

Key Document 45

Email Chain containing correspondence from the then MP for Keighley to the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office

██████████

From: ██████████
Sent: 22 September 2003 13:45
To: ██████████
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

Thanks ██████████ will do

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

From: ██████████
Sent: 22 September 2003 13:41
To: ██████████
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

██████████

As long as you let DCU know that is fine, I am on 1st Floor Allington Towers.

██████████

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

From: ██████████
Sent: 22 September 2003 13:39
To: ██████████
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

Thanks ██████████

Would you be able to add to the response - *"Thank you for your letters of 18th August to the Home Secretary and 20th August to Caroline Flint..."*?

The letter we've received from Ann asks for Caroline Flint's comments on the letter to the Home Sec - but it seems wrong for two responses to go out. I'll make a copy of the letter to Caroline Flint and send it over to you for your records.

Let me know if there is a problem with this.

Thanks

██████████

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

From: ██████████
Sent: 22 September 2003 13:33
To: ██████████
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

██████████

I have not drafted the reply yet because I am still waiting for a response from West Yorkshire Police. When I do draft the reply I will send it to you.

██████████

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

From: ██████████
Sent: 22 September 2003 12:10
To: ██████████
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

██████████

Can you send me a copy of the reply that was sent to Ann Cryer please? We've just received a letter from Ann to Caroline Flint on the same subject.

Thanks

██████████

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

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 September 2003 11:53
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

[REDACTED]

Thanks for this contribution. I requested a contribution on prostitution because it was an issue which came up in her previous of 24 May 2002 regarding these incidents in Keighley.

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

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 September 2003 11:42
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Correspondence from Ann Cryer - Prostitution Review Team contribution

[REDACTED]

I've attached a short contribution for the reply to Ann Cryer, which outlines the prostitution review that we are currently undertaking. There's not much more we can say at this stage - and seeing as Ann Cryer's letter does not specifically refer to prostitution I'm not sure we should say much more. I've also attached the Home Office statement that was issued when this story broke on Channel 4 a couple of weeks ago - apologies if you've already seen it.

<< File: Contribution for [REDACTED] 08Sep03.doc >> << File: HOME OFFICE STATEMENT.rtf >>

If you need anything else, please come back to me.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Criminal Law Policy Unit
Tel: [REDACTED]



Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

Bob Cryer House
35 Devonshire Street
Keighley BD21 2BH

Caroline Flint MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
The Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1 9AT

20 August 2003
Our Ref: 020512

22 AUG 2003

5571

Dear Caroline.

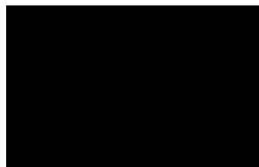
In light of our recent conversation (following your meeting with my constituents in Leeds), I take this opportunity to pass to you a copy of the letter, with enclosures, that I have sent to the Home Secretary.

This is a difficult matter and is likely to come to the fore in the next few days as Channel 4 are expected to run a piece in its 7.00pm news-slot.

I shall keep you advised of developments. However, in the meantime, I would very much appreciate your thoughts.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



ANN CRYER MP

Phone



Fax:



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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

ANN CRYER MP

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City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

www.bradford.gov.uk

Ann Cryer MP
 Bob Cryer House
 35 Devonshire Street
 Keighley
 BD21 2BH

Department of Social Services

Director's Suite
 5th Floor, Olicana House
 Chapel Street
 BRADFORD BD1 5RE

Tel: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Our Ref: [REDACTED]

Date : 11th August 2003
 080803a

Dear Ann

I am writing in response to your letter concerning the situation of young women being sexually exploited in Keighley.

I waited until after the meeting had taken place between ourselves and the police at Keighley on Tuesday, 5th August in order to give you I hope a more informed response. As you know [REDACTED] was also in attendance at that meeting and I am sure he will have given you a full briefing of the outcome and I hope [REDACTED] would agree that as your representative the discussion and debate was very balanced, looking at all aspects of the investigation over the last twelve months.

I am disappointed that you feel that the response in my briefing was "lacklustre". I would accept your concern that many of the suggestions are confirmation of actions and decisions that were made over a year ago. Many of those actions related to ongoing preventative work with these young girls and by the nature of the problem these actions have to be repeated and delivered for a long time. We all know that preventative work does not have any quick results but has to be part of a longer term strategy that we will be maintaining. I do also share the frustration that these concerns are still with us after this period of time and I accept your challenge to us as organisations in terms of our response to these on-going concerns. In relation to the current concerns you are correct in your information that eleven children have been interviewed and it is also fair to say that we are encountering a repeat of last year where evidentially there is very little progress to be made from these investigations from the police perspective. I fully agree with you that we need to look at more creative ways of tackling this problem when the constraints placed



BRADFORD
 one landscape many views

11 AUG 2003



on the statutory agencies under legislation are such that it is near on impossible to secure convictions.

