

Home Secretary and Lord Chancellor

Via email

**The Statutory
Independent
Inquiry into
Grooming Gangs**

23rd July 2026

Dear Home Secretary and Lord Chancellor,

We are writing to share concerns that have been shared directly with us by victims and survivors of grooming gangs following recent announcements regarding sentencing and the release of certain offenders convicted of serious sexual offences. Some had also received notifications themselves about the release of their perpetrators. The strength of feeling expressed has been considerable, and we believe it is important that these views are heard and understood, particularly ahead of the review of the early prisoner release scheme that the Prime Minister announced yesterday. For the avoidance of doubt, we are not making any determinations at this time, which will be based on the formal evidence that is heard throughout the Inquiry's lifetime.

A strong and consistent message from those who have contacted us, or we have spoken to so far, is that the prospect of offenders being released earlier than expected is having a significant and traumatic impact on them. Many describe feeling that they are being forced to confront renewed fear and uncertainty at a point when they had been trying to rebuild their lives. Others have expressed concern for the safety of their families and communities, particularly where offenders may return to areas connected to the original offending.

We have also heard concerns about the lasting impact such decisions can have on confidence in the criminal justice system. Many victims and survivors reflected on the years it took for offences to be investigated and prosecuted, and the personal toll associated with reporting abuse and participating in criminal proceedings. For some, the possibility of offenders serving substantially less time in custody than anticipated has created a perception that the seriousness of these crimes, and their lifelong consequences, are not being fully recognised.

While individual circumstances vary, the accounts we have received highlight broader questions about victim confidence, public protection, communication with victims and survivors, and the arrangements that are put in place when serious offenders are released back into the community. These issues are particularly significant in cases involving child sexual exploitation, where the harm caused extends far beyond the conclusion of criminal proceedings and continues to affect victims and survivors for many years.

As an Inquiry established to examine the institutional response to grooming gangs, we consider these concerns highly relevant to our work and extremely important. We will

be examining what victims and survivors tell us about their experiences of the criminal justice system, including how decisions relating to sentencing, release and offender management can affect their sense of safety, confidence in public authorities and trust in the justice process.

We recognise that decisions regarding sentencing policy, prison capacity and offender management involve complex considerations, which we will be considering in due course. However, we felt it important to write to ensure that the concerns being raised directly with the Inquiry are brought to your attention. The voices of victims and survivors, and their experiences of the consequences of these decisions, will form an important part of the evidence that we consider.

Victims and survivors have placed considerable trust in the Inquiry by sharing these views with us. We are committed to ensuring that their experiences inform our work and help shape our understanding of the changes needed to better protect and support those affected by child sexual exploitation.

Yours sincerely,



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Chair, Statutory Independent
Inquiry into Grooming Gangs



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Panellist, Statutory
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