

Annex G

Notes of Discussions with Former Officials

Annex G: Record of discussions with former officials

Introduction

The Internal Review team is grateful to those former officials who shared their recollections for the purposes of the review.

Details of the information these officials were able to provide are set out below.

Former Official ■■■

Note of a telephone conversation with former official ■■■

Note of a telephone conversation of 12 May 2016

Participants:

Former official ■■■
■■■■■■■■■■

1. ■■■■ thanked former official ■■■ for responding to Jeremy Oppenheim's letter and for taking the time to speak to her.
2. ■■■■ mentioned that former official ■■■'s letter had been helpful in explaining that, although he did not recall the incident described in the annex to Jeremy Oppenheim's letter, the procedure described in that Annex – i.e. referral of a concern to a regional child protection coordinator for transmission to a senior officer at the local education authority – would have been the process followed at the time.
3. Former official ■■■ added that as a policy team, his team at the Department for Education and Employment led on matters of strategic procedure, and would not have had any role in any investigation of a safeguarding concern or specific allegations, which would have been taken forward by relevant agencies. Former official ■■■ recalled that the network of regional child protection co-ordinators existed to promote awareness of safeguarding within schools; improve procedures for dealing with allegations made about teachers and other staff employed in schools, and to be a conduit for information about safeguarding procedures and best practice.
4. ■■■■ referred to former official ■■■'s letter (which indicated he had no recollection of the specific incident referred to in the annex to that letter). ■■■■ asked whether it was possible that a referral from the Home Office could have been dealt with solely by someone else within his team. Former official ■■■ thought this might have been possible, although noted that it would not have been within the remit of anyone in his team to investigate the issue such that anyone dealing with the concern raised would simply have passed the information on to those with responsibility for investigating such concerns.
5. Former official ■■■ added that the Department for Health would more commonly have received information about specific safeguarding concerns for referral on to social services and local child protection teams. He recalled that Jenny Gray had been a Social Services Inspector working within the Department for Health at that time, and her role would have included liaison with local social services and child protection teams where appropriate.
6. Former official ■■■ mentioned he had been aware of concerns raised by Ann Cryer, MP. These had been a matter of general knowledge at the time; although no specific allegations had ever been discussed directly with him. He had also been aware of a project running at the time operated by Barnados, called the 'streets and lanes' project, which had provided services to sexually exploited children and young people.
7. Former official ■■■'s feeling was that he would have been likely to recall an incident that had made an impression on him because of a high public profile at the time (for example, he had clear recollections of events relating to the murder of Victoria Climbié) or appeared to have a wider significance. However, given the time that had passed, he could not recall details of issues which had not had that profile or significance at the time.

Former Official ■

Note of meetings with former official ■

Note of information provided by former official ■ to the Home Office Crime and Policing Analysis team, in a series of conversations in late 2014

Former official ■ was able to provide the following information to the internal review:

1. General background information specifically to guide the original files searches
2. Details of the Luton Evaluation and Risky Business Rotherham Research Project (particularly information regarding personnel and the receipt of key documents).
3. Specific information relating to the Crime Reduction Programme Bidding Process and issues connected the Luton evaluation team's disclosure of information regarding the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's taxi arrangements.

Note of a meeting with former official ■, 10 December 2015

Attendees

Former official ■
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1. Former official ■ confirmed that she worked as a grade ■ in the Home Office's Research and Development and Statistics team. She started at the Home Office in 2000.

Former official ■'s recollections were as follows:

2. ■
 ■ Initially, the Violence against Women and Girls section of the Crime Reduction Programme comprised two strands: one supporting projects dealing with domestic violence and one supporting projects concerned with rape and sexual assault. ■
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3. A bid process was conducted to select prostitution related projects for receipt of Crime Reduction Programme Funding. It was likely that bids had come in via the various Government Offices, and were then assessed by a central panel comprising a range of officials. In addition to Home Office research officials, policy and other officials would have been present.
4. The prostitution theme of the Crime Reduction Programme was itself divided into three components for the purposes of evaluation: 'exiting and supporting', 'policing' and 'young people'. In total, 11 projects were successful in their bids for funding, three of which sat within the 'prostitution and young people' initiative. These projects were based in Bristol, Sheffield and Rotherham.

