

## **Key Document 42**

CROP response to the 'Tackling Human Trafficking' Home Office Consultation

**CROP***A voluntary organisation working to end the sexual exploitation  
of children and young people by pimps and traffickers**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
34 York Road  
LEEDS LS9 8TA**Parent Support Unit General: 0113 240 5040*

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Research and Policy: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

[www.crop1.org.uk](http://www.crop1.org.uk)

30 March 2006

Stephen Webb  
 Organised Immigration Crime Team  
 Specialist Crime 2  
 Home Office  
 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Fry Building  
 2 Marsham Street  
 LONDON  
 SW1 4DP

Dear Mr Webb

I am enclosing the CROP response to the trafficking consultation. This response is rooted in our work with families whose children have been coerced into prostitution by a pimp, or increasingly by a sophisticated pimping network. It is therefore seeking to highlight the place of in-country trafficking and its resonances with the international 'trade'. I hope it will be a useful perspective.

I appreciated your input to the recent Chaste conference in London. Thank you.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Hilary Willmer  
 Chair of Trustees

## ***CROP***

A voluntary organisation working to end the sexual exploitation  
of children and young people by pimps and traffickers

### **Tackling Human Trafficking – Consultation on Proposals for a UK Action Plan**

#### **ABOUT CROP**

CROP is a national charity supporting families whose children are subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation by pimps and traffickers. CROP was founded in 1996 by Irene Ivison whose daughter Fiona was coerced into prostitution by a pimp and then murdered by a punter at the age of 17. CROP works with families affected by the activities of criminal pimps or pimping networks through providing practical, emotional and non-judgmental support. It also seeks to highlight the work of these pimps in order to increase the number of successful prosecutions.

CROP's support services are aimed at families enabling them to provide active support to the positive development of their child or children subjected to sexual exploitation. CROP responds to the needs identified by families themselves and its service users include mothers, fathers, partners of parents, siblings, and extended family members, including grandparents, in-laws, aunts, uncles and cousins of the child subjected to sexual exploitation. In addition, those with parental responsibilities, such as carers from care homes and foster parents also use CROP's services - telephone advice, one to one support, advocacy services, training and awareness raising.

Since its inception, CROP has advocated for policy and legislative changes. CROP responds to government consultations and participates in policy reviews and debates. It has responded to the Home Office (HO) and Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Consultations such as 'Paying the Price', 'Children's Work Force Strategy' and 'the rationalisation of grant funding from Children, Young People and Families Directorate to voluntary organisations.' CROP organizes national and regional conferences and the recent one was on 'Criminal Pimping Networks' held at Leeds on 11 November 2005.

CROP undertakes research into issues concerning child sexual exploitation, produces information materials in the form of leaflets, flyers, booklets and extensively disseminates information through CROP's website, other agencies and parent networks. Advice to Parents and A Guide to the Sexual Offences Act, 2003 are two examples of information booklets produced by CROP. In November 2005 CROP published a research report 'Parents, Children and Pimps: Families Speak out About Sexual Exploitation' which highlighted the trends in grooming practices and its impact on children and families.

Since the appointment of the Parent Support Worker with funding from the HO, then DfES and latterly by charitable trusts CROP has supported over 140 families. The current response to the Consultation on Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking is based on its work with affected families and its research on issues surrounding pimping.

**Consultation Questions 1 & 2:**

**Have we got the scope of the plan right? Have we adequately covered the various forms of exploitation which can arise in the trafficking context? and**

**Are there any areas for action or specific actions missing from the proposals?**

CROP welcomes the Consultation and the Government's proposal for a UK action plan to tackle human trafficking. CROP supports the UK Government's understanding of 'human trafficking' based on the definitions of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and highlights the need to incorporate the term 'grooming'<sup>1</sup> (gaining access to young person, communicating, meeting and travelling to meet) or other equivalent terminology to ensure that preventative strategies to tackle trafficking incorporate the offence of grooming. CROP's parent support work has shown that targeting and grooming of children and young people is the first phase of the exploitation process leading to the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and controlling of young people for purposes of exploitation.

CROP commends the Government's three-pronged approach to tackling human trafficking focussing on prevention, prosecution and protection. However, CROP has a few concerns about the scope and coverage of the proposed action plan. Firstly, the action plan concentrates only on human trafficking at the international level. Its scope should be broadened to include **in-country trafficking**. We are concerned that the phrase 'within the country' in the consultation document might only refer to the ongoing trafficking of international victims.

CROP's parent support work has brought to light the movement of young people from and across towns and cities within the country for purposes of sexual exploitation by criminal perpetrators<sup>2</sup>. It is important to recognise that means and methods used for purposes of grooming and trafficking by organised criminal pimping networks within the country are similar to those at the international level and that these activities at the domestic and international level equally serve to meet demands of the domestic sex markets. **As one parent puts it, 'We talk of international trafficking. We are not saying that we should not do anything about that. But look here, they are passing these children from gang to gang just like they are doing with girls brought from**

<sup>1</sup> This process of befriending a child and creating a situation whereby the child will acquiesce in sexual acts is known as grooming. [Alisdair A. Gillespie, Tackling Grooming, *Police Journal*, September 2004 PJ 77(239)]

<sup>2</sup> See also Tink Palmer and Lisa Stacey (2002) *Stolen childhood: Barnardo's work with children abused through prostitution*, Published by Barnardo's.

**abroad. Girls are not seeing the money changing hands. That's what is happening.'** CROP is concerned that internal trafficking of children, young people and women within the UK and other Western countries, operates through targeting and grooming, and is accompanied by extreme abuse and violence; and yet is not regarded by society in the same way as international trafficking which evokes necessary public outrage. Girls targeted by criminal pimps are sent to different parts of the country which is why they go missing from home. CROP has become aware of gangs and individual pimps from Yorkshire sending girls to many towns and cities in the Yorkshire region and around the country where they know of demand – e.g. to Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester and London. Developing a national overview and acknowledging the scale of the problem of trafficking at the domestic level would lead to the development of an action plan aimed at prevention and prosecution at all levels.

Knowledge of grooming is not new. Organisations such as Barnardo's<sup>3</sup> highlighted the problem of grooming and different phases of sexual exploitation. Much of the abuse go on behind closed doors, is hidden and hence difficult to scale the extent and operation. What is new is the awareness of the highly organised indigenous pimping networks. CROP welcomes the proposed action research into off-street prostitution as part of the Coordinated Prostitution Strategy published by the HO in January 2006 and seeks an action plan specifically to deal with off-street hidden prostitution arising from the activities of the criminal pimping networks.

