

The Rotherham *et al* Rape Gangs

A few months ago, I had a brief conversation with a social worker concerning children caught up in the State 'care' system, the Rotherham *et al* rape gangs, the respective roles of Social Services and parents, and various other aspects of the State's assistance (at least, as the State sees it) of families in recent decades. Because our chat was necessarily very brief, I subsequently revisited in a little more depth some of topics we'd touched upon, collating them into a letter to the social worker concerned, of which this short document is just one part.

Social Worker: "It's about keeping children safe."

Elizabeth: "The State has the worst possible outcomes for keeping children 'safe' ... And what about Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford, etc – you know what I'm referring to; police and Social Services failed – and still are failing - to keep all those young girls 'safe'..."

"In November 2010 [in] Rotherham ... five 'sexual predators' were convicted of grooming three girls, two aged 13 and one 15, all under children's social care supervision, before using them for sex" [Jay Report, p141].

"Last week five men were given life sentences for raping, torturing and sex-trafficking six girls – one as young as 12 – over six years. Three girls were in council care ... similar stories have recently come from Rotherham, Derby and Rochdale, also involving the systematic abuse of young girls in care" [What Our Judges Forget].

Fears of Racism

Tragically, the pernicious ideology of Identity Politics also affects the situation of the thousands of young girls who have been repeatedly gang-raped and sodomised, pimped and trafficked, tortured, and some even murdered - Fiona Ivison, Lucy Lowe (also her mother and sister), Becky Watson, Vicky Round, Laura Wilson, and Charlene Downes - by the Rotherham *et al* rape gangs since the 1990s (and still ongoing), who have *not* been "kept safe" by Social Services who have looked the other way because they have been more concerned about being called 'racists' than safeguarding these children from *very real and very serious* sexual abuse:

"[S]taff described their nervousness about identifying the ethnic origins of perpetrators for fear of being thought racist; others remembered clear direction from their managers not to do so" [Jay Report, pp.2,93].

"[T]he responsibility of all agencies, particularly social services, the police, and schools, is to protect those at risk from grooming and sexual exploitation and help to bring to justice those responsible, totally regardless of race or background ... To do otherwise leads to what occurred, or in fact didn't occur, for far too long at Rotherham and Rochdale, and quite likely other places as well" [HofC, *Sexual Exploitation*, pp.52,57].

"[A] Home Office researcher ... said she had been accused of being insensitive when she told one official that most of the perpetrators were from Rotherham's Pakistani community. A female colleague talked to her about the incident. 'She said you must never refer to that again ... her other response was to book me on a two-day ethnicity and diversity course to raise my awareness of ethnic issues'" [Home Office Worker Investigating Rotherham].

"[T]he public sector ... is terrified of the word racist ... police, social services ... Decisions, often significant ones, can be decided on the basis of whether a racism accusation could result" [Rotherham – the Perfect Storm].

"[The authorities] were petrified of being called racist and so reverted to the default of political correctness" [Ann Cryer, MP, quoted in: *Rotherham – the Perfect Storm*].

"[T]he police, the social services and the care system, seemed eager to ignore the sickening exploitation that was happening before their eyes. Terrified of accusations of racism, desperate not to undermine the official creed of cultural diversity, they took no action against obvious abuse" [Taj Hargey, imam, quoted in: *Rotherham – the Perfect Storm*].

“It was always the same. If the perpetrators played the race card, then the police, the social services, they melted away” [Emma Jackson, rape victim, quoted in *Rotherham – the Perfect Storm*].

“[W]hite professionals’ oversensitivity to political correctness and fear of appearing racist may well have contributed to justice being stalled” [Nazi Afzal, CPS, quoted in *Group-Based Sexual Exploitation*, p.44].

“Politically-correct authorities won’t deal with it properly until middle England wakes up and forces them to” [Mohan Singh, Sikh Awareness Society, quoted at *Another Night in Rochdale*].

“[S]omehow we think racism is worse than anything – even the rape of girls” [*Please, Let Me Go*, p.73].

“To our eternal shame, the UK reached rock bottom when social workers, police & politicians colluded with the crimes by taking no action. They would call it multiculturalism - which stinks. It is also utter cowardice - which also stinks” [*Multicultural Niceties Gave Gangs a Licence to Groom*].

The pathetic fear of being called a ‘nasty’ name trumped Social Services’ professional – and, I would have thought, basic human and compassionate - duty to protect the helpless child victims of this evil abuse.

Police, Social Services, Politicians...

“Outreach groups from around the UK have been reporting cases of child sexual exploitation to the police and social services but most people don’t know this because, so far, no one’s been listening, and police, politicians and many other groups have been too frightened to talk about the so-called racial issue and have therefore decided to run away from the whole problem – allowing the gangs to take hold” [*Unthinkable*, p.273].

“Under Section 18 of the Children Act 2004, the director of Children’s Services has responsibility for ensuring that the local authority meets their specific duties to organise and plan services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They knew there was a problem, And they failed in their duty to protect children, and to do something about it” [*Unthinkable*, p.244].

“[E]vidence from more than 200 restricted-access documents ... show that, in one area, police and child protection agencies have held extensive knowledge of this crime model for ten years, yet have never publicly acknowledged its existence. The internal police and social services correspondence, research papers, intelligence reports and case files are a detailed history of alleged child sexual exploitation in South Yorkshire since 2000, focusing on Rotherham” [*Police Files Reveal Vast Child Protection Scandal*].

“Nazir Afzal [who became the new CPS head in May 2011, said] ... ‘There was a lack of understanding about the way these networks operate. Today it’s on the radar of every justice body and every public authority. It wasn’t three or four years ago, but it should have been.’ But these networks were ‘on the radar’ three or four years ago. They had been on the radar of the police, social services, the CPS, parents, and outreach groups for more than twenty years” [*Unthinkable*, p.203].

Child Care Professionals: Denial, Downplaying, Blaming

“1999: *Community Care* magazine (read by everyone in social care) publishes an article explaining how young girls involved in prostitution may ‘defend her man to the hilt’ and ‘social workers don’t always see it [prostitution] as abuse’. They are not usually ‘nice, polite children. They tend to be scruffy and have attitude problems’ and are, therefore, seen by some social workers to be at fault” [*Unthinkable*, p.144].