5. Policy officials led the Crime Reduction Programme and were chiefly responsible for the relationship with projects. Home Office researchers were responsible for the evaluation of projects. Grant payments were probably made by the Government Office [of Yorkshire and the Humber], and there was a reporting process – which probably operated on a quarterly basis – supporting the release of funding.
6. The University of Luton were contracted, by the Home Office research team, to conduct the evaluation of the three prostitution and young people projects. Professors David Barrett and Margaret Melrose led the evaluation. They were responsible for evaluating the delivery of the projects and assessing whether they had achieved their aims and drawing out any good practice lessons with the aim of informing future policy and practice. As part of this process, anonymised data on the number and nature of cases (e.g. demographics) dealt with by the project (if relevant) would be provided by the projects to the evaluators, in accordance with the conditions of grant.
7. The Rotherham project was different to the others in the ‘prostitution and young people’ initiative in that it targeted pimps. Part of the funding provided to the Rotherham project supported the work of a Research and Development Worker. That person would be working in partnership with others to look at the sort of evidence that was needed for the purposes of conducting successful prosecutions against pimps.
8. The Research and Development worker, the ‘former researcher’ (who was employed by Rotherham Borough Council) had a legal background. Former official ■’s recollection was that the Rotherham project’s funding bid included the production of 8-10 case studies, which would ultimately help to establish what was needed to build a successful legal case against pimps. The ‘former researcher’ was employed by the Rotherham project to compile these case studies.
9. The University of Luton Evaluators were the projects’ principal point of contact in relation to the Home Office funded evaluation. In all other matters the local Government Office was the project’s day-to-day key point of contact and the Home Office policy officials would also have a role with regard to national policy issues and overall governance of the Crime Reduction Prostitution programme. The evaluators monitored the projects’ progress, in essence verifying that the project was delivering what was expected under the terms of grant. The University of Luton would have been contracted to provide progress updates and various types of report, such as an interim report to the Home Office research team.
10. None of the projects were expected to directly supply the Home Office research team with data. Data, which was required for the evaluation, would be provided by the project in an anonymous format (as per standard research practice) to the Home Office commissioned evaluation teams. The evaluators would then assess which information/data should be included in their written reports, which they submitted to the Home Office research team.
11. The Rotherham project was different to the other projects in that it was collecting data/information (via case studies) to help to prosecute pimps and to develop related good practice. Former official ■’s recollection was that this information (not anonymised) was to be shared with the police for operational and investigative purposes. This type of operational information (names of individuals, information about specific crimes and incidents) was not required by or expected to be shared with the commissioned evaluators or the Home Office.

12. The first that was known about issues with the Rotherham project was when Professor Melrose telephoned to report something along the lines of there being a 'number of issues with the project'.
13. Professor Melrose had been interviewing someone at the project, and the respondent revealed some issue with a taxi company that was working under contract from Rotherham Borough Council. The Council had been paying for taxis to take vulnerable young people between various safe places such as care homes and it was being suggested that use of the taxi firm in question was placing young people at risk.
14. Professor Melrose came into the Home Office to discuss the issue. At or around that point it had become clear that the Research and Development worker (the 'former researcher') was having a difficult time at the project. Sadly this was not uncommon, there were 34 projects in the Violence against Women and Girls section of the Crime Reduction Programme and a number had been affected by tribunal related employment issues.
15. Professor Melrose considered that a duty of care existed in relation to the information she had heard (i.e. young persons being placed at risk as a result of the taxi firm) and that some action would be necessary. The Home Office policy team and Government Office had been engaged and it could have been around this time that [former official ■] went with an official from the Government Office to see the project directly.
16. In conjunction with Home Office policy officials it was agreed that reporting to relevant safeguarding entities would need to take place. Former official ■ thought a letter was sent by email – probably to the Department of Education and/or the Department for Health and for contact to be made with the local responsible entity – possibly the Area Health Committee.
17. The project had only been funded for the first year, and had not been funded for the full two years. Therefore, findings from the Rotherham project were not included in the University of Luton's final report to the Home Office research team. As a consequence, findings from Rotherham project were not included in the Home Office commissioned report on the whole crime reduction prostitution programme: 'Tackling Prostitution: towards an holistic approach' (2004). This report was written by Professor Marianne Hester and Nicole Westmarland (at the time at the University of Bristol) who were both members of the evaluation team for the 'exiting and support' package of projects. This programme level report drew upon the final evaluation reports, which were submitted to the Home Office research team, by the respective evaluation teams.
18. Former official ■ was unclear as to the exact reason why the project was not funded for a second and final year. Whether to stop funding the project was a decision that would have been taken by the Government Office and Home Office policy. However, if the project had stopped functioning and was not undertaking the actions and delivering the services that were set out in the bid and grant conditions then presumably this would be grounds for funding to be discontinued. With regard to the evaluation, this would stop if the project was stopped or continue if the project continued. It was possible that Rotherham Borough Council had indicated that they did not want to continue with the project and there may have been some input from the Government Office in that decision. It was also possible that the