In also commends the HO initiative to establish the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and highlights the need to expand its remit to include all organised criminal activities, but not limit to organised immigration crime. CROP argues that the issue of sexual exploitation and trafficking has to be construed broadly, to include other activities of the organised criminal networks. These networks, in our experience, are not only involved in trafficking and prostitution, but also with other serious criminal activities such as drug and gun crime.

**Consultation Question 3: How can we measure the extent to which trafficking is taking place into and within the UK? In particular, how can we improve our knowledge on the scale of child trafficking and trafficking for labour exploitation into and within the UK? Does your organisation have information on cases of trafficking in the UK, in particular trafficking for forced labour, including domestic service?**

CROP challenges the indication that there is little, if any, demand for trafficked minors for the purposes of sexual exploitation (P.5) and wonders if the lack of such demand could be attributed to existing and well organised internal market. CROP would like this hypotheses to be explored and suggests a review of the scope of the action plan to include in-country trafficking. The scoping exercise/study could also

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<sup>3</sup> Anne Van Meeuwen, Sara Swann, Diana McNeish, Susan S M Edwards (1998) *Whose Daughter Next*, Published by Barnardo's.

focus on recruitment (grooming), movement, harbouring of people within the country for purposes of sexual exploitation.

Mapping of the problem is difficult especially when victims are not forthcoming. A large number of children and young people subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation go missing from homes, care homes and schools. However, the data as to extent of this phenomenon among those living in the country as well as those migrating to the UK is unavailable. CROP believes that estimating the numbers of those going missing without a valid reason is one of the ways to understand the problem and to integrate the efforts to tackle human trafficking into daily policing priorities.

In addition, the mapping exercise would yield good results if the health agencies can be involved in the process of mapping. People subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation often suffer severe physical, sexual and mental health problems and it is important for the health services to be involved in the mapping exercise and for the action plan to incorporate strategies for training the health workers to be equipped to provide an appropriate response.

**Consultation Question 7: How can we reduce the demand for the services of trafficked persons, in particular for forced labour, including domestic service?**

CROP's work shows that clear and strong links are prevalent between organised crimes such as drug trafficking, gun crime and sexual exploitation and believes that a holistic approach to dealing with organised crime must be central to the action plan to effectively reduce demand for trafficking in human beings. CROP highlights that action plan should focus on dismantling the linkages between domestic organised crime and international human trafficking market. The SOCA initiative is positive in dismantling the illegal businesses; it should, however, recognise the inter-linkages between different forms of organised crime. The remit of SOCA and Operation Reflex teams should not be limited to organised immigration crime but should explicitly include organised sex crime within the country as well.

In addition to seeking prosecutions, there is much work to be done in seeking to change the culture of the acceptability of prostitution, which in our experience, is the result of coercion – subtle or otherwise. CROP welcomes the fact that this is broadly accepted in the two Home Office strategies. At present, however, too many men – from the police force, from the legal system and all other walks of life – ‘use’ prostitutes including trafficked women. CROP would urge the government seriously to consider the Swedish approach which makes it illegal to pay for sex - thus changing the focus of the law to the perpetrators.

There has been some excellent media coverage of the horrors befalling women who have been trafficked internationally. Much more needs to be done to highlight the similar plight of in-country trafficked children and women; NGOs have a significant role to play in this context.

**Consultation Question 10: What more needs to be done to get trafficking into core police business?**

CROP takes this opportunity to highlight the absence of information sharing among different forces and divisions within forces as identified by frontline staff of different forces; this results in problems associated in dealing with pimps who groom young people from one town and then take them to other towns/cities falling in the jurisdiction of other divisions and forces. CROP strongly recommends the development of a specific police performance indicator in the area of sexual exploitation by third parties to ensure international and in-country trafficking becomes a local policing priority.

In some police forces currently child abuse is defined purely in terms of intra familial abuse. Unless sexual abuse and exploitation of children by a third party is a specific category of crime, it will continue to be recorded in too many different ways; so recognition across police forces of comparable emerging patterns will not be seen. CROP would also like to see initiatives similar to 'Operation Bridge' (P.7) started at the national level to promote networking within and among police divisions and forces across counties and districts.

**Consultation Question 11: What more needs to be done to raise awareness of organised immigration crime, including trafficking, among police forces?**

Initiatives similar to *immigration liaison officers in source, transit and destination countries established as part of the Operation Reflex task force* should be set up within the country linking key areas where in-country trafficking is prevalent and enable the formation of joint intelligence structures to dismantle the criminal gangs operating across towns and cities. CROP suggests an effective strategic partnership working between these liaison officers and other frontline officers such as mispers coordinators (West Yorkshire Police) or missing persons champions (Lancashire Police) and supplying each other with profiles of the missing persons nationally and internationally. Training by NGOs with specialist knowledge, including the stories of women, children or their families can be powerful tools in highlighting the reality of what is happening.

CROP welcomes the UK Governments plans to develop a strategy to publicise prosecutions in source and transit countries to deter traffickers from continuing to operate (P.10). CROP believes that efforts should continue to achieve successful prosecutions of perpetrators both at international and national levels – prosecutions at one level alone will prove less successful and may even result in increased recruitment of young people as a buffer to meet demand in the sex industry.

**Consultation Question 14: How do we identify vulnerable child victims?**

CROP acclaims the Government's initiative on *Unaccompanied Minors Best practice Guidance for immigration staff* (P.16) and recommends that similar guidance must be developed to equip frontline police officers, teachers, social workers and others working in the area of child protection with tools they need to be able to recognise

signs of both international and in-country trafficking. Guidelines on registering missing persons should also be provided to parents and carers.

**Consultation Question 15: What are the benefits and drawbacks of providing reflection periods and/or residence permits to victims of trafficking?**

CROP welcomes the Government's recognition that victims of trafficking are often highly traumatised by their experiences and require specialist care and protection. Pimps and traffickers often subject their targets to rape, violence, indignity, personality change, alienation from support systems and subsequently coerce them into prostitution. CROP's work shows that victims/survivors rarely gather the courage to speak about the violation of their rights and make complaints; they need confidential support and access to secure accommodation. The process of healing is slow and successful prosecutions based on the information provided by the victims must not be jeopardised for want of time. CROP supports the provision of reflection periods for victims of international trafficking and also would like to support the provision of similar services to victims/survivors of in-country trafficking. CROP has worked with families that have relocated to far away cities and even moved abroad as a way to protect their children from the abuse of the perpetrators. CROP hopes that the action plan will duly acknowledge the need for safe accommodation to victims and support to their families at all levels – international, national and regional.

