

The Guardian

This article is more than 5 years old

Rotherham: many victims referred to in report are now missing from system

Teenage girls who suffered litany of abuse have disappeared from official view and their fates are unknown

Alexandra Topping

Wed 27 Aug 2014
00.27 BST



A shopping street in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Photograph: Christopher Thomond for the Guardian

Several of the victims referred to in Professor Alexis Jay's uncompromising report have since gone missing from the system - their fate is unknown.

Child E, who had been abused at the hands of her family and had mental health problems, went into care when she was 12.

A naive child who was desperate for affection, she was exploited by older men she thought were her boyfriends.

By her mid-teens she was fending for herself in semi-independent accommodation and was admitted to a residential adolescent mental health unit after suffering a psychotic episode.

She was put into a specialist foster placement at the age of 16, but no more is known about her life.

Child H was 11 when she told the police she and another child had been sexually assaulted by adult men in 2008.

She was found drunk with an older man who had explicit pictures of her on his phone and, while her father tried to get help, after an assessment her case was closed.

Later she was found in a derelict house with another child and a number of men. She was arrested for being drunk and disorderly - they walked free.

Child H was finally identified as high risk and put into care. While she was with foster carers, she suffered a miscarriage. She eventually rejoined her family and they moved away.

Child I, whose older sister had been sexually exploited, was just 11 when she was raped. She came into contact with the authorities in 2009. She went missing regularly and was raped repeatedly by older men. When she was placed in care away from Rotherham she would go missing and try to return.

She suffered post-traumatic stress disorder, self-harmed and at times became suicidal. She is being supported by children's social care but her experience has left her with lasting emotional and psychological damage.

The report has examples of girls exploited as recently as 2013. One, Child K, came to the attention of the authorities in 2011 after being groomed by a known sex offender on Facebook. She has been admitted drunk to hospital and has been missing with other children. The child exploitation team has tried to help her and her family, but she is resistant to accepting help.

Another girl, known as Child O, was 13 when she was wandering around Rotherham late at night with an older girl who was a known victim of abuse. Active online and friends with many adults, she posted a video of another child being abused.

The suspected abuser contacted her and threatened that she would be the next victim - then she was beaten up.

She and her family refused to speak to police and despite a Rotherham team putting a programme in place to protect her, she is still considered to be at risk of sexual exploitation.

Topics

- Rotherham
- Crime
- Children
- Child protection
- Social care
- news