“What could possibly motivate child-care professionals to allow schoolgirls to suffer this abuse for so many years, and then be so deeply in denial that these professionals would demand that no-one even discuss the ethnicity of the gang members? Did the pressure brought to bear on *Channel 4* over the documentary *Edge of the City* scare child-care professionals into compromising their integrity? Were the officials of public-service trade unions, supporters of UAF, putting pressure on social workers to turn a blind eye? Did the theoretical framework taught in social work degrees/in-service training encourage these child-care professionals to view the schoolgirls as willing sexual agents and to view the Muslim grooming activity as part of the rich diversity of multicultural Britain? ... These are not rhetorical questions” [*Easy Meat: Inside Britain’s Grooming Gang Scandal*, p.126].

In Oxford

“Oxfordshire’s social services ... was insufficiently well organised, weak at performance management, inclined to overrate its own performance, and was resistant to change. ... ‘[T]he focus on the girls and their families as the source of the problems, the corresponding lack of focus on the perpetrator ... not believing the girls, not picking up the hints that they were giving about their abuse and not being inquisitive [interested] enough about what was happening to them ... The language used by professionals was one which saw the girls as the source not the victims of their extreme behaviour and they received much less sympathy as a result.’ One manager is described in the report as telling a parent their daughter was ‘streetwise and loves it’” [*Bullfinch Grooming Scandal*].

“A number [of the local victims] were in the care of the local authorities. ... one of the girls was drugged and raped by a gang of men. She managed to escape and hail a taxi which drove her to the care home she lived in. Staff at the care home refused to pay the taxi fare, so the taxi driver took the girl straight back to the property from which she had just escaped, where the gang then raped her again” [*Rape Gangs: A Story Set in Leafy Oxfordshire*].

“In [her apology] Ms Simons [CE of Oxford CC] ... gives an apology to the people who the Council has let down ... From start to finish, every thing about it is wrong. Its tone and content suggest that Ms Simons is apologising for a delay in local bin collections, or for delays in providing pavement-salt during inclement weather. Nothing about it fits the appallingness – the sheer, unimaginable horror – of what had gone on in leafy, lovely, dreaming-spires Oxfordshire on her watch” [*Rape Gangs: A Story Set in Leafy Oxfordshire*].

“It is absolutely incredible that [Joanna Simons] has ‘escaped’ without being held to any accountability whatsoever ... It can be no wonder that ordinary people see the council’s refusal to sack her as the ‘corruption of the establishment’ ... [She and Sara Thornton] are failures. That both of them cannot understand this show just how brazen and arrogant they are. It seems that they are only concerned with protecting their pensions and their massive salaries” [comment at: YouTube: *Oxford Child Abuse: The Disgrace and Dishonour of Joanna Simons and Sara Thornton*].

In Rochdale

“Steve Garner, who worked in Rochdale Social Services for 11 years and was the AD for Children’s Social Care between Oct 2009 and Oct 2012, told us he was also unaware of the scale of the issue of CSE” [HofC, *Child Sexual Exploitation*, p.23].

“[T]here were staff who gave evidence to the parliamentary inquiry who said that social services in Rochdale knew about the problem as far back as 2004, and nothing was done ... having been scared into inaction, councils then tried to conceal the fact that they had failed in their duty of child protection” [*Easy Meat*, pp.122-3].

“Rochdale Council claimed not to have known, or at least not to have understood, what was going on. They’ve been on a ‘journey’, they said, as if they’d signed up for some kind of fancy self-awareness course and everyone was supposed to say, ‘Well done, that’s nice. We hope you’ve learned a few things.’ But they did know, or they should have done ... If Social Services had been on a ‘journey’, it wasn’t the same one I’d been on. Nor Leah, Roxanne, Alicia, Paige, Courtney, Nadine, and all the others they’re still either investigating or who never came forward. What we went through was real. Not packaged, not dressed up, not made to fit someone’s politics or agenda. We didn’t care about things like that. We just wanted to be rescued” [*Girl A: My Story*, pp.329-330,333].

“When things eventually got tough for both the police and Social Services, they’d claim that grooming like this wasn’t fully understood then. They knew about it, of course, but just dismissed it as girls like me going off the rails and making what became their new buzz word: ‘lifestyle choices’. No, they said, they didn’t understand it. Even though they had files full of evidence that told them exactly what sort of behaviour was going on in their town and how they could have moved in to stop it, and rescue at least some of the girls like me ... Rochdale Social Services, though, are the people I blame the most” [*Girl A*, pp.330,338].

In Rotherham

“I had no idea whatsoever of the scale of SCE abuse that had occurred to young children in Rotherham over a period of more than a decade” [Martin Kimber, CE, RMBC, quoted in: *Casey Report*, p.22].

“Denial of the accuracy of Jay’s methods and findings ... Denial of the ‘scale and scope of the issue’ ... Denial of culpability ... Denial [that] CSE is still an issue ... Denial – the national spotlight ... That children had been exploited and abused, that perpetrators had not been brought to justice, that the Council had not been able or willing to protect them was not, with some exceptions, at the forefront of many ... minds” [*Casey Report*, pp.19-27].

“Within social care, the scale and seriousness of the problem was underplayed by senior managers ... Some at a senior level in the Police and children’s social care continued to think the extent of the problem, as described by youth workers, was exaggerated ... The terms used by many people we spoke to about how those in authority ... dealt with CSE were ‘sweeping it under the carpet’, ‘turning a blind eye’, and ‘keeping a lid on it’. One person said the past ‘the people above just didn’t want to know’” [Jay Report, pp.1,111].

“[F]ew services actually saw, observed and heard Child S [in Rotherham], as the highly vulnerable child that she was, and whom society had a responsibility to protect. There were similar attitudes seen in the Rochdale case, where the victims were not taken seriously and were not protected by those who had a responsibility to do so ... When victims such as Emma Jackson approached the authorities for help, many were treated in an appalling manner. Even reports by frontline health workers were ignored” [HoFC, *Child Sexual Exploitation*, pp.27,28].