**Consultation Questions 16 & 17:**

**How can we ensure that vulnerable victims returning to their countries of origin are not re-trafficked? And**

**How can we ensure safe and sustainable return and reintegration of victims into their home communities?**

CROP would like to highlight the need for an inter agency partnership between police, immigration authorities and other agencies involved at Heathrow and all other ports to monitor children travelling out of the country without a carer and especially with older men/man. Specific action must be planned to provide in country trafficked children & their families support in helping them to re-establish relationships and their livelihoods. Rebuilding lives after being victimised by criminal activities is a long term process and calls for a sustained and intensive intervention strategies. CROP hopes that the consultation will consider plans to establish reintegration support work for child victims of in country trafficking to return to their education and wellbeing.

**Conclusion**

CROP would be keen to work with government and others in tackling the issues that we have highlighted in this response. CROP is attaching a paper entitled 'Prostitution as a Business' which gives a brief overview of the methods of targeting and grooming by criminal pimping networks as an illustration of the similarity of methods used for in country trafficking.



## **CROP**

A voluntary organisation working to end the sexual exploitation of children and young people by pimps and traffickers

### **Prostitution as a Business**

*Article from CROP Annual Review 2005*

#### **Parents speak out:**

“We talk of international trafficking. We are not saying we should not do anything about that. But look here, they are passing these children from gang to gang just like they are doing with girls brought from abroad. Girls are not seeing money changing hands. That’s what is happening”.

#### **Prostitution as a Business**

While not all underage girls enter prostitution through criminal networks, many do. CROP has identified a highly organised and profitable web of crime through offering family support to parents and children abused through prostitution. CROP has a dual focus unique amongst voluntary organisations: to find ways to address the criminal activities of those perpetrating widespread abuse of girls in the U.K. today, and to offer family support to parents and children abused through prostitution.

Knowledge of criminal networks first emerged as a result of CROP research undertaken four years ago as part of a Home Office study on prostitution. As awareness of traditional methods operated by pimps grew, the work of CROP identified increasingly sophisticated and extensive grooming and pimping operations. This knowledge base continues to expand as new families contact CROP for assistance. Networks of men formed around a central core of male relatives of various ages can be described as commercial firms. They are in the business of making money and girls are the work force. Their business strategy is to identify, groom and pimp a growing number of underage girls.

Grooming for prostitution starts with identifying girls in various locations, such as shopping malls, schools, leisure facilities – any location where informal interaction is possible. For the girl the first stage is fun and often begins with boys of the same age or not very much older than she is. Depending upon the location, the role boys play may have direct oversight by older men in the organisation, for example in shopping malls where the man in charge of the boys identifies who to approach, talk with, invite to go for a can of coke and end by suggesting meeting in town. When the contact is made in town and a relationship begins to be established, the girl is introduced to a man, often described as a relative, a few years older than the boy. The process is the same in other locations, although oversight and direction of the boys may be less obvious. In schools boys in the same classroom undertake the same role, and after contact is made girls are introduced to a man described as an older brother or cousin sitting in an impressive car at the school gates. Boys play a very important role in establishing initial contacts, which enables girls to be passed upwards in the criminal network.

The next stage has an exciting beginning. During the first part of this stage the grooming aim is to make the girl more accessible to the next male and his influence. This is a skilled operation. The young man to whom she has been introduced begins by showing a great interest in the girl. He takes her out in his car, which may be parked at the school gates, and possibly she enjoys the envy of her friends, and on to clubs and other venues she would not normally experience until older. Cigarettes, alcohol and drugs become part of the experience. He gives her a new name, for example from Ann to Cecilia, as part of acquiring a new identity. He gives her presents, including a mobile phone if she does not have one, and maintains constant contact with her through verbal and text messages. She finds this very flattering and becomes convinced he loves her.

By inducing feelings the girl experiences as love, he can begin to encourage isolation from family, friends and school. The vulnerability of girls is age related, with grooming usually beginning between 12 to 14 years, a time of relative inexperience. At this age it can be difficult to believe, or even think, that his attention and interest may not be genuine. Older girls are likely to be more savvy and less trusting, which explains why the early teenage years are the best for introducing grooming for prostitution. Sexual experience is unlikely to start before 13 years when legislative punishments for sex with a minor are less and girls are expected to make a formal complaint. From the point of view of the criminal prostitution business once a girl reaches the age of 13 years the criminal justice system offers valuable support for their activities, however unintended that may be.

Achieving a break with her parents may take time and effort, but he has prior experience of the process while her parents do not. He knows how to turn to his advantage responses such as family rows, parental attempts to discipline, to restrict the amount of time spent out the house and, if parents know him, in his company. His efforts can end with the girl permanently moving in with him or someone else or asking to be accommodated by the local authority, often alleging parental abuse. The pimp instigates the move, as moving away from the family home into local authority accommodation or elsewhere increases his access to and over her.

During the time of traumatic break from the family, friends and school, the grooming process begins to develop threatening aspects. If not before, girls will be introduced to alcohol, drugs and criminal or pseudo criminal activities to further their entrapment. For example one parent reported that, "they took her in the car to get cash from the machine and asked her to hold a credit card. Then they said it is a stolen card and we have drawn two grand on it and now your fingerprints are all over it. 'If the police come you will be in trouble'. A 13 year old would believe it". Other threatening strategies include taking incriminating photographs of girls who may or may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

When a girl's complete isolation from her family, other supporters and previous life is achieved, or well on the way to being achieved, he then can begin to introduce her into prostitution. This may start as a request for her to help him out of a temporary financial problem by having sexual relations with another man, or a demand that she have sex with other men as she has to pay him back for the drinks, mobile phone, lifts in his car, and presents, or group rape. Whatever tactic is used to gain her

acquiescence to sexual activity with another man or men, once achieved the pimp then has the control he needs to enforce her continuation in prostitution.

During this time parents and other family members experience conflicting feelings. "Its like – sometimes I could have knocked down our daughter. Sometimes we blamed her. We felt she wanted to be with these people." Blame alternates with despair, tears and temper at not being able to stop their daughter from being abused. "We all used to sit down to eat and then the car honking and she used to run and we did not know when she would be back." Schools too, could blame the girl and worry about the school reputation. "They said she is old enough. She has got to learn to take the consequences of her own behaviour." Police too, could blame the girl and the parents for choosing or allowing her to choose a life in prostitution and could refuse to become involved. "Every single thing – no matter what we said – they just did not want to know – THEY JUST DID NOT WANT TO KNOW". Blaming the victim also took more collusive forms such as returning underage girls to flats where sexual abuse was known to take place.