You ask some specific questions about which schools have seen the video, how many children have seen the video etc, and I did seek a briefing note from Streets and Lanes on this issue which can be summarised as follows:

1. Following the launch of the Education pack "Things we don't talk about - (understanding abusive relationships)" was launched just over two years ago there has been an on-going programme to train all named and PSHCE Teachers throughout the whole district using this pack. There have been two major training events over the last two years each event focussing on 30 to 40 participants. Education Bradford maintain an inventory of schools attending and each secondary school has been issued with all the appropriate materials to encourage participation in this aspect of work. I am advised that every secondary school in the district has had the opportunity to take part in training around this issue. However, the uptake does depend on the different schools and the personnel responsible for taking the issue forward are based within the school.

2. Notwithstanding the above in September 2002 [REDACTED] for Education Bradford, led an action day with all appropriate teaching staff in Keighley schools which resulted in plans being made for [REDACTED]. With regard to [REDACTED] there has been induction training for all new staff, PSHCE lessons for girls in Year 9 and small group work activity for Years 7 & 8. At [REDACTED] an employee of Streets and Lanes Project and a Youth Worker attended the presentation for at least 30 staff with a programme of intervention constructed with [REDACTED]. I understand that some of this activity was later not able to take place due to staff sickness and that needs to be rearranged the events of the last two months has prioritised this now and will be taking place in the Autumn Term. With regard to [REDACTED] input by Streets and Lanes was reviewed and the programme of work completed this past Summer Term with a target group of Year 8 pupils over a 6 week period. At [REDACTED] the member of staff from Streets and Lanes was involved in presenting the education input to 12 parent governors with the plan for the school's Head of PSHCE to deliver this to Years 7 & 8.

With regard to police officers visiting schools I am afraid I am not aware of that particular information but what did emerge from the meeting on Tuesday was a reported clear reduction in number of young people reported missing over the last 12 months as a result of the police activity. You will recall that all officers were briefed about this concern and had been issued with very clear instructions on how to respond to missing persons reports and to prioritise them and this appears to have had a positive outcome.

With regard to your points relating to liaison with the Asian Community I am sure [REDACTED] will have relayed to you the outcome of the discussions yesterday. In effect it was agreed that we should approach the community in a sensitive manner, not by trying to apportion blame, but by approaching the issue as a shared problem for all of us, to establish that this is a situation that could be misperceived, misused and exploited by other parties and that it was in everybody's interests to try and find a solution to the problem. I understand that Mark Whyman is taking advice from his Ethnic Minority Liaison Officers as to who the best people are to approach in the community as well as listening to [REDACTED] advice in the course of the meeting.

Again, I would reiterate that we share the frustrations in this case and this is keenly felt by some of our front line staff that work directly with the children and families who are caught up in this. I can assure you that we are fully committed and determined to explore all options and creative ways in trying to tackle this very distressing area of work.


We will continue to keep you informed of developments and again would be very happy to meet with you jointly with the police if that would be of assistance.

All best wishes.

Yours sincerely



K. TUNSTALL
Head of Service
(Children, Young People & Families)

Copy to: Supt Mark Whyman – Divisional Commander – Keighley Police
Mark Carriline – Asst Chief Executive – Education, Community & Social Care
 Child Protection Co-ordinator

Key Document 46

Memorandum from the Home Office Correspondence Unit concerning a reply to the then MP for Keighley



Home Office

MEMORANDUM

From [REDACTED] Your Ref
Room 1st Floor Allington
Towers

Tel [REDACTED] File Ref

Date 3 September 2003

To [REDACTED] cc
Prostitution Review Team
CLPU
Rm 471
QAG

RE: CHILD PROSTITUTION

I attach ministerial correspondence from Ann Cryer MP concerning the sexual exploitation of young girls in Keighley. I also attach a copy of a draft reply to Ministerial Correspondence sent in May 2002 by the MP on the same issue.

I would appreciate a contribution on Government measures to tackle prostitution. I understand from the paragraph 10 of the attached draft reply PO 10618-2 that guidance called 'Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution'.

I have written to West Yorkshire Police and sent a memo to [REDACTED] for a contribution on admissibility of hearsay evidence.

Please respond by 8 September.

I look forward to hearing from you.

[REDACTED]



DCU - minister's case for Hazel Blears reply Strategy To Reduce Violent Crime CRST/HB



Ann Cryer MP for Keighley

RECEIVED BY

Bob Cryer House 2003
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

BEEN TO
OUTER OFFICE
20 AUG 2003

Our Ref: 020512

RECEIVED BY 18 August 2003
DCU
22 AUG 2003

Dear David

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

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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,


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Bob Cryer House
35 Devonshire Street
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Superintendent Mark Whyman
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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.
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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

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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.