“Ms Thacker [SD of Children’s and Young People’s Services, RMBC] had shocked colleagues by seeking to downplay the problem of child sexual exploitation during a safeguarding meeting May [2014]. She had argued that ‘agencies need to retain a sense of proportionality’ about such offences because ‘it only accounts for 2.3% of the council’s safeguarding work in Rotherham’” [Childcare Chief in Scandal Quits Her £115,000 Job]. (£)

In Telford

“A council-commissioned report told how social workers [in Telford] knew of the child sex crimes in the late 90s ... Council files show [that] social services, teachers, and mental health workers were fully aware of what was happening but did little. They also failed to tell police. Files admitted failing on ‘concerns of physical abuse and sexual exploitation’” [Why Weren’t They Saved? Whistleblowers Silenced].

In Other Councils Across the UK

“Both Ofsted and the Home Affairs Select Committee found that some of the councils who have come under scrutiny have deliberately tried to conceal information in order to defend themselves and their staff from criticism over their failure to protect the children in their care. ... It is a staggering catalogue of failure, and sometimes even deception, across many councils in Britain” [Easy Meat, pp.123-4,127].

“Time and again, the heads of children’s safeguarding boards (CSBs), police and social services have published wishy-washy press releases, admitting the smallest possible amount of culpability, i.e., ‘We didn’t do anything because we weren’t aware’ but ‘lessons have been learned’ and ‘actions have already been taken to rectify the problem’. These lazy, meaningless, blame-dodging phrases are designed to hide the truth, to allow those responsible for the current crisis in child protection to carry on as if nothing has happened, to continue without taking responsibility or even explaining in any detail what went wrong, and what has since been done to put things right, so that the same mistakes will never occur again” [Unthinkable, pp.vii-viii].

Girls in ‘Care’ Homes Across the Country

“Sometimes a girl is put into a care home. But the gangs know where they are. They wait outside, bombard them with texts and catch them – along with other girls – as they come out” [Unthinkable, p.55].

“The men had grown confident. It was so easy with the care home girls they didn’t have to bother with much of a ‘seduction’, just bring them, use them and send them back. Nobody cared. No one would believe them. No one would even listen ... When a staff member asked them where they’d been, they said they couldn’t remember. The men waited for them every day. They spent more time out of the care home than in, staying in flats all over the north-west, above restaurants, kebab shops. The care home knew. Nothing was done” [Unthinkable, pp.126-127].

“A number [of the local victims] were in the care of the local authorities. ... one of the girls was drugged and raped by a gang of men. She managed to escape and hail a taxi which drove her to the care home she lived in. Staff at the care home refused to pay the taxi fare, so the taxi driver took the girl straight back to the property from which she had just escaped, where the gang then raped her again” [Rape Gangs: A Story Set in Leafy Oxfordshire].

“1991: An official inquiry is launched by Bradford Council to find out why pimps were able to pick up girls each evening from three care homes and take them to men in houses, flats and guest houses, where they were sold for sex. The pimps returned the girls each morning. All the men were of Pakistani heritage” [Unthinkable, p.128].

“[I]n an interview with the Sikh Awareness Society, Andrew Norfolk [*Times* journalist] does indicate that grooming activities were known about in Bradford in 1991: the gang were taking girls from a children’s home, prostituting them, then returning them to the children’s home at night ... child-care professionals knew what was going on” [*Easy Meat*, p.65].

“Nikki told me how she’d been kidnapped and raped by dozens of men on repeated nights ... ‘Does anyone at the care home know about this?’ ‘The people at the care home know about it but aren’t bothered. The police know too but they haven’t done anything’ ... I tried to imagine what that experience must have been like for Nikki – to be sent somewhere for her own safety, only to fall prey to monsters worse than the ones we had sworn to protect her from ... How many other children had suffered similarly?” [*Unthinkable*, pp.145,147].

“2003: Papers report that Victoria ‘Vicky’ Agoglia, fifteen, a white girl who absconded from her privately run Rochdale children’s home twenty-one times in two months, died of a heroin overdose after being used for sex by older men who paid her in alcohol, coke and heroin. Vicky, who had ambitions of becoming a model, had previously reported being raped. She was in the care of Manchester Social Services, who had placed her in a care home run by a company called Green Corns” [*Unthinkable*, p.156].

“Hassan ... particularly liked a girl called Becca, who couldn’t have been much more than twelve years old. She was from a children’s home and they went for her whenever they wanted because they knew they could, I suppose. The home was eventually shut down a few years later, probably because ... the people running the place were complicit in it all, but not before a lot of damage was done to a lot of children. I know there was a social worker who had tried to do something about it, but no one listened to her at the time either. Hassan also frequently used another young girl from the same house called Hayley – she was maybe a year older than Becca and they were both tiny little things, so young and vulnerable ... These men seemed particularly fearless - they would just pick the girls they knew off the streets, mainly girls from care home or hostels. They seemed to think they would never be touched for it, and neither did I” [*Please, Let Me Go*, pp.99-100, 106].

“[In Rotherham various] reports revealed that organised groups of men who groomed, pimped and trafficked girls across the country were identified by police and social services but never prosecuted. As far back as 1996, a social services investigation found that girls were being coerced into ‘child prostitution’ by a small group of men who regularly collected them from residential care homes. Up to seventy girls were said to be involved ... Despite repeated reports handed over to police and social services from Risky Business, nothing was done” [*Unthinkable*, pp.242-3].

“There are forty-seven care homes in Rochdale (Haringey in North London, a similar-sized borough, has two private care homes), most of which are in areas where Asian [sic] populations have settled, and it is these girls who were preyed upon most and first, where the gangs learned how to operate, before turning their attention to any young girl walking around town and then finally waiting outside school gates” [*Unthinkable*, p.277].