In the third and final stage pimps pursue a number of strategies to control the girls they have inducted into prostitution. These include alternating affection with violence and abuse, illegal drugs and other criminal activities. His violence and that of the men who pay for her become accepted as inevitable and her obedience to her pimp's demands is seen as the only way to reduce physical and sexual harm. As can happen with domestic violence, the violence and abuse becomes a regular event that the girl resigns her self to. The same question, 'why doesn't she leave?', may occur to those who have not lived through this experience. Girls explain their inability to leave in different ways. One mother said, "I recall her saying, 'It's like as if he is inside me, controlling me and telling me what I am allowed to say or do and what I am not allowed'" and another parent said, "Mum! He has brainwashed me so that I cannot leave him ever. I am like his possession."<sup>1</sup>

Violence from criminal prostitution businesses can include emotional abuse, rape, threats to and attacks on parents, siblings and other family members. Class A drugs are likely to be involved at an early stage as drug addiction makes girls more amenable and desperate. Drugs are often embraced as a coping strategy. A girl is likely to regard her controller as a boyfriend, rather than acknowledge the reality of the situation. Even as he continues with his violence and abuse, a girl may continue to view him as her boyfriend as he sells her the drugs she now desperately needs. Prostitution becomes the only way to earn enough money to pay for her daily use of drugs.

Pregnancy is another strategy that extends his control whether the result is an abortion or a child. Through pregnancy he gains control not only over her sexual performance, but also over her reproductive life. If the result is a child her need to earn increases and he may subject the child to actual or threatened abuse, including kidnapping or child abduction, in order to obtain more money from her. If the result is an abortion, he resolves what she may see as a problem, earning her gratitude. If she wants the

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<sup>1</sup> Brainwashing is described as having five major components: isolation, control, uncertainty, repetition and emotional manipulation. Immaturity is of major assistance in achieving brainwashing and all these elements are evident in grooming. See Kathleen Taylor (2005) *Brainwashing: The Science of Thought Control*, London, Open University Press.

child, but he insists on an abortion, his control is extended. For example, CROP encountered two girls in one year who had been subjected to forced abortions carried out by medically unqualified associates of the pimp resulting in horrific physical injuries. In defining and exploring vulnerability to pregnancy amongst 13 to 18 year old girls, induction into prostitution requires greater attention by health authorities and other agencies.

Statutory agencies can be unaware of these processes and unable to distinguish the early grooming stages from normal teenage courtship, as the first point of contact involves local boys around the same age of the girls and both are from the same area. Their contact may seem harmless, even when older young men later become involved. Similar age and locality may have a significant impact on statutory agency involvement, for example social services. If child protection investigations by social services occur, meetings focus on individual girls. Usually there is no arena for meetings in which information and concern about the boys and men can be shared and grooming networked businesses identified. Policing too, can be influenced by similarities of age and locality as the extent of the criminal network is not immediately obvious, given that police forces are organised locally through a divisional structure and a headquarters that covers only part of the operational area of the criminal prostitution business. These criminal networks may extend over different police force areas. The organisational head of the criminal network is hidden from view with possibly three or more layers to the criminal organisational structure.

Criminal grooming and pimping businesses can involve many girls while in comparison the number of men is relatively small. The boys and men may be associated through sub-networks. Only the men at the centre of the business know everyone who is involved; boys, men and girls. Men in criminal pimping networks also have the added advantage of guidance, if needed, by those above them in the organisation. These younger men may report to another much smaller layer of men and ultimately to an older male relative, the firm's managing director. Boys are also learning the business and after leaving school may be able to participate at the next level.

As CROP works from the ground up, tracing the connections is hampered by the men's use of different names as well as the slow and patient way in which information is of necessity gathered from girls and parents. Parents who are desperate to protect their daughters may know only a small part of what has happened and is happening to their daughter and possibly more than one daughter. Girls too have networks of siblings and friends through whom criminal grooming and pimping networks can make contact with new girls. For statutory agencies, a full network analysis needs to incorporate both in order to identify vulnerable girls and the members of the business.

Criminal prostitution businesses have support from other commercial organisations. Taxi firms play an important role in all the geographical areas where CROP works. Girls in prostitution are taken to different locations, both indoor and outdoor venues. The youngest girls are unlikely to be seen on the street as they may attract attention from the police who monitor the street scene. Girls are taken to different cities over a wide area of England; a practice best described as trafficking. Indoor locations may be organised by the criminal prostitution firm or by others more external to it. The

supply and sale of drugs is another area of linked, but possibly separate criminal business interests – as is pornography.

CROP has identified a highly organised and profitable web of crime. Girls are exposed to levels of violence, torture, and abuse that most professionals cannot conceive of. As a result of the intricate grooming and control methods, the extensively organised business and the tendency of society to blame the victim, the plight of the majority of girls goes unrecognised by statutory authorities that have the role and duty to protect them. As a result the business continues to make good profits with little interference. One parent concludes that, “The issues of the human rights of the child and parent’s rights to family life without any conflict, and the right to psychological support have no value”.