project itself had acknowledged that, due to the difficulties being experienced, it could not continue.

19. Former official ■'s recollection of the issues experienced by the project is hazy. She recalls the Research and Development worker (the 'former researcher') experiencing difficulties with her line manager and project stakeholders and that these relationships were tense. Also that the former researcher was sacked or suspended from her duties. Former official ■ also remembers reports that the Rotherham project office was broken into and that information collected by the former researcher was missing. Former official ■ cannot recall the detail or sequencing of these events. These project implementation issues would have been primarily dealt with by the Government Office and Home Office policy officials. Beyond this, former official ■ cannot recall specific details.
20. Former Official ■ had no recollection of having received a report directly from the Research and Development Worker. Any data which was not in anonymised form would have been likely to raise concern at the Home Office, as had been the case with the report relating to the taxi contract.
21. It was possible that a report might have been sent to the Home Office policy team or Government Office, and (in line with the project's purpose) it would have been expected that any report would have gone to the police. Professor Jalna Hanmer, also experienced in this area, was also involved in some capacity with the project.
22. There was also an ESRC funded project, led by Professor Jenny Pearce, dealing with similar issues that became operational at some time after the Rotherham project ceased being funded. The Home Office facilitated meetings for the ESRC funded project, and the Home Office may have offered a letter of support when the original application for funding was made. The police and a relevant Home Office policy official (Former Official ■) were at a meeting when these issues were raised by Professor Jenny Pearce.
23. Former official ■ could not recall the former researcher having tried to contact her, but it was possible. The former researcher may also have tried to contact the Government Office, and possible that she may have tried to contact Former Official ■.
24. Former Official ■ could not recall having spoken to Professor Jalna Hanmer about the former researcher's position or issues with the Rotherham Research Project but it was possible.

Former Official ■

Note of a meeting with former official ■

Note of a meeting with former official ■, 21 April 2015

Attendees

Former Official ■
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Former Official ■ confirmed that during the early 2000s she had been a Grade 5 Head of the Sentencing and Offences Unit (SOU), following a period as a Grade 6 in the same unit. Former Official ■ recalled that at some point during the early 2000s, SOU had been renamed CLPU after its sentencing functions became a separate unit.

Former Official ■ noted that a Head of Unit would not routinely be engaged in all aspects of more junior colleagues' day-to-day activities; although the position did carry overall responsibility for the whole unit. She said, however, that if she had any recollections of specific issues she would be happy to share these.

Her recollections – subsequently clarified by way of email correspondence where necessary - were as follows:

1. Former Official ■ thought it possible that someone named (Former Official ■) had worked in the unit for a short period, possibly on a cross-team basis (i.e. on work for both SOU and another team, possibly RDS). This may have been at a point before she became Head of Unit, while a Grade 6 in SOU. She had a vague recollection that Former Official ■ could have been an HEO(D) officer working for her, but as indicated previously, Former Official ■ may have possibly been working as a shared resource.
2. The work of SOU would not have included monitoring research produced under the Crime Reduction Programme, as the unit she headed was a policy unit dealing with criminal law.
3. She was not aware of any issues having affected the Rotherham research project that was supported under the Crime Reduction Programme.
4. She was not aware of a person called (the former researcher) and had no recollection of Former Official ■ having received a telephone call from the former researcher.

