonably be known about the past is known. This is the first and crucial step if the Force is to get itself into a better place.

However, in the light of what has now been revealed I cannot be certain that we are at that point.

Reluctantly, therefore, I now believe that a full 'Casey-like' county-wide inspection of South Yorkshire Police is necessary to get to an accepted understanding about the past and whether things have changed - which is the first step to restoring public confidence.

I believe the only authorities that can commission such an inspection are the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Home Secretary. Therefore I am now commissioning such an inspection

I met with a group of Sheffield MPs, the Chief Constable and Sheffield City Council this morning and my office is having urgent discussions with the Home Office to agree on how this inspection should proceed.

The inspection needs to be thorough but not drawn out, sufficiently resourced, and recognise the investigations currently being conducted by the Independent Police Complaints' Commission and National Crime Agency. The inspection needs to proceed alongside work the Force is already doing with partners to address recommendations in the Professor Jay and Louise Casey reports. It also needs to work alongside the group I have established to listen to the views of victims, survivors and their families which I am feeding into the Force in relation to reports of CSE now.

If anyone has any information to help identify perpetrators of child sexual exploitation across South Yorkshire, or if anyone would like to talk about their experiences as a police officer, former officer or employee of the Force, I would ask them to come forward. They will be listened to and taken seriously.

END