## **Key Document 43**

Letter from Parents to the then Home Secretary

To note: text with grey background constitutes original highlighted text

*Caroline first to reply please*



2 NOV 2003

7281



20th October 2003

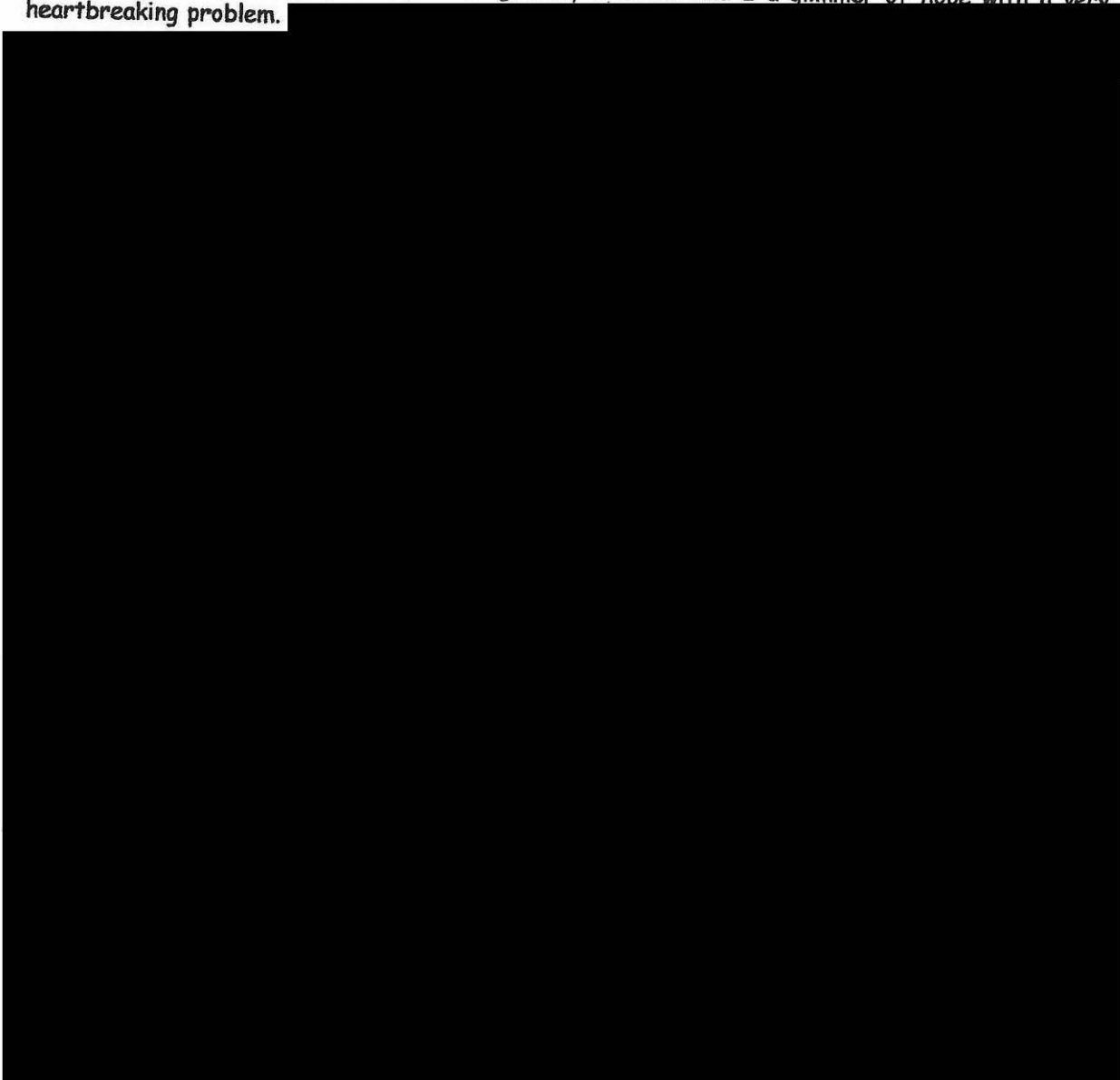
**RECEIVED BY**  
10 NOV 2003  
**HOME SECRETARY**

Mr D Blunkett, MP  
Houses of Parliament  
London

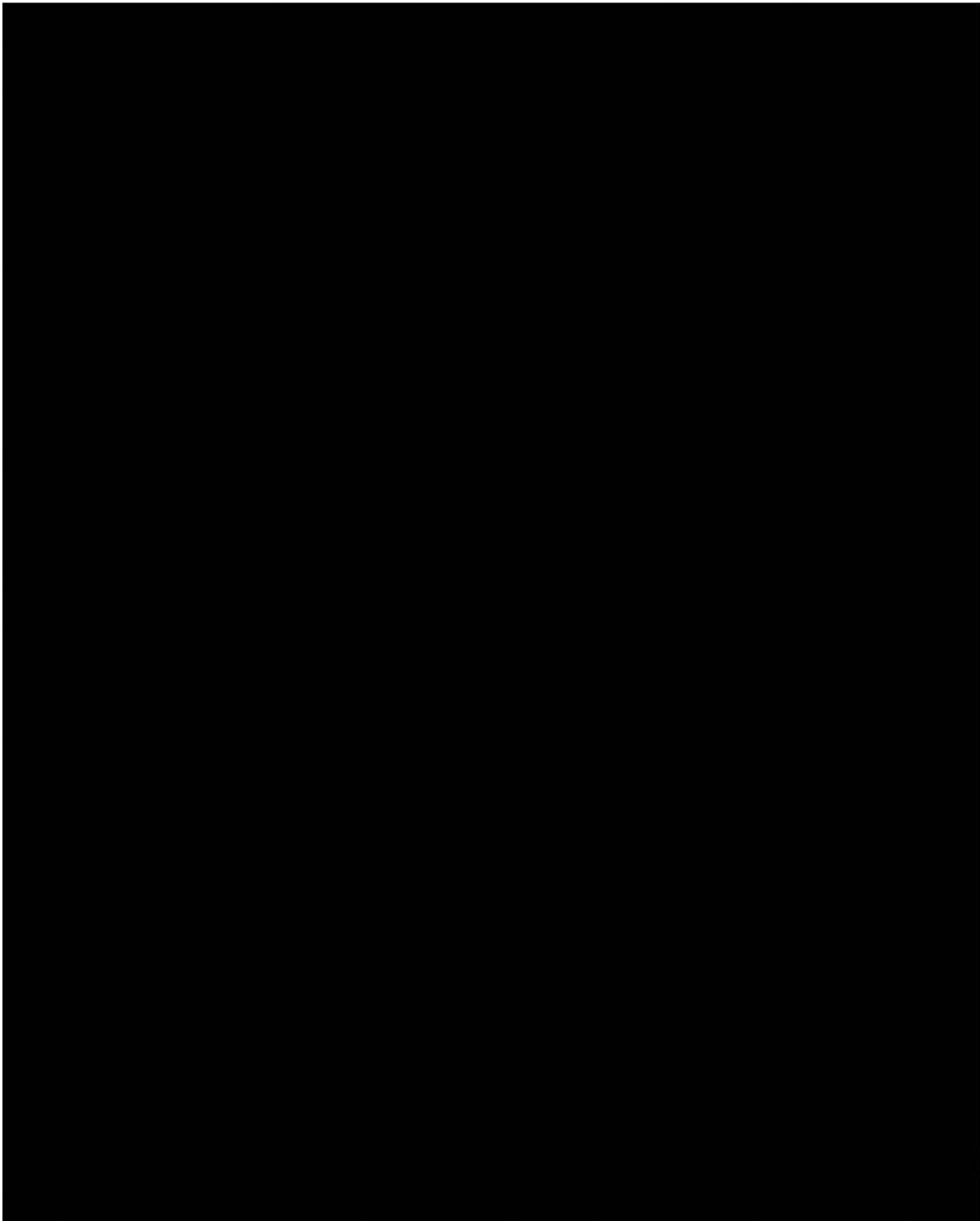
**RECEIVED BY**  
**DCU**  
03 NOV 2003

Dear Mr Blunkett,

I am writing to you hoping that you can give my husband and I a glimmer of hope with a very heartbreaking problem.