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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 on (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.

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Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

ANN CRYER MP

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Our Ref KT/jmc

Date : 11th August 2003
080803a

Dear Ann

I am writing in response to your letter concerning the situation of young women being sexually exploited in Keighley.

I waited until after the meeting had taken place between ourselves and the police at Keighley on Tuesday, 5th August in order to give you I hope a more informed response. As you know [REDACTED] was also in attendance at that meeting and I am sure he will have given you a full briefing of the outcome and I hope [REDACTED] would agree that as your representative the discussion and debate was very balanced, looking at all aspects of the investigation over the last twelve months.

I am disappointed that you feel that the response in my briefing was "lacklustre". I would accept your concern that many of the suggestions are confirmation of actions and decisions that were made over a year ago. Many of those actions related to ongoing preventative work with these young girls and by the nature of the problem these actions have to be repeated and delivered for a long time. We all know that preventative work does not have any quick results but has to be part of a longer term strategy that we will be maintaining. I do also share the frustration that these concerns are still with us after this period of time and I accept your challenge to us as organisations in terms of our response to these on-going concerns. In relation to the current concerns you are correct in your information that eleven children have been interviewed and it is also fair to say that we are encountering a repeat of last year where evidentially there is very little progress to be made from these investigations from the police perspective. I fully agree with you that we need to look at more creative ways of tackling this problem when the constraints placed



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one landscape many views

14 AUG 2003



on the statutory agencies under legislation are such that it is near on impossible to secure convictions.

You ask some specific questions about which schools have seen the video, how many children have seen the video etc, and I did seek a briefing note from Streets and Lanes on this issue which can be summarised as follows:

1. Following the launch of the Education pack "Things we don't talk about - (understanding abusive relationships)" was launched just over two years ago there has been an on-going programme to train all named and PSHCE Teachers throughout the whole district using this pack. There have been two major training events over the last two years each event focussing on 30 to 40 participants. Education Bradford maintain an inventory of schools attending and each secondary school has been issued with all the appropriate materials to encourage participation in this aspect of work. I am advised that every secondary school in the district has had the opportunity to take part in training around this issue. However, the uptake does depend on the different schools and the personnel responsible for taking the issue forward are based within the school.
2. Notwithstanding the above in September 2002 [redacted] [redacted] for Education Bradford, led an action day with all appropriate teaching staff in Keighley schools which resulted in plans being made for [redacted] and [redacted]. With regard to [redacted] there has been induction training for all new staff, PSHCE lessons for girls in Year 9 and small group work activity for Years 7 & 8. At [redacted] an employee of Streets and Lanes Project and a Youth Worker attended the presentation for at least 30 staff with a programme of intervention constructed with [redacted]. I understand that some of this activity was later not able to take place due to staff sickness and that needs to be rearranged the events of the last two months has prioritised this now and will be taking place in the Autumn Term. With regard to [redacted] input by Streets and Lanes was reviewed and the programme of work completed this past Summer Term with a target group of Year 8 pupils over a 6 week period. At [redacted] the member of staff from Streets and Lanes was involved in presenting the education input to 12 parent governors with the plan for the school's Head of PSHCE to deliver this to Years 7 & 8.

With regard to police officers visiting schools I am afraid I am not aware of that particular information but what did emerge from the meeting on Tuesday was a reported clear reduction in number of young people reported missing over the last 12 months as a result of the police activity. You will recall that all officers were briefed about this concern and had been issued with very clear instructions on how to respond to missing persons reports and to prioritise them and this appears to have had a positive outcome.

With regard to your points relating to liaison with the Asian Community I am sure [redacted] will have relayed to you the outcome of the discussions yesterday. In effect it was agreed that we should approach the community in a sensitive manner, not by trying to apportion blame, but by approaching the issue as a shared problem for all of us, to establish that this is a situation that could be misperceived, misused and exploited by other parties and that it was in everybody's interests to try and find a solution to the problem. I understand that Mark Whyman is taking advice from his Ethnic Minority Liaison Officers as to who the best people are to approach in the community as well as listening to [redacted] advice in the course of the meeting.

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Again, I would reiterate that we share the frustrations in this case and this is keenly felt by some of our front line staff that work directly with the children and families who are caught up in this. I can assure you that we are fully committed and determined to explore all options and creative ways in trying to tackle this very distressing area of work.

We will continue to keep you informed of developments and again would be very happy to meet with you jointly with the police if that would be of assistance.

All best wishes.

