

Inquiry into Midland sex scandal

An inquiry is under way in Nottingham following a sex scandal involving girls in care.

It was revealed at a recent trial in the city, that under age girls at an observation and assessment centre were working as prostitutes in a Nottingham sex club. The centre is one of 19 "non-secure" institutions in the county. It has six staff and has facilities to take up to 34 girls.

A man has since been jailed for three years for living off the girls' immoral earnings and keeping a disorderly house.

Nottinghamshire's social services chair, Mrs Joan Taylor (Labour) has ordered an inquiry and there have already been calls for its findings to be made public. The Conservative group leader, Councillor Caroline Minckley, said it would be in the best interests for the county's social services and it would clear the air. She also

questioned whether a girl, known to be streetwise, should have been put in non-secure accommodation in the first place.

In a statement the social services chair said staff at the home became suspicious about the girl and called in the vice squad. One girl, 14 was interviewed by police and told them what she had been doing on occasions she absconded from the home. The next day the girl was moved into secure accommodation and the man running the sex club was arrested.

Since the inquiry has started Nottinghamshire's social workers are concerned about what they call "a disturbing trend in society" which makes them the scapegoats for society's failures.

Nalgo county convenor of social services, Mike Scott, said "We regret that this sort of thing should be happening, however, it is not social workers who are responsible but the individuals involved."