The Briefing Note Produced by the Charity CROP

5. She did not have any recollection of the charity known as CROP (the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping) and did not have any recollection of the briefing note produced by CROP which appears to have been sent by the charity to the then Secretary of State.
6. She recalled that Tim Brain would have been the ACPO lead at the time and thought it possible that the then Secretary of State might have talked to him about the issues generally associated with the abuse of children through prostitution. She wondered whether the note might have been passed to a policing unit in the Home Office for advice.

7. She noted that matters relating to the sufficiency of the criminal law would have been referred to SOU but otherwise the matters raised would not have been for SOU. SOU did lead on the Prostitution review, which had been led by a very able Grade 6 member of staff. Thus, the question of any decriminalisation of prostitution could have been one for the Prostitution Review and Former Official [REDACTED] thought this could have motivated the reference to the forthcoming meeting with Former Official [REDACTED] referenced in the cover letter accompanying the CROP briefing note. However, most of the issues in the note itself were for policing units, or other departments, and related to operational matters, not the criminal law.

Briefing Note supporting the Secretary of State's attendance at the CROP conference

8. Former Official [REDACTED] did not recall the briefing note apparently produced to support the Secretary of State's response to parents' questions following the CROP conference.

Former Official ■

Note of a meeting with former official ■

Note of Meeting with former official ■, 9 December 2015

Attendees:

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Former Official ■

Former Official ■ was able to provide the following information to the Internal Review:

1. Former Official ■ confirmed he was a ■ from 2001 until September 2003. This included providing some support on ■ policy. That support was provided to Former Official ■, who was the Grade ■ leading on ■ at the time. Former Official ■ also worked in this unit (at some point after June 2002; and until some point post September 2003).
2. Former Official ■'s principal recollections were of providing policy support for the 2003 Sexual Offences Act, which contained new provisions around adult and (what was then termed) child prostitution and pornography and the trafficking of persons within the UK.
3. He did not have any specific recollections of the Crime Reduction Programme or the Rotherham project.
4. Because he had no specific recollection of the Rotherham project; he could not recall any termination or post termination issues; nor did he have any recollection of what – if any – information may have been supplied in connection with it.
5. He also could not recall the CROP conference which took place in August 2003.

Former Official ■

Note of telephone conversation with former official ■, 11 May 2016

Participants:

Former official ■
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1. ■ thanked Former Official ■ for responding to Jeremy Oppenheim's letter and for taking the time to speak with her. She asked whether he would be happy to share his recollections of child protection practice at that time.
2. Former Official ■ indicated that from June 2000 – February 2002 he had been ■ located in the Department of Health's child protection division (Grade ■). He left the role in about February 2002, when he became ■ at the Department of Health.
3. The 'every child matters' reforms bringing together education and children's social care at central government and local government level did not take place until 2003 so in 2001/2 local authority education departments operated separately from children's social care services. This was reflected in the responsibilities of central Government Departments; with the Department for Health taking responsibility for social care services, and the Department for Education having responsibility for local education services.
4. The Care Standards Act 2000 had established the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) as a regulator and inspector of social care but in 2001 the NCSC was still in set up. Former Official ■ noted however, that in 2001 the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) was still in existence. The SSI undertook an inspection programme of local authority social services and assessed how well each local authority was delivering its social services functions. SSI also had a performance improvement role. SSI worked through a network of regional offices. SSI inspectors were also based in relevant Department of Health policy branches. In about 2004, the functions of the SSI together with the social care responsibilities of the NCSC and some functions of the Audit Commission all transferred into the newly established Commission for Social Care Inspection. In about 2009, responsibility for the regulation and inspection of children's social care transferred again, this time to OFSTED. Former Official ■ also thought that in 2001 local authorities also had their own in house inspection teams. In the event of specific, local safeguarding concerns being raised with the Department of Health, these would be referred on to the Social Services Inspectorate including a local inspector covering the local authority in question. The local inspector would then work as necessary with local authority senior managers in social services or other agencies as appropriate to follow up and address the concerns raised.
5. Former Official ■ referred to the letter annexed with the letter he had received from Jeremy Oppenheim, which documents the course of action apparently taken by Home Office officials in response to concerns about a taxi firm being used by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to transport vulnerable young people. Although Former Official ■ had no memory of the incident referred to in the annex, the course of action described (i.e. that the Department of Health would have raised concerns with social services in Rotherham) struck him as the action that would normally have been taken in response to concerns of this nature being raised. It is likely that the follow up with Rotherham MBC would have been managed through SSI as explained above.
6. He also noted that the letter would have been received shortly prior to the point at which he would have moved post. He thought it possible that the letter might have been referred to