We are writing to you in desperation. These people have not been arrested as yet, but we are so afraid for our daughter. We are afraid because they are no laws to protect [REDACTED]. The only protection she as got is a 999 phone (supplied by Police). [REDACTED] is having counselling with Risky Business, which is a brilliant organisation. My husband and I are getting a lot of support from CROP, another brilliant organisation. Without these two organisations I don't know what [REDACTED] my husband and I would have done. We all feel that things must be done now, not in months to come,

how many more children are going to be lured in to the net of these evil men before there is some justice done. Girls are afraid to complain to Police because they are in real danger from these men. Our daughter is willing to go to Court and say what has happened to her but we need her keeping safe from these people. The Police know what these men are capable of doing. There are little resources to help girls complain and carry the complaint through. Surely someone should be looking at what can be done to help these children and keep them safe from threats and intimidation then girls would not think there is no choice but to go along with these men, letting them use and abuse them and be frightened for their life. At this time Police are investigating our daughter's accusations. I hope that these men who have turned all our lives upside down don't get away with the evil crimes they have committed because they know the laws and how they can get away with continuing to use children for their gain.

[REDACTED] The situations as been like this since [REDACTED] These men and others like them must be stopped, and there must be laws that can be used to stop them. The Police must have the resources to stop them and we feel this situation is getting and has got out of hand. Please Mr Blunkett do something now before these evil men get their claws into our daughter. She always attended school, had never been in any sort of trouble with school or police and has always been a loving and delightful daughter. Don't allow these pimps and paedophiles to get away with it. Don't let our daughter and lots of other girls like her down. Please give the police the resources to help [REDACTED] and the thousands like her.

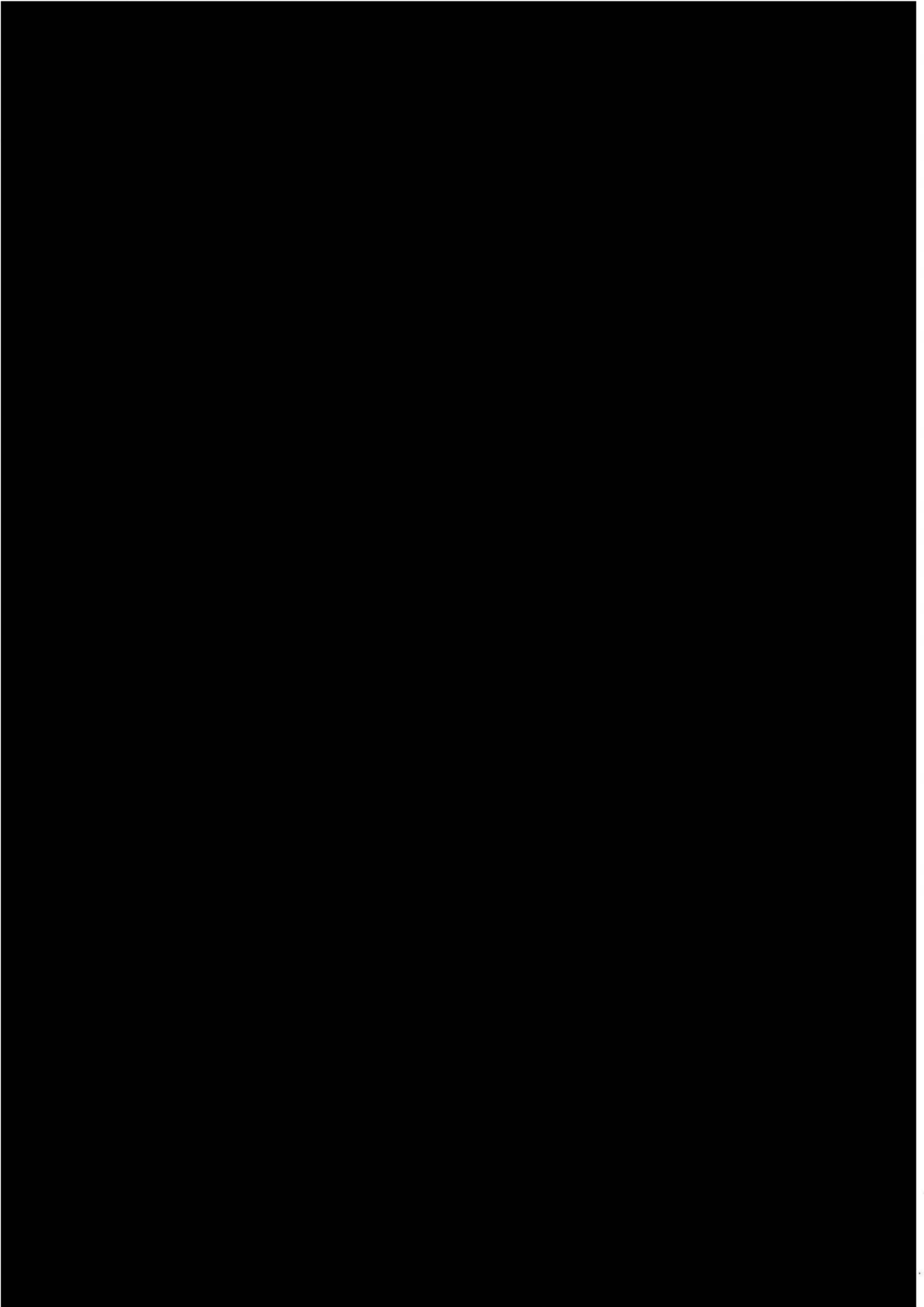
I am sending a copy of this letter to Kevin Barron, MP and the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police.