Home Office Pilot Report (2002)

This report “contained severe criticisms of the agencies in Rotherham involved with CSE. The most serious concerned alleged indifference towards, and ignorance of, CSE on the part of senior managers. The report also stated that responsibility was continuously placed on young people’s shoulders, rather than with the suspected abusers ... there was a great deal of personal hostility and anger towards the researcher and her work on the part of senior people ... The secrecy around this report, the discrepancies in the accounts we received from senior people and the treatment of the researcher were all deeply troubling to the Inquiry team. They have inevitably led to suspicion of collusion and intended cover-up” [*Jay Report*, pp.83,87].

“A Home Office official [Adele Weir] who investigated the sexual exploitation of children in Rotherham accused the council of being involved in the unauthorised removal of information from her office ... she had sent her report to both the council and the Home Office on a Friday, but when she returned on Monday she found her office had been raided ... [she] said that at one point the council had tried to get her sacked and the report was never published” [*Home Office Worker Investigating Rotherham Child Abuse ‘Had Data Stolen’*].

“In a statement Adele [Weir] made to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee in 2014, she said that ... right from the beginning she came across what she described as ‘poor professional practice’ in the police force, social services and education ... ‘I was able to observe and record several situations where children were left in situations of risk by those who were employed to protect them ... I encountered numerous examples of child protection issues being disregarded, dismissed or minimized ... I was placed under pressure to change and present my findings in a way that presented services in Rotherham in a better light and diluted the findings of

the pilot ... I find it personally and professionally a tragedy that Rotherham MVBBC did not avail itself of the opportunity it had to explore the information and evidence that I was providing to senior managers in key services in Rotherham in 2002” [Broken and Betrayed, pp.96-120].

Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Report (2012/2013/2014)

“Forgetting the Child: Children who are at high risk of CSE, or who are already victims, are often simply ignored or discounted. They are invisible; not seen or heard. Whilst 98% of LSCBs reported CSE is a strategic priority, almost half were unable to report how many victims had been identified during 2012 in their local area. There was continued reference to children ‘putting themselves at risk’, rather than the perpetrators being the risk to children” [p.2].

“Failing to Engage with Children and Young People: There is a lack of professional and agency awareness and understanding on how to engage with children and young people. Specialist organizations highlighted [that] statutory services often have a poor understanding of the children they work with and their specific needs. The Inquiry noted a significant difference between children’s views of their needs and what would help and professional understanding of what would help” [p.2].

“In Denial: Too many people who should be protecting children are in denial about the realities of CSE and therefore do not believe what children tell them” [p.2].

“Failing to Recognise Victims: Damaging and persuasive myths still exist about the profiles of both victims and perpetrators. This results in different patterns of sexual exploitation being ignored and victims left unprotected, for example in relation to gangs. Only 35% of LSCBs have undertaken any activity to obtain a detailed local picture of the scale and nature of CSE” [p.2].

HofC Home Affairs Select Committee Report (June 2013)

“There has been a failure among care professionals to recognise the fact that some children are being exploited. Instead many professionals referred to them as being ‘promiscuous’, engaging in ‘risky behaviour’ or having ‘consented’ to sexual activity ... the young person was ‘prostituting herself’, ‘risk-fuelled’, ‘sexually available’ or even ‘asking for it’. Such an attitude was evident in the Rochdale case” [p.12].

“Directors of Childrens [sic] Social care must ensure that they have received adequate training on the issue of CSE. They must also take full responsibility for the failure of their department ... no matter what they knew. It is their personal responsibility to find out what is taking place in their department” [p.14].

“[S]ocial services failed to act effectively in 50 cases of children who were identified as being at risk of grooming by the Working Group ... Sara Rowbotham of the Rochdale Crisis Intervention Team is adamant that the problem of child sexual exploitation in Rochdale was evident as far back as 2004 when the [CIT] was established to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies in the borough. She told us that she had at that time made it very clear to child protective services that vulnerable young people were being coerced in to group sexual activity, but no action was taken ... ‘They were treated appallingly by protective services’” [pp.21,22].

“Both Rochdale and Rotherham Councils were inexcusably slow to realise that the widespread, organised sexual abuse of children, many of them in the care of the local authority, was taking place on their doorstep ... a woeful lack of professional curiosity or indifference, from the Chief Executive who claims to have known nothing about the problem during his first decade in post, to the Director of Children’s Services who saw prosecution of sex offenders as a desirable but ancillary goal, through the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board which tried to suppress criticisms in a Serious Case Review, to the individual practitioners [social workers] who, in a chilling confirmation of the abusers’ blackmail and threats, dismissed the victims – children as young as 12 – as ‘prostitutes’. That it took so long for anybody, at any level from the CE downward, to look at reports of young girls with multiple, middle-aged ‘boyfriends’, hanging around takeaways, drinking and taking drugs, and to think that it might be worth investigating further, is shocking. Because of the widespread publicity, not least due to the investigative journalism of Andrew Norfolk in *The Times* and the subsequent public outrage, both local authorities now recognise that nature and extent of localised grooming” [pp.27-28].

Jay Report (2014)

“CSE became the focus of attention in Rotherham in the late 1990s, when the Risky Business project was established. Several experienced workers told us that they had come across examples of CSE from the early-mid 1990s onwards, and there was awareness at that time that looked after children in local residential units were at risk of being targeted” [p.11].

“2007/2008: The Commission for Social Care Inspection’s Annual Performance Reviews ... found that management oversight of looked-after children had not ensured that they had been safeguarded” [p.19].

“Autumn 2009: Ofsted rated Rotherham children’s services ‘inadequate’ on the grounds that the safety of children could not be assured” [p.11].

“The perpetrators targeted children’s residential units and residential services for care leavers. It was not unusual for children in residential services and schools to introduce other children to the perpetrators” [p.37].

“Child D (2003) was 13 when she was groomed by a violent sexual predator who raped and trafficked her ... Police and children’s social care were ineffective and seemed to blame the child ... An initial assessment accurately described the risks to Child D but appeared to blame her for ‘placing herself at risk of sexual exploitation and danger.’ Other than Risky Business, agencies showed no comprehension that she had been groomed at 13, that she was terrified of the perpetrators, and that her attempts to placate them were themselves a symptom of the serious emotional harm that CSE had caused her. Risky Business worked very hard with Child D and her parents. None of the other agencies intervened effectively to protect her” [p.39].