Yours sincerely



K. TUNSTALL
Head of Service
(Children, Young People & Families)

Copy to: Supt Mark Whyman – Divisional Commander – Keighley Police
Mark Carriline – Asst Chief Executive – Education, Community & Social Care
Paul Hill – Child Protection Co-ordinator

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Our Ref: VCS 02 9/4/1
PO 10618-2
Your Ref: 020512

Further to a letter to you of 17 June from one of my officials regarding your request for assistance in respect of the sexual abuse and exploitation of young girls by young men in Keighley. As Minister with responsibility for Crime Reduction and Police issues your letter has been passed to me for reply. The reply has been co-ordinated with the Departments of Health and the Department for Education and Skills.

I have been told by the police that a number of agency members came together in Keighley to discuss a situation involving thirty white girls under the age of 16 and older criminals of Asian origin, which suggested sexual/drug abuse. Some of the girls were regularly missing from home and had behavioural problems. Naturally, their parents were frustrated with the situation.

Further inter-agency meetings took place and it was decided to interview the girls to find out if any of the offences were apparent. The girls refused to be interviewed on video and would only give information if it would not be used in court. The information was varied and uncorroborated and the girls refused a medical examination. This meant there was no prima facie evidence from the girls,

In an attempt to gain additional information and to find ways of helping the parents, meetings were held with them. The parents were prepared to make statements about the men but some felt intimidated by them. An offence (abduction) under the Child Protection Act (sub section 2 (1)) has been identified which could be utilised if the parents provide statements and is an arrestable offence.

I gather that in relation to the situation in Keighley, an initial inter-agency strategy discussion set up in August 2001 was attended by the relevant agencies and that meetings about strategy and information gathering have also been held since then. At a meeting in March 2002 the agencies agreed an action plan.

As a result of the recommendations from the meeting of April 2002, a joint Police and Social Services investigation was commenced. I am assured that the joint investigation continues, a support group has been set up for parents and regular inter-agency meetings are taking place.

You may be interested to know that the 'Bradford Vision,' the Strategic Partnership for the Bradford District has made crime and community safety a key priority. Indeed 70% of its 2002/03 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund of £7.359 million are being spent on this issue in its most deprived communities including Keighley. Bradford Crime and Disorder Partnership has substantial funding available to it through the Communities Against Drugs Initiative (at least £477,000 in 2002/03) to tackle drug related crime. It also has funding available to it through the Safer Communities Initiative and the Street Wardens element of the Government's cross-cutting Street Crime initiative. The partnership will need to consider whether there is a case for targeting some of these resources at the serious issues identified in Keighley.

Given the recent riots I am aware that the situation in Keighley could be used by extreme groups to cause tension between the Asian and white communities. I also understand that there are similar situations in Bradford and here in London (Tower Hamlets) where young Asian girls are being exploited and are becoming involved in prostitution and drugs. Regardless of whether they are white or of other ethnic origins, underage girls who are being exploited need help and perpetrators need to be brought to justice.

Although not always prominent or visible, children are involved in prostitution across England and Wales. It is a tragedy for any child to become involved in prostitution. It exposes them to abuse and assault, and may even threaten their lives. It deprives them of their childhood, self-esteem and opportunities for good health, education and training. It results in their social exclusion.

That is why we published supplementary guidance to *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. This Guidance, entitled *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution*, is for police, health, social services, education and all other agencies and professionals that may work with children about whom there are concerns that they are involved in prostitution. It sets out an inter-agency approach, based on local protocols developed within the framework of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, to address this type of abuse. Its aim is to both safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and to encourage the investigation and prosecution of criminal activities by those who coerce children into and abuse them through prostitution.

The Government recognises that the vast majority of children do not voluntarily enter prostitution: they are coerced, enticed or are utterly desperate. We need to ensure that local agencies act quickly and sensitively in the best interests of the children concerned. It is important that proper prevention, protection and re-integration strategies are put in place to ensure good outcomes for these children. All services must be able to recognise situations where children might be involved, or are at risk of becoming involved, in prostitution. They should treat such children as children in need, who may be suffering, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm.

I would like to assure you that the Government shares the profound concern which the most serious offences arouse particularly when it is children who are the victims. There is no higher priority than the protection of children.

John Denham

Minister's Case - Draft Reply

Divisional Reference: VCS 02 9/4/1

Private Office Reference: PO 10618-2

Notes For Minister:

Ann Cryer wrote to the Home Secretary expressing concern in respect of incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation of young girls by predominantly older Asian men in Keighley. The MP addressed similar letters to Alan Milburn and Estelle Morris, the Home Office agreed to co-ordinate contributions for a single draft reply. A draft reply is aside.

Enclosures:

Copy To: ACC Greg Wilkinson, Divisional Operations (West) West Yorkshire Police Headquarters, [REDACTED] of the Crime Reduction Team at the Government Office for Yorkshire, [REDACTED] of the Regional Directorate of Public Health at the GO for Yorkshire, [REDACTED] of Children's' Safeguards Unit at the DOH (Wellington House), [REDACTED] of DFES, [REDACTED] of REU and [REDACTED] of Probation Unit.

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