another member of his team, but felt confident that if it had been raised by Home Office colleagues as a high profile incident, he would have recollected it. If it had been raised as a more routine issue, and given the length of time that has now passed, he was not surprised that he did not remember it as the Children's Safeguards Unit dealt with a significant volume of referrals, correspondence from the public, Ministerial business etc. He was also confident that any member of the [REDACTED] Unit who had been asked to deal with such a letter would have dealt with it in exactly the same way i.e. via prompt referral to SSI. He noted that the [REDACTED] worked closely with SSI at the time.

7. Former Official [REDACTED] recalled having a good relationship with his counterpart at the Home Office ([REDACTED]) and recalled liaising with her on a number of issues, although had no recollection of any specific meetings with [REDACTED] on this issue. His expectation was that the Department of Health would have raised the concern with the Social Services Inspectorate, which in turn would have spoken to someone senior in children's social care in Rotherham.
8. Former Official [REDACTED] indicated that he would expect the Department for Education also to have raised the issue with the local authority Education Department in Rotherham, and it would have been the responsibility of the Home Office to talk to local police.
9. Now, local area safeguarding boards are in place, but in 2001 local areas would have had their own multi-agency working arrangements. This was reflected in the separate lines of communication running from central Government departments into the departments at local level. From the evidence provided though Former Official [REDACTED] noted that it looks as if three separate Government departments were potentially raising concerns about exactly the same issue at more or less the same time with local agencies in Rotherham. This should have given ample opportunity for the concerns to be investigated further.

Former Official ■

Note of a meeting with former official ■

Note of meeting with former official ■, 22 January 2016

Attendees:

Former Official ■
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■ explained that the internal review had been commissioned by the Home Secretary to establish what information may have been passed to the Home Office regarding child abuse in Rotherham in the early 2000s. ■ explained that Former Official ■ had been invited in due to her role ■ 2003-2004

Former Official ■ noted that her recollections of events at this time were – given the length of time that had now passed – imperfect. Former Official ■ also noted that her recollections were hampered by the fact that, after leaving the Home Office, ■

■ – it is therefore difficult to separate what she came to know and understand, and what was understood about CSE (child sexual exploitation) at the time of the Prostitution Review. It should also be noted that Former Official ■ was not the policy lead in this area – her post was a supernumerary post ■ (not CSE). However, her recollections were as follows:

CROP Conference: Pre-brief

1. In 2003 Former Official ■ had been working on the review of the ■ the outcomes of which were reflected in a draft Bill which they hoped would be included in the programme for the following session. Clearance processes at the time required departments to have a Bill team on standby before inclusion in the Programme would be considered. Former Official ■ headed this putative Bill team, which essentially had very little to do while they awaited a decision on whether the Bill would go ahead.
2. The charity organisation Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP) was holding their annual conference in June/July 2003. Former Official ■ recalled that CROP was part-funded by the Government, she believed by what was at that time the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).
3. Former Official ■'s recollection was that the then Home Secretary (David Blunkett MP) accepted an invitation to attend the conference and took Caroline Flint with him. Caroline Flint was the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. Former Official ■ explained that she was not working on sexual offences at that time and so she was not aware of advice or pre-briefing supplied from the Sentencing and Offences Unit in advance of the conference. As far as she was aware, no officials attended the conference. Former Official ■'s recollection was that the Home Secretary announced his intention to hold a prostitution review at the conference and that this had come somewhat as a surprise to officials.
4. The team that usually dealt with sexual offences were busy working on the bill that led to the Sexual Offences Act at that time. At roughly the same time as the announcement of the Prostitution Review, it became apparent that the draft Rehabilitation of Offenders Act had