“Risky Business made referrals to children’s social care but in the early years, the response in terms of assessments, risk assessments and safeguarding was rarely good enough” [p.45].

“We spoke to some members of the Key Players Group and gained the impression of dedicated professional people who understood the severity of the problem and were not listened to ... ‘You were made to feel you were making a fuss about these girls’ ... There was general disbelief in the problem they described” [p.103].

Casey Report (2015)

“Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is not fit for purpose ... it is failing in its duties to protect vulnerable children and young people from harm ... The Council’s culture is unhealthy: bullying, sexism, suppression and misplaced ‘political correctness’ have cemented its failures. The Council is currently incapable of tackling its weaknesses without a sustained intervention ... a council in denial about serious and on-going safeguarding failures ... failure to address past weaknesses, in particular in Children’s Social Care ... a culture of covering up uncomfortable truths, silencing whistle-blowers and paying off staff rather than dealing with difficult issues ... denial of knowledge of the ‘scale and scope’ of CSE, blaming others, and denial that CSE remains a serious problem ... The Council does not use inspection to learn and improve” [pp.9-11].

“The treatment of victims of exploitation by the authorities in Rotherham has been historically poor in the extreme. In particular, their treatment by South Yorkshire Police and the various professionals that work in Children’s Social Care has meant that they have been failed in many ways. Ultimately, they have not been given the attention, help and protection they deserved, and perpetrators have been left to flourish ... The attitudes of Children’s Social Care towards the victims of CSE and consequently the treatment of them over the years betrays a failure to adapt services according to the nature of CSE, a disinclination to learn from past experience and a concerning tendency to blame the victims for the abuse they had experienced ... There was no understanding that their difficult and challenging behaviour was a manifestation of the exploitation ... There was no understanding of the level of intimidation victims were experiencing and neither was this accounted for by professionals” [Casey Report, p.55-6].

“The law is clear on what constitutes unlawful behaviour with a child but this was not reflected in the attitude shown by Children’s Services or the police in Rotherham ... K was only 13 years old yet the excerpts from her social care files plainly show that professionals did not see her as a child and neither did they see her wholly as a victim ... A section 47 report ... was written which put the responsibility for K’s behaviour fairly and squarely with her. There was no reference to her age and or [sic] that the sexual abuse was unlawful let alone any understanding of grooming or sexual exploitation” [p.57].

“The conclusion that I have reluctantly reached is that both today and in the past, Rotherham has at times taken more care of its reputation than it has of its most needy ... [Rotherham] was repeatedly told by its own youth service what was happening and it chose not only not to act, but to close that service down. This is important because it points to how it has dealt with uncomfortable truths put before it” [p.5].

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Review (2015)

“Today’s Serious Case Review says that from 2005 to 2011, the girls were badly let down by those meant to protect them. There was no evidence, it said, of wilful neglect, but there was plenty of evidence of weak organization, national guidance not being followed, insufficient curiosity, and judgmental attitudes which viewed the girls as bringing the problems upon themselves” [YouTube: *Oxford Child Abuse Inquiry*].

“The behaviour of the girls was interpreted through eyes, and a language, which saw them as young adults rather than children, and therefore assumed they had control of their actions; ... the girls’ accounts were disbelieved or thought to be exaggerated; ... [it] was not recognised as being as terrible as it was because of a view that saw them as consenting, or bringing problems upon themselves, and the victims were often perceived to be hostile to and dismissive of staff; as a result the girls were sometimes treated without common courtesies, and as one victim described it, by ‘snide remarks’ ... an apparent tolerance of (or failure to be alarmed by) unlawful sexual activity ... insufficient curiosity about what was happening to the girls, or to investigate further incidents ... there were many, often stark, indications that what was happening to [the girls] was extreme and out of the ordinary ... insufficient attention to investigating and disrupting the activities of the alleged perpetrators (compared to the effort to contain the girls’ behaviour)” [Some of the points from the Safeguarding Board at: *Bullfinch Grooming Scandal*].

“The catalogue of failures within all agencies is extensive. Failure to act on clear evidence of cases of child sexual abuse ... failure to provide protection to children when they needed it, failure to draw serious issues to the attention of senior management, failure to act on the concerns of junior staff, chaotic arrangements for child protection, unminuted meetings, and a professional disregard for the illegality, exploitation and dangers of young girls induced and forced to have sex with older men. ... How was it that a professional tolerance of under-age sexual activity developed ... to the extent that it contributed to failure to stop the abuse?” [Liz Brighouse, MP, and Andrew Smith, MP, quoted at: *Bullfinch Grooming Scandal*].

Risky Business

“In the run-up to Operation Central, Rupert Chang [police sergeant in charge of the Safer Neighbourhood team for the area] and his team had gone to great lengths to build a rapport with the girls we [Risky Business] felt were being exploited ... which is more than can be said for social services ... my battles with them had lasted a long time and would, sadly, get much worse as time went on” [*Broken and Betrayed*, pp.195-6, 203].

“By their actions or, more accurately, inaction, the council and police allowed Rotherham’s sexual predators to believe they were untouchable; that nothing would happen to them as long as they didn’t cause too much trouble. In that climate, the abuse of children flourished. That, to me, is criminal and I hope that eventually the weight of the law recognizes that and deals appropriately with those [police and ss] who chose not to listen to Rotherham’s victims” [*Broken and Betrayed*, pp.358-9].

“Risky Business had been doing everything but shouting through the council’s doors with a megaphone ... reports revealed that organised groups of men who groomed, pimped and trafficked girls across the country were identified by police and social services but never prosecuted ... Despite repeated reports handed over to police and social services from Risky Business, nothing was done” [*Unthinkable*, pp.239,242-3].

