

THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN IN CUSTODIAL INSTITUTIONS

An inquiry into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation while detained in custodial institutions

Scope of investigation

1. The Inquiry will investigate the nature and extent of, and institutional responses to, the sexual abuse of children in custodial institutions, including Secure Children's Homes, Secure Training Centres, Youth Offender Institutions, and their precursor institutions ('custodial institutions'). The investigation shall incorporate case specific investigations and a review of information available from published and unpublished reports and reviews, court cases, and previous investigations in relation to the abuse of children in custodial institutions.
2. In conducting the investigation, the Inquiry will consider the experiences of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse while in custodial institutions, and investigate:
 - 2.1. the prevalence of the sexual abuse of children in custodial institutions;
 - 2.2. the adequacy of the safeguarding and child protection policies and practices of the range of institutions responsible for the detention of children, including the Youth Justice Board, the Prison Service and individual Secure Children's Homes, Secure Training Centres and Youth Offender Institutions. In examining the adequacy of these policies the Inquiry will consider issues of governance, training, recruitment, leadership, reporting and investigation of child sexual abuse, disciplinary procedures, information sharing and inter-agency working, and approach to reparations;
 - 2.3. the extent to which there was or is a culture within custodial institutions which inhibits the proper investigation, exposure and prevention of child sexual abuse;
 - 2.4. the adequacy of the law enforcement and criminal justice response to allegations of the sexual abuse of children in custodial institutions; and
 - 2.5. the adequacy of the inspection and regulatory regimes applicable to children in custodial institutions.
3. As an initial case study, the Inquiry will investigate allegations of child sexual abuse at Medomsley Youth Detention Centre and, in particular, consider:

- 3.1. the nature and extent of child sexual abuse of detainees at Medomsley during the relevant period;
 - 3.2. the nature and extent of the failures of custodial institutions and/or other public authorities or statutory agencies to protect children from such abuse;
 - 3.3. the appropriateness of the response of the custodial institutions, law enforcement agencies, prosecuting authorities, and other public authorities and/or statutory agencies to allegations that detainees at Medomsley were sexually abused during the relevant period;
 - 3.4. the extent to which custodial institutions sought to investigate, learn lessons, implement changes, and/or provide support and reparations to victims and survivors, in response to allegations of sexual abuse of detainees at Medomsley and/or any investigations into those allegations;
 - 3.5. the extent to which any failings identified by the Inquiry in relation to Medomsley are representative of wider failings within custodial institutions.
4. Other case studies may be identified by the Inquiry as the investigation progresses.
 5. In light of the investigations set out above, the Inquiry will publish a report setting out its findings, lessons learned, and recommendations to improve child protection and safeguarding in England and Wales.