We look forward to hearing your response and are really hoping that you can help [REDACTED] and us out of this terrible, terrible situation.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

P.S. I enclose a copy of a piece of work [REDACTED] wrote after a counselling session. She wrote this trying to get her feelings on paper. [REDACTED]





**Key Document 44**

Email Chain containing Correspondence from the then MP for Keighley to the then Home Secretary's Office

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 August 2003 17:01  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Goggins Paul (Submissions); Blears Hazel (Submissions); Gieve John (Submissions); Grice Deborah Mary; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] Mactaggart Fiona (Submissions); [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Letter re child sexual abuse & possible coverage on CH4  
**Importance:** High



Ig Ann Cryer MP for Keighley. ... [REDACTED]

We spoke. Please find attached letter from Ann Cryer's office referring to allegations of child sexual abuse in her constituency. Also attached is a letter she has recently sent to the local police and another that is apparently on its way to the HS.

The gist is that it is alleged that a number of Asian young men are abusing minors in Ann's constituency but the police and social services are failing to act. The mothers of those suffering from the alleged abuse are seeking a change in the law to allow hearsay evidence to be considered (i.e. evidence from the parents given the reluctance of the minors involved to give evidence).

As you will see, HS met one of the mothers when he went to the CROP conference in Leeds though there doesn't appear to be a direct link with prostitution.

I know you are already trying to find out from Channel 4 what coverage on this they are planning but our lines will need to be linked to investigations of child sexual abuse etc rather than prostitution.

You will also see that the key issue of concern to Ann Cryer is that she suggests the police are failing to take any action because of fear of trespassing on cultural sensitivities, though of course we don't yet know the police's story on this.

I am not sure if the letter to HS is already being dealt with through other channels but grateful if you [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] could provide a reply for Hazel Blears to send please. I have a very vague recollection of previous correspondence on this same issue and we may have replied to Ann previously.

Tel: [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Outer Office  
**Sent:** 21 August 2003 16:35  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Ann Cryer MP for Keighley. 21 aug.tif

**Ann Cryer MP for Keighley**

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2B11

Private Secretary  
Office of the Home Secretary  
The Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1 9AT

21 August 2003

Our Ref: 020512

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to our telephone conversation of a few moments ago and enclose a copy of the letter that is already on its way to the Home Secretary.

Channel 4 News has investigated the allegations and are planning to run a story imminently. The bulk of the story centres around the evidence of two mothers (of girls that have been sexually abused) who met with the Home Secretary in Leeds at the end of June. Channel 4 is seeking a comment from the Home Secretary as to what his thoughts are (the mothers are calling for a change in legislation such that hearsay evidence from a parent would be admissible in any investigation/proceedings relating to allegations of sexual abuse of the children and where that child is unwilling to give evidence).

Should you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Assistant to Ann Cryer MP

Phone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]  
E mail: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk

Website: [www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

21-Aug-03 01:26P Ann Cryer MP



## Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH

Superintendent Mark Whyman  
West Yorkshire Police  
North Street  
Keighley  
West Yorkshire  
BD21 3RX

13 August 2003

Our Ref: 020512

I refer to recent discussions regarding Operation Parsonage. I understand that you are not convinced that this is necessarily a "race matter" and that it would not be appropriate to raise this issue with the whole of the Asian community. However, you have - I believe - decided to seek the help of "key members" of the Asian community.

That said, I take this opportunity to raise a number of points:

1. both you and Social Services have made the point that sex crimes go, to a great extent, under-reported and, therefore, the abuse of young girls may involve white men as well as Asian men. This may or may not be the case. However, what we are sure of (although I accept that there is a real problem as far as evidence that could be used for the purposes of prosecution is concerned) is that a number of children from [redacted] and now [redacted] School are displaying signs of the same *modus operandi* involving Asian men. You are aware that the parents of the children have produced a list of some 60 to 70 men who are alleged to be involved in having sex with their daughters. Whatever your suspicions regarding the under-reporting of sex crimes, I do not believe that you are aware of any allegations involving the abuse of girls by white men.
2. From any view, I am afraid that there is inevitably a racial element to this. Some Asian men who, for cultural reasons, are deprived of the possibility of striking relationships with young women from their own community until marriage has been arranged (quite often with a cousin from the sub continent with whom he has little or nothing in common) whilst, at the same time, growing up in a westernised society, may be encouraged to look elsewhere for

Phone: [redacted] Fax: [redacted]

[www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

email: [redacted]@parliament.uk





## Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH

those relationships. The strong familial bond and sense of honour (*izzet*) means that those men cannot openly "date" young white women. This would be frowned upon and could cause shame on his family. That dating, therefore, "goes underground". Where the concept of *izzet* is enshrined in the honour of the Asian woman – no such honour is attributable to the white girl who are often seen as expendable, easy-targets by some men.

3. It is not the street-wise, mature young woman who normally enters into this type of relationship. Rather, it is the vulnerable and impressionable young girl that is enticed by the sense of excitement and adventure. The fact that many of these young men, despite the fact that they are not in employment or perhaps even registered at the benefits office, are able to drive cars and wear designer clothes increases their appeal yet further to these vulnerable girls (who are simply not old enough to differentiate between love and abuse).
4. At the end of last year, the Police concluded that there was no "organised crime" regarding the exploitation of young girls in Keighley and concluded that it was more "of a social issue". I agree with this. Cultural and racial factors are at play here. If the settled Asian community in the UK was more prepared to arrange marriages within that settled community, rather than insisting on trans-continental marriages with a spouse that is incompatible, I am sure that some of the pressure felt by these young men (torn between the cultures of the East and the West) would not be as great. Furthermore, were the Asian community be more willing to appreciate the value of ensuring that their children go to school with the ability to speak English (without prejudicing fluency in their mother tongue), educational achievement amongst the Asian communities would be higher and the ability of young Asian men to successfully and equitably compete in the labour market would increase.
5. The fact that most of the Asian community insist on inter-continental marriage (which means that the second or third Asian generation in the UK can never truly materialise) English is not encouraged and educational standards remain low amongst the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. This attempt to strengthen the culture of the East, whilst living in the West, is serving only to ensure that integration of the communities is further away today than it has ever been and that the young British Asian community will continue to be trapped in a clash of two cultures.
6. The problems we are experiencing in Keighley are a symptom of that clash. Whilst I wholeheartedly accept that this is not necessarily an issue that can be addressed by the Police, I do believe that it must be taken into consideration and it is simply unhelpful to try and address this problem by attempting to

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

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[www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

email: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk



## Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH

ignore the arguments of culture and race that go to the very heart of this matter.