From the Risky Business Case Files

“A fourteen-year-old who was being sexually exploited and whose social worker considered that the child’s mother was not able to accept that what her daughter was going through was just ‘part of growing up’”

“A twelve-year-old girl who had been sexually assaulted and had indecent pictures taken of her. Her case was closed by a social-work manager because she wasn’t considered to be at risk of sexual exploitation”

“A thirteen-year-old who was raped, trafficked and threatened. Although Risky Business worked very hard with her and her parents, a social-care assessment said she ‘placed herself at risk of sexual exploitation and danger’”

After Social Services Betrayal of Risky Business Re: Murder of Laura Wilson

“I knew I could no longer work for a council that not only denied children were being abused, but would castigate the very people who were trying to protect them and bring the issue into the public eye. I thought of Laura’s mum. Much as I needed a job, could I really stay with an organization that was lying to a mother about her daughter’s death in this report?” [*Broken and Betrayed*, pp.253-4].

The Girls Speak...

“[S]everal of the victims of CSE were interviewed ... The victims all told the interviewer that they felt they had been let down by children’s social care” [HofC, *Child Sexual Exploitation*, p.22].

“These young girls felt scared of talking to authorities to disclose CSE in case they got into trouble. They were also nervous about using telephone lines and about where the information would go to, as they never knew who was at the end of the phone ... One girl said she felt that social workers did not really care and were just ‘box ticking’ until the end of their shift” [*Real Voices*, p.23].

“Often [the girls and boys] do not get the actual support they ask for but get into a situation where they feel they are being controlled and told not to put themselves in that situation again. The other problem they identified was that when they get a different social worker, the new one works with the notes from the previous one ... [these young people] wanted more control over what was in their files and more of their own words and updates on how they felt things had changed. Social workers, talking to young people and agreeing what might go into their file, written in their own words, could be a way of building trust” [*Real Voices*, p.23].

In Oxford

“They [Oxford Council, police, social services] have let me down a lot” [*Bullfinch Grooming Scandal*].

“I just want to know why social services took us away and sent us to so many s*** holes full of paedos” [Lara, quoted in: *You Can’t Have My Daughter*, p.172].

In Rotherham

“I’ll never forgive social services for putting me in care” [Debbie, quoted in: *Broken and Betrayed*, p.3].

“They talked about me like I wasn’t even there. They were very harsh” [Child, quoted in: *If Only Someone Had Listened*].

“I was a victim when police and social services ignored me. Now I’ve gone on to survive, so I’m a survivor” [Child, quoted in: *Broken and Betrayed*, p.331].

“I still thought I was to blame as neither the police nor social services had believed me and had always told me what happened had been my fault ... Some services are now in place and work is continuing to find out what those survivors of CSE need, **not what those professionals think we need**” [Jessica, quoted in: *Broken and Betrayed*, pp.369,372]. (italics in original, emboldening mine).

“Emma Jackson, a survivor, said that few practitioners understood what went on ... ‘They didn’t listen to me ... they must be trained to understand CSE better and intervene earlier. There should be more people like Risky Business’” [*Jay Report*, p.23].

“Emma Jackson ... was scathing about her involvement with Rotherham Council during the period she was subject to child sexual exploitation. Having been approached by her parents for help, both she and her father are adamant that [the Council] were not in the least bit supportive ... Ms Thacker emphasised that her priority was prevention of child sexual exploitation, however according to Emma Jackson the response of the Council is still lacking and child sexual exploitation is still occurring in Rotherham” [HofC, *Child Sexual Exploitation*, p.20].

“I survived. ... I’m not a politician, but there must be something the government, the police and social services can do to root out these criminal gangs. Set up dedicated squads, go undercover... and, first of all, take it seriously. Respect the girls and women” [*The End of My World*, pp.276-7].

“My name is Elizabeth, and I am one of the 1400 Rotherham ‘Survivors’ now estimated to be 2800 and I am trying ... to make the Police and Councils accountable for totally ignoring thousands of vulnerable girls, who like me, have suffered horrific abuse, trafficking, beatings, race hate, and gang rapes, at the hands of violent grooming gangs now operating ALL over Britain ... We would also like a criminal investigation to be launched by the government into Police forces and Councils throughout Britain who have stood back and allowed these men to traffic, beat, gang rape and destroy the lives of so many girls for decades” [Petition: *Stop Evil Rape Gangs Getting Such Short Sentences and Help Me Get Justice for Survivors*].

Girl A: My Story (Girl A, 2013)

“I am becoming aware that I was let down by some of the very people who should have been there to help me: the people who either didn’t realise or didn’t care that I desperately needed to be rescued, or else turned a blind eye to it because to have acknowledged what was going on was, to them, unthinkable. Because how could they admit, even to themselves, that teenage girls on their own doorstep were being preyed on in such a way? Trafficking was something that happened in other countries far, far away, wasn’t it? And anyway, if a few girls like me slipped through society’s safety net, did it really matter?” [pp.3-4].

“[The police] never seemed to care whether I was OK, whether the gang had any hold on me ... I felt betrayed by them, as though after all I’d been through I was just a joke to be laughed at – by the gang, the police, by Social Services. I was locked into the life Emma and the gang were forcing on me ... it was rape in the feral, urban landscape that neither the police nor the local social workers seemed prepared to acknowledge even existed” [pp.136-7,159].

“[T]wo social workers called at home, having made an appointment to see me and my family ... Right there in front of my mum and dad, [Anne, one of the social workers] talked about me being a prostitute, saying I was sleeping with men for money ... Anne didn’t seem interested in what I was going through: when I talked about the video interview I’d done with the police and the evidence I’d given about the situation I was in, she said it had nothing to do with Social Services ... she was here to see me about the baby ... [Mum and Dad had] been led [by the ‘professional’ social worker] into thinking I was a prostitute. Even though I was only fifteen ... Social Services did nothing to help me, and certainly nothing to help me get away from Harry’s place ... they told me to give them a call once [the baby] was born if I decided I didn’t want it. That was it. They just didn’t seem interested” [pp.185-8].

“I had always felt as though Social Services were always trying to make me look like the one in the wrong: the prostitute, the silly, drunk schoolgirl who was messing everyone about. In some of their reports they talked about drugs, making it look as though I took them. But I never did – not beyond trying them and deciding I didn’t like them. But it felt as though in their eyes I was always the bad person. I know that I drank, and I’d drunk in the early months of the pregnancy, but I only started drinking when it was all going on with the gang. To block it out” [pp.223-4].