not been granted a legislative slot in that Parliamentary Session. As a result, Former Official [redacted]'s team was available and the [redacted]'s team was allocated to them with Former Official [redacted] as the lead. The team consisted of Former Official [redacted] (grade [redacted]) and Former Official [redacted] ([redacted]) who were both constant members, as well as [redacted], an [redacted] and a Personal Secretary named [redacted] who both left during the project. Former Official [redacted] reported to Former Official [redacted] (grade 5)

5. Former Official [redacted] did not recognise the document entitled "Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) What Works: Tackling Prostitution Initiative – links with CROP" (this is a fragment of briefing material apparently produced to support the Home Secretary's attendance at the CROP conference. It refers to a 'number of issues' affecting the Rotherham project and Rotherham Borough Council considering disciplinary action against the former researcher). Former Official [redacted] explained that she had not been involved in this work until after the conference had taken place. She also explained that at that time the Home Office had been located at Queen Anne's Gate and that she had been located on a different floor from the sexual offences team so she was not as aware of their day-to-day work as she might have been had they been co-located.

"Risky Business" Research Project

6. Former Official [redacted] explained that she was aware of the research project that had been conducted in Rotherham and funded by the Home Office at that time (the research project which involved "Risky Business") but did not have any involvement with it until the final report on Tackling Prostitution was produced. She said that she presumes the policy input was provided by [redacted]. She explained that [redacted]
[redacted] Former Official [redacted] now knows something of the issues that arose while the project was running.
7. Former Official [redacted] talked about the problems with the research project. She explained that she had subsequently been told about problems with another researcher who had brought these issues to the attention of Margaret Melrose. In turn the University of Bedfordshire brought the issues to the attention of the Home Office. There had been problems with Rotherham Council around employment as well as trouble with the researcher.
8. Former Official [redacted] explained that she had read over the prostitution review consultation document, *Paying the Price*, the night before the meeting to refresh her memory. [redacted] [redacted] not made any reference to the Rotherham research in [redacted] [redacted] the Prostitution Review. However she did not believe it to have been intentionally omitted and reiterated that the consultation document was focussed on prostitution, not CSE.

Post CROP Conference

9. Following the CROP conference, Former Official [redacted] came to know Hilary Willmer well. Hilary often contacted the [redacted] team, usually in connection with her search for future funding.
10. Former Official [redacted] referred to the submission document dated 21 August 2003 entitled "CROP Conference – Additional Questions from Parents" (this is a submission apparently produced post the conference which containing a proposed response to concerned parents). She commented that she didn't remember the document but confirmed that she would have seen it at the time, as it was drafted by a member of her team (Former Official [redacted]) and Former Official [redacted]'s name appeared on the copy list.