7. When my office was approached by the parents' support group a couple of months ago, the matter was referred to a member of the Asian community for the first time. Mr [REDACTED] as you are aware, visited the Low Fold Family Centre and was given the list of alleged offenders. Shocked by the stories he heard, he agreed to "take this to the key members of the community". Forty eight hours later, Mr [REDACTED] reported that the response from the "key members" was not good and that he had been told to do nothing with this matter and, indeed, the "key members" were unable to do anything to control these young men as they were all over 18 and, moreover, some were related to the "key members".
8. Mr [REDACTED] was challenged on the grounds that the Asian community was very critical when I failed to refer the allegations of child abuse to the Asian community (I make no apology of this - I followed Child Protection procedure and alerted Social Services and West Yorkshire Police) and told him that the Asian community could not "cherry-pick" what issues it was prepared to take responsibility for.
9. I do not believe, therefore, that your attempt to consult with the "key members" now will be of any practical assistance. I suspect that you will speak to the "usual suspects" who have little or no interest in addressing the fundamental and underlying reasons behind these problems. The people with whom you will attempt to consult are un-elected and self-appointed representatives. I do not believe for one minute that they are representative of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. More importantly, some take the view that issues such as "domestic violence" do not exist and are simply an invention of a perverse Western culture.
10. The Police have serious problems in this case. Constrained by PACE and the unwillingness of the children to give evidence on camera is frustrating. However, a large and significant source of information has been left untapped. When I first heard the stories of what was happening to young girls in my constituency, I was horrified. I am quite sure that the vast majority of Asian parents would react in exactly the same way: how would they react if these were their daughters? It may well be that, on hearing the allegations, some members of the Asian community will be prepared to come forward with information that may assist the Police in bringing further prosecutions.

Phone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]

3

[www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

email: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk



## Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH

11. At the last strategy meeting, my assistant raised the issue of the lack of attendance by representatives of the Asian community and the fact that there is a widely held perception in Keighley that there is "one law for them and one for us". Whilst I do not necessarily subscribe to that mantra, the fact remains that that view is held and increasingly so. This cannot be ignored and needs to be addressed for the benefit of the whole community.

12. The fact that West Yorkshire Police is unwilling to seek the assistance and support of the Asian community on this important issue on the grounds of "sensitivity", serves only to strengthen the view that it is "one law for them and another for us". Had it been a case of Asian children being sexually abused by white men, I am quite sure that the community would have insisted (and received), quite correctly, immediate police action.

Unless you positively and actively attempt to include the Asian community in an effort to challenge the unacceptable behaviour of a small group of men, you will assist in perpetuating the segregation and distrust between communities. Your attempts to be "sensitive", rather than protecting members of a particular community, serve only to fuel the arguments and the minds of the extremists on both sides.

A reliance on self-appointed "key leaders" and token members of the community will do nothing more than entrench already held views and maintain the *status quo*. An attempt must be made to go over the heads of self styled leaders to reach the hearts and minds of every member of the community. After the Bradford Riots, it was mothers who took a leading role in clearing the streets of young men and preventing further outbreaks of violence. If we never even bother to try to reach the women in Keighley, how can we ever expect to achieve a similar, positive result? I would be more than happy to join you and Social Services in addressing public meetings (there would have to be separate meetings for men and women).

Finally, I appreciate that this is not an easy matter and all concerned are somewhat frustrated. However, thus far, it appears that every attempt has been made to protect the "sensitivity" of the Asian community at the expense of the equally sensitive and vulnerable children and their families that have been exposed to horrific abuse.

I have taken the liberty of copying this letter to the Home Secretary and the Chief Constable.

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

[www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

email: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk



**Ann Cryer MP for Keighley**

**Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH**

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

ANN CRYER MP

Phone

Fax:

[www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

email: @parliament.uk



## Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH

The Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP  
The Secretary of State for the Home Department  
The Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1 9AT

18 August 2003

Our Ref: 020512

At the end of June, in Leeds, you met with two mothers from my constituency whose daughter's were being sexually exploited by Asian men. I am sure that you will recall that I first raised this issue with you in May 2002.

For some time I have been pressing both West Yorkshire Police and Bradford Social Services to take a more pro-active role in this matter (which has been given the name "Operation Parsonage"). Whilst I can appreciate that there is an evidential problem, within the parameters of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill (ie the girls are unwilling to make a formal complaint - either as a result of the misguided view that they are "in love" with the abuser or they fear the man) that has impeded arrests, I do not believe that this warrants a *carte-blanche* for inactivity.

At no time, in the last eighteen months, have these men even been interviewed, questioned or even spoken to informally to alert them to the fact that the police are aware of what is going on and that they are committing paedophilia. The failure to challenge this behaviour has resulted in its replication and continuation. Indeed, West Yorkshire Police have recently interviewed a further 11 girls who are suspected of being abused. These are the children that we are aware of.

I take this opportunity to pass to you a copy of the letter I have sent to the Divisional Commander of West Yorkshire Police in Keighley and a copy of the letter I have received from Bradford Social Services. I would refer you, in particular, to the top of page 2 of this letter that refers to the problems that have been encountered in securing convictions in these distressing cases.

When I ask the police and the parents of these children (who are also victims) what is needed to actively deal with this problem, they unanimously agree that only by

Phone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]  
E mail: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk

Website: [www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)

**Ann Cryer MP for Keighley**

Bob Cryer House  
35 Devonshire Street  
Keighley BD21 2BH

allowing "hearsay" evidence (from the parent) is a conviction likely to be brought. After all, argue the parents, if they fail to ensure that their children attend school, they are liable for prosecution (indeed, some parents caught in this case have been prosecuted by Education Bradford). That being the case, why are the parents unable to offer any protection to their children when they fear that their children are being sexually and emotionally abused by men? The parents are seeking to be empowered to act as complainant in such circumstances. The police are calling for the admissibility of hearsay evidence.

In order to be "sensitive" to the Asian community, both Social Services and West Yorkshire Police decided against raising this matter directly with it. This matter has been the subject of much discussion between my office and the police, and I believe that I make views known in this regard in my letter to Superintendent Whyman. I understand that the police have, in the last few days, raised the matter with "key members" of the community.

I am afraid that it is this "sensitive" approach (at the expense of the sensitivities of the children and their families) that has served only to ensure that this abuse continues and undermines the very race relations that the police/Social Services believe they are protecting.

I would very much appreciate your views.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

ANN CRYER MP

Phone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]  
E mail: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk

Website: [www.anncryer.co.uk](http://www.anncryer.co.uk)