“In their eyes I was just a wayward teenager who’d made the choice to sleep with takeaway workers and taxi drivers in their forties and fifties; to have sex with them one after the other, this way and that way, and then be driven back to a fleapit of a house to recover in time for the next round of ‘fun’” [pp.239-40].

“At one point, the head of targeted services ... was asked to give me extra support. His department promptly sent along the two social workers I hated the most. One of them, Anne, came back later, asking me a million questions about Chloe’s paternity. I was so angry I wanted to throw her out. It all just added to the pressure, but Rochdale Social Services didn’t seem to see it that way” [p.264].

Real Voices (2014)

“[Social workers] just take you off your mums” [p.17].

“[All the young girls (and boys)] all had a number of different social workers. One said: ‘Sometimes they do not even tell you that you are getting a new one. They just turn up. Nowadays you cannot trust anyone. So if you keep it to yourself, you can trust yourself. I would only ask my brothers and sisters for help. No-one else’” [p.23]. “[The girls (and boys)] were also worried about would happen if social workers went into their families: ‘You just tell them the good things to keep them happy and keep the meeting short. To them it’s just a job, but to us it’s our lives. They go home at the end of the day. If you need help after that, you cannot get hold of them. Yet from Friday at 5pm to Monday is the most likely time you would need to phone them. Most of them do not let you have a phone number. It’s just a 9-to-5 office number’” [p.23].

“You tell a social worker something and they might exaggerate it. Once I mentioned I missed a bus and it went down on my file as ‘has trouble with public transport and getting around.’ Also, I once used an inhaler as a one-off when I was eight and it was down on my file that I was an asthmatic when I wasn’t. It’s your life observed and judged by other people” [p.23].

“I do not think highly of the police. They spoke to us very rude’ ... ‘One social worker was very snobby, and when dad showed her my certificates she looked at me as if to say they were worth nothing. They should be nicer and not stuck up, and politer than they were. One looked down their nose at me” [p.29].

“J has been working with a children’s charity project worker, who has helped her a lot ... ‘It’s only since I’ve been working with (the charity project worker) that I’ve been able to say no to people ... I’m trying to get social services and the other people to realise that I’m only trying my best. I can’t do no more” [p.31].

Violated (Sarah Wilson, 2015)

“I was referred to social services. I was assigned two social workers ... but I thought they were horrible. They always moaned to each other about the size of their caseloads in front of us ... It was quite clear the social workers saw me as a burden and they spent more time telling me off than trying to help me” [pp.96-97].

“[Social workers put my sister] Laura on a special register, saying she was at risk of being exploited by older [Pakistani] men ... because she lived in the same house as me, but what they did to protect her, I don’t know. This was all the proof Mum needed that they knew all about what was going on, but with me they just sat back and did nothing. ... [Laura] got different social workers from me, but they were just as snooty” [pp.122,225-6].

“Professor Jay’s investigations proved what Mum and I had suspected for a long time. For many years, a large number of officers within South Yorkshire Police saw girls like me as scum. They didn’t even try to help lots of us ... The coppers had been totally clueless when it came to the ins and outs of grooming and abuse, so they assumed we’d made a conscious choice to be drugged up to our eyeballs and raped by loads of men. As if! What child is capable of making any choices when it comes to sex and drugs?” [pp.328-9].

“[The Report] also said that some coppers and council staff were scared to admit that nearly all of the men who were preying on us were ... British Pakistanis. Apparently, they didn’t want to appear racist ... Girls like me were being raped by six or seven men a night and they were worried about being politically correct?” [pp.329-30].

“Louise Casey found that instead of taking positive steps to help victims, senior council staff had tried to silence whistleblowers, and in some cases there were attempts to pay off employees to keep them quiet” [p.347].

“It had become so normal that in some areas of Rotherham it was almost an accepted part of growing up. It didn’t have to be that way. People were being paid – very generously - to protect us, and they let us down so badly that many of us wondered if what had happened was our own fault. It is only now that [we] are slowly starting to accept that we weren’t the ones in the wrong. For that reason, I knew my story had to be told” [p.353].

Just A Child (Sammy Woodhouse, 2018)

“Ash’s relative, Jahangir Akhtar ... was a taxi driver then, though later on he went on to become a councillor, and then the deputy leader of Rotherham Council ... Jahangir Akhtar was named in *The Times* for his involvement in my ‘no prosecution’ handover deal to police at the petrol station when I was 14 ... he was also vice-chairman of the Police and Crime panel, which scrutinises the local force. He denied any wrongdoing but stepped down from both roles on the day my story was printed” [pp.101-2,276-8].

“There were loads of occasions when I was seen by police officers in Ash’s car but nobody stopped us, or the officers would chat to Ash and leave us alone. I understood very well by now that he had friends in the police, and that some of them must have been looking out for us” [pp.111-112].

“I was taken to [a] foster home ... A social worker took me there, and on the way she explained that Sue was a very experienced carer ... I imagined there was no way an experienced foster carer was going to let me see [Ash] ... I was allocated a social worker called Margaret Brown ... [who] visited my mum and explained that Social services had no power to prevent contact between me and Ash. Mum had no idea Sue was allowing us to see each other every night ... she [believed] that a foster carer, supported by Social Services, would have a much better chance of keeping me safe, which was her priority” [pp.143-147].

“Every day, memories came back to haunt me. I could see Ash being right nice to me, and the nicer he was the more I could see how hard he was trying to groom me. It turned my stomach. I thought about my long-term foster carer and my social worker, torturing myself with the ‘what ifs’. What if they had kept me away from Ash? He had fooled them as much as he fooled me, but how had this happened when they were adults, trained in caring for and protecting children?” [p.248].

“What if the police had prosecuted Ash for having underage sex with me the first time I got pregnant? Or what if he’d been prosecuted for girls he abused before me? I wasn’t his first victim so I’d never even have met him if the police had got him earlier ... I felt abandoned and betrayed by everyone in authority. I’d been let down by Social Services” [pp.248-9].

“[Andrew Norfolk, investigative reporter with *The Times*] had become my rock, and I found myself thinking many times that it wasn’t the role of a journalist to support me, yet he was doing a far better job than the vast majority of the Social Services’ specialists and health professionals I’d come across over the years” [p.262].