11. From her experiences since, Former Official [REDACTED] explained the usual format of a CROP conference. Parents of victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE) were always invited to the conference. CROP were also always keen to have a Minister there, from HO or DfES. After plenary sessions and before the keynote speech the parents would be invited to speak privately with the Minister about their experiences. Former Official [REDACTED] assumed that this format would have been the same when the Home Secretary attended in 2003. She suggested that the questions from parents in this document may have been from those who did not have the opportunity or did not feel comfortable speaking on the day.
12. Former Official [REDACTED] had no previous knowledge on the subject of prostitution before [REDACTED]. Following the conference she invited a wide range of stakeholders to the Home Office so that she and her team could gain an understanding of the issues. The stakeholders included a number of individuals who talked about child sexual exploitation, including [REDACTED] (formerly of Barnardo's) and Professor Jenny Pearce from the University of Bedfordshire, Former Official [REDACTED] also met with Tim Brain the then Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and the ACPO Lead for Vice and Other Matters and many other stakeholders relating to (adult) prostitution.
13. Former Official [REDACTED] recalled that at that time DfES led on safeguarding young people from prostitution. DfES, DH and the Home Office had worked together to jointly publish "Working Together to Safeguard Children from Prostitution", a supplementary document to Working Together.
14. Colin Green was head of safeguarding at DfES at that time (grade 5) but was reluctant to contribute to work on the Prostitution Review. Former Official [REDACTED] perceived his view to be that his policy remit had been fulfilled with the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children from Prostitution (and a National Plan) and that it was for central government to issue guidance on safeguarding issues, and for local authorities to implement it.
15. Former Official [REDACTED] was determined to include the issues of CSE in the prostitution review as it was clear that most people in prostitution became involved as children or young people. She formed an interdepartmental group to draw in contributions from all relevant departments, including DfES. However only one meeting was held before Former Official [REDACTED] decided to disband it because the DfES official (name not recalled) was obstructive.
16. CROP had received some project funding from DfES. Former Official [REDACTED] does not recall the precise nature of the funding but seems to recall that this was seedcorn funding to set the project up. Former Official [REDACTED] does not recall when the funding ended but does recall that it would be unusual for a government department to continue funding an organisation beyond initial setup funds. Hilary Willmer phoned Former Official [REDACTED] to ask for advice on where she could look for further government funding. Former Official [REDACTED] often met Hilary Wilmer (at conferences and separate meetings) and – as she did with others working in voluntary organisations in the field of CSE – discussed the frustrations they were experiencing with a lack of understanding about CSE, and a poor local response to CSE in most areas, often arising from a lack of a coordinated response between social services and the police.
17. Former Official [REDACTED] CROP conference the following year. She attended a number of conferences after that [REDACTED].

CROP Post-Conference Briefing Note

18. Former Official [REDACTED] referred to the letter from Hilary Willmer to the Home Secretary dated 8 December 2003 attaching the document "Briefing Note on CROP for the Personal Attention of the Home Secretary November 2003" (a briefing note produced by the charity asking for assistance). She noted that it referred to a forthcoming meeting between CROP and herself on 18 December 2003. Former Official [REDACTED] could not remember this specific piece of correspondence but believed it would have gone to the Home Secretary personally, given his interest in the subject and his attendance at their annual conference.
19. Former Official [REDACTED] noted that the CROP briefing note attached to Hilary Willmer's letter requested a criminal investigator, independent of South Yorkshire Police, to help respond to requests for assistance with CSE in Keighley and Rotherham. CROP was a national organisation but at the time was mainly active in the north west of England (the organisation is based in Leeds). Former Official [REDACTED] understood that CSE was a national problem and these issues were likely to be replicated in other areas. Former Official [REDACTED] was not part of an operational unit and her role was to [REDACTED]. However it would be usual practice to pass on such concerns to the relevant chief constable. Former Official [REDACTED] was also in regular contact with Tim Brain and his staff officer (at that time, Tony Davis) and it is likely that Hilary's concerns would have been discussed with them. ACPO would also have been at the CROP conference and would have been aware of CROP's concerns.
20. Former Official [REDACTED] could not remember specifically discussing concerns about Rotherham but she did clearly recall another example. She described visiting a multi-agency project in Sheffield at the invitation of the project manager, [REDACTED]. While at the project [REDACTED] and her team talked to her about work they had done with local victims of CSE which showed that several generations from the same families had been involved in sexually exploiting young people in the Sheffield area over a long period of time. None had been prosecuted for any sexual crimes. [REDACTED] had passed the information to a PC who had been attached to her team but she was unaware of any action having been taken. Former Official [REDACTED] had taken the information to the ACPO and there was subsequently an investigation by South Yorkshire Police which led to a number of successful prosecutions. Former Official [REDACTED] does not know whether this action precipitated the response from South Yorkshire or whether action was being taken but the information was not being shared with the multi agency team. Former Official [REDACTED] commented that one of the many problems at that time was that police forces did not always act on information on CSE provided by voluntary organisations or indeed any third parties, and that information was not often passed to them in a way that was evidentially sound.

