



Discussion at:	Joint Independent Ethics Committee (JIEC)
JIEC Date:	17 September 2025
Subject/ Dilemma:	The National Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Report of:	DMPC Alison Lowe
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To get independent advice and opinion from the Joint Independent Ethics Committee members to inform and influence decision making.
- 1.2 For JIEC Members to highlight areas of focus for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Constable to consider.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In January the Home Secretary asked Baroness Louise Casey to carry out a rapid audit of data held on group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, to explore the cultural drivers behind this offending, and identify any further actions.
- 2.2 This announcement was made after building pressure on the Government to support local inquiries into past abuses, as was seen to be successful in Telford in 2022.
- 2.3 In addition, Professor Alexis Jay reported that she felt "frustrated" that none of the recommendations of her own landmark review ([link](#)) had been implemented more than two years after its publishing.
- 2.4 The Home Secretary's statement reflected the public debate at the time; of concerns that some survivors of abuse had not seen justice, possibly having their case labelled for 'no further action' or simply not being believed; that the scale and nature of abuse in some localities had not fully been understood or investigated; and that statutory decision-makers had not been held to account for their actions.
- 2.5 Baroness Casey's subsequent report ([published in June](#)) called for a renewed

commitment in the national effort to seek justice for the victims of child sexual exploitation. At the forefront was a proposal for **a national inquiry into CSE, leading to a series of targeted local investigations**; the mandatory collection of ethnicity and nationality data for all suspects in child sexual abuse and criminal exploitation cases; and further research into the drivers for group-based child sexual exploitation, including online offending, cultural factors and the role of the group.

2.6 Details on the scope of local inquiries into CSE remain limited. Baroness Casey's report states that each investigation will call witnesses to give evidence, and that there should be a charter for victims about what they should reasonably expect from this process.

2.7 Locations for initial local inquiries have not been revealed, with the exception of Oldham.

3. KEY QUESTIONS/ SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE COMMITTEE

3.1 How can we support victims being heard, treated with dignity, and receive timely, trauma-informed support when services are under intolerable pressure, and we are leading with a 'Child First' approach?

3.2 What probing questions can be posed to West Yorkshire Police to ensure they are fearless in confronting uncomfortable truths, specifically when addressing the ethnicity of the people involved. How is this best communicated to the public?

3.3 If a local inquiry was to take place in West Yorkshire, what would we hope to achieve through this process? How could it help to rebuild trust in local policing and safeguarding services?

3.4 Public scrutiny of non-recent CSE cases has highlighted an over-representation of British Asian men amongst the convicted perpetrators of non-recent abuse. What are the potential impacts on community cohesion from analysis of this issue through local area inquiries?

3.5 Is there a danger that this inquiry will draw resources away from the pursuit of perpetrators of child sexual abuse who do not follow the group-led model, and which far outnumber cases of group-led CSE.

3.6 Should the inquiry conclude that organisations or individuals have failed victims, what should be the outcomes for statutory bodies and exploitation survivors?

Discussion Summary

Members focussed on developing their understanding of the discussion topic and received information from subject matter experts, asking questions to find out more about specific areas. The Committee took a decision to split the topic into two parts; Part A, 'scene setting and understanding' which took place on 17 September 2025, and Part B, which would follow at the December committee, applying the learning within the broader context of the current environment which would include the Mayor's strategy on the safety of women and girls. As the two discussion topics ran parallel, the discussion summaries are repeated for each discussion topic. Member discussion summary from 17 September 2025:

- i. Members heard from subject matter experts in WYP and praised the work of the teams undertaking these complex and sensitive investigations. The support available for WYP officers and staff undertaking this emotive work was recognised.
- ii. Members felt that public reporting picked up by the media focussed on perpetrators, convictions and sentencing and highlighted the opportunity for WYP to promote the investment of specialist skills, knowledge, and experience which was victim and survivor focussed.
 - a. Members noted recent commentary from victims who felt unsupported, or who did not trust that the police could deal with their case; and noted that this supported the need for WYP to better promote the positive investment that was dedicated to recent and non-recent child sexual exploitation and abuse, including the skills and expertise of the teams and the available support for victims and survivors.
- iii. It was imperative that victims and survivors felt safe, protected, and heard, and that perpetrators were held to account. The risk of victims and survivors feeling inanimate as a result of the criminal justice system process felt high; Members acknowledged public anger and national petitions which highlighted that victims and survivors felt secondary victimisation, and their voices minimised.
 - a. Wherever possible, victims and survivors should be asked a minimal number of times to provide an account, to prevent repeat trauma. Accepting the requests come from wider than WYP, the initial account should be documented with a view to it being used multiple times throughout the criminal justice process.

- b. The criminal justice system was highlighted as being a barrier to victim and survivor satisfaction, with waits as long as two years for court dates. WYP had monthly reviews with the Crown Prosecution Service to inform them of early investigative demand.
 - c. Outcomes should be meaningful to victims and survivors. Changes should be transparent and well communicated. WYP should provide assurance that change can, and will, happen; and demonstrate positive change clearly.
- iv. The impact on social cohesion should be considered; Members noted recent West Yorkshire based written publications which highlighted the impact on South Asian communities feeling persecuted due to the narrative in the media. WYP to be aware of how the media narrative could fuel action from right wing groups.
 - a. Communication should focus on factual data, noting that data can be divisive, information should be tailored, appropriate and fit for purpose.
- v. In terms of the scope of the inquiry, it was important to advocate for a West Yorkshire wide approach [and not a specific district]. Members unanimously felt that it would be damaging for West Yorkshire to have a single district investigated. It is of note that the decision lay with the Home Secretary.

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

4.1 Please click on the links:

- [Next steps to tackle child sexual exploitation](#) – Home Secretary’s statement to Parliament, January 2025.
- [National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#), Baroness Casey, June 2025 [Conclusions and recommendations, p.149]
- ‘Telford model’ is more effective for child abuse inquiries, says former Chair; [Guardian article, January 2025](#)
- [NSPCC summary](#) of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse’s (IICSA) final report and government response (the ‘Jay Report’)
- [Baroness Casey’s session with the Home Affairs Committee](#), June 2025. [Comments on the National Inquiry proposal from p.8]

Further information:

In September, the Mayor will consult with local survivors of abuse, representatives of

the VCSE services which support victims, and local MPs, on what we hope the inquiry will deliver on behalf of CSE victims in West Yorkshire.