“My story was published in *The Times* on 23rd August 2013 ... The opening paragraph of Andrew’s article read: ‘It is the story of a man who stole childhoods, and a town whose care authorities wrote detailed reports about what he was doing, then sat back and let him get on with it’” [p.265].

“[Various councillors stepped down after the Jay report, but they all left on] a big pay-out. It looked to me like they’d been paid for failing to stop children from being abused ... Rotherham Council started trying to discredit the findings of the Jay report. They even spent £20,000 attempting to find out who leaked some of the information to Andrew Norfolk that enabled him to write his newspaper reports ... [They] needed to put their energies into helping the police lock up the abusers, not into covering up their mistakes and trying to protect their reputation” [p.273].

“I spoke out publicly as a survivor of CSE ... However, two social workers from Rotherham Council said I’d put my own children at risk by coming forward as a victim, and they put [my two sons] on a protection plan for ‘at risk’ kids. I’d been asking for help for years with my sons and the council had never put them on a protection plan before. It felt like I was being blackmailed, to stop me encouraging other victims to come forward. It nearly worked. I considered stopping, but then I realised this was the very last thing I should do ... I made a verbal complaint to Rotherham Council, explaining I felt I was being blackmailed into quitting by the remarks in the child protection report. Later, one of the social workers who commented in the report left the council and stopped working as a trainee social worker. The other subsequently apologised to me” [pp.277-279].

Sweep Around Your Own Front Door...

“Councils have a legal obligation to actively prevent abuse of all children in their constituency, whether that child is under their care or not. Several children however ... who suffered [CSE], had been placed in to the care of the local authority, meaning the authority exercised parental rights and obligations to the child ... parental responsibility” [*Rotherham – the Perfect Storm*, p.9].

“[T]here have been failures both in the social services and the police, by the very people who should have been protecting these vulnerable young girls ... These girls were in care. That four-letter word means something and should mean something. They did not receive the care they should have” [Catherine Bearder, MEP, SE England, quoted at: *Bullfinch Grooming Scandal*].

“The depth of failure is at times hard to fathom and we do not accept explanations that CSE was not ‘widely recognised’ nationally at the time. As the serious case review notes, ‘One does not need training in CSE to know that a 12-year-old sleeping with a 25-year-old is not right, or that you don’t come back drunk, bruised, half naked and bleeding from seeing your ‘friends’” [Letter from various MPs to the chairman of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, quoted at: *Bullfinch Grooming Scandal*].

“In children’s social care ... the focus was on younger children at risk of abuse from family and household members” [HofC, *Child Sexual Exploitation*, p.22].

“[The Casey Report] describes how [social] workers seemed interested only in abuse taking place within families in the town. They were not concerned by the far worse crimes perpetrated on 1,400 girls by gangs of outsiders. But even Casey does not focus on how many of these girls were in council ‘care’ (according to earlier reports as many as a third), making the council directly responsible for them. It was a similar story in Rochdale, Oxford and elsewhere: in the wholesale degradation of our ‘child protection’ system, these horror stories now

rank alongside those of ‘Baby P’ and Victoria Climbié as examples of social workers failing to intervene when their intervention was cried out for. Just as tragic, though, are those cases in which social workers fail in precisely the opposite direction - when they use their power to wrench thousands of children from their parents every year for no good reason at all (often for the children to be abused in ‘care’ to a far worse degree than anything allegedly done by the parents)” [Rotherham is Yet Another Massive Failure by our Social Workers, (my emphasis)].

“What price has been paid, is being paid, or might be paid at some stage, by all those public officials who ... allowed these modern-day atrocities to go on, doing nothing to stop them? The policemen, politicians, council workers and others who were show to have failed time and again. They have never been sentenced to prison for any of their oversights ... It is worth asking, however, if any of these people’s lives, career paths, or even pension plans were ever remotely affected by their proven failure to confront one of the greatest evils to have gone on in Britain ... But of course these people are not in prison. They are rarely if ever vilified or even mentioned in the national press. They have not had their lives turned upside down. They have not been persecuted at every turn. Instead – if Joanna Simons [CE of OCC] is anything to go by – they have been able to keep their heads down briefly, cash in and then fall upwards again” [Rape Gangs: A Story Set in Leafy Oxfordshire].

“[T]his issue has, so far, been a total disaster for [the police and] social services. And although many social workers would like to come forward, they are afraid to expose wrongdoing. As Community Care reported in [October] 2012: ‘Recent research by the BASW portrayed a climate of fear and intimidation in many social work departments, with almost half of practitioners surveyed saying they would be reluctant to speak up if they had concerns’ ... [W]hy do those services that are there to protect our children want to hide the truth, when the truth is vital to saving children from horrific abuse ... [This] scandal is ... unthinkable. It is about time the unthinkable is finally believed, confronted and dealt with” [Unthinkable, p.vii-viii,xiii].

“So social workers play god [sic] in secret courts to remove children from a loving family and at the same time conspire to hide the mass abuse and rape of children in our cities. Ye gods I despair” [Reader’s comment at: ‘Baby With No Name’ Judge Defends the Biased System].

Would you not agree that all the above is a *gross* dereliction of Social Services’ duty to children whom they claim to care so much about that they will split up families on that basis?

Would you not agree that Social Services’ mantra **“It’s about keeping children safe”** sounds very hollow indeed, not to say disgustingly hypocritical in light of their treatment of the victims – nay, survivors, as the girls themselves say, no thanks to the Social Services – of the Rotherham *et al* rape gangs?

Would you not agree that the Social Services should set about sweeping around their own front door before they sweep around the doors of others?...

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Please note that the inclusion in this document of any quotations from or references to any report, article, book, video, or other, listed below does *not* necessarily imply endorsement of that item; neither can I vouch for any other materials by the same authors, nor any groups or websites with which they may be associated, nor any periodicals to which they may contribute, nor the beliefs of whatever kind they may hold, nor any other aspect of their work or position.

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**Elizabeth McDonald,
30 June 2018**