21. Letter from the Home Office to Hilary Willmer

22. Former Official [REDACTED] referred to the letter dated 22 December 2003 from herself, on behalf of the Home Office, to Hilary Willmer. She noted that the letter indicates that she and Former Official [REDACTED] had attended CROP for a meeting the previous week.
23. Former Official [REDACTED] recalled again the problems with local responses to child sexual exploitation which would have been discussed at the meeting. There was frustration from some organisations, including CROP, that courts would not accept complaints from parents (often young people had been groomed to such an extent that they did not recognise that they were being abused, or were too frightened to report abuse) This period of time, when methods of grooming were beginning to be understood, coincided with the closure of many vice units. Many forces had none – or few – officers dedicated to this area of work. Former Official [REDACTED] referred back to the South Yorkshire prosecutions – once the case was over the

team was disbanded. Former Official ■ at one point made efforts to have CSE recognised as a form of domestic violence to help access the resources made available for those cases, but found that the policy leads responsible wanted to keep the two areas separate. She refers to this point in her letter to Hilary Willmer.

24. Former Official ■ reiterated her earlier comment that she understood the points raised in the CROP briefing note related to problems nationally, exemplified by the issues in Rotherham. Her letter to Hilary Willmer was therefore drafted from the same overarching viewpoint.
25. Former Official ■ described some of her work in this area, including maintaining an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders such as CROP. She developed a network of relationships with individuals and organisations, such as academic ■ and charities Barnado's and the NSPCC. She frequently visited problem areas and brothels. Former Official ■ attended a number of conferences held by charities, and meetings where she was able to meet adults involved in prostitution and also victims of child abuse.

Letter from Parents

26. Former Official ■ referred to the letter dated 20 October 2003 from the parents of ■ to the Home Secretary. Former Official ■ explained that as a result of her work subsequently she now knew ■ and had discussed her experience of CSE with her ■
27. Former Official ■ commented that she did not recall this specific letter. She noted, however, that the standard response to this type of correspondence at that time was to pass it to the Chief Constable of the local force. She therefore assumed that that would have happened with this letter.

received by the Home Office. The caller had explained that the submission of evaluation data was being delayed due to a break-in at the office.

8. She had noted that the data would be delayed and had not felt the need to escalate the issue to other colleagues. Her recollection was that this was because the content of the call had not led her to understand that the break-in causing the delay to the submission of the data was something other than a general burglary of office premises.
9. Her recollection was that at the time of the call she had not understood the caller to be seeking to 'whistleblow'; or to report malpractice. She felt confident that if that had been her understanding of what was being said to her she would have reported it to other colleagues and would have wanted to look into it further.
10. She had a general memory that the various prostitution projects – of which there were many - were supposed to be submitting data, but (noting that these events took place over ten years ago) had no specific recollection of receiving particular papers. She could not recall receiving a copy of a report headed 'Chapter 4: key achievements of the Home Office pilot'.
11. She did not have any recollections of contact made by other Home Office colleagues with the Rotherham project (in particular, she had no recollection of contact between the 'RDS' team and the project).
12. She did not have any recollection of issues associated with a taxi contract. She could not recall having written to any other Government Departments in connection with a taxi contract, but noted that this did not mean that she had not done so.

Former Official [REDACTED]

Note of a meeting with former official [REDACTED]

Note of a meeting with former official [REDACTED], 24 March

Attendees

Former Official [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] explained that the internal review had been commissioned by the Home Secretary to establish what information may have been passed to the Home Office regarding child abuse in Rotherham in the early 2000s. [REDACTED] explained that Former Official [REDACTED] had been invited to share any recollections, as it was possible that in her role as an [REDACTED] [REDACTED] she might have had contact with some of the stakeholders relevant to the [REDACTED] team's work.

Former Official [REDACTED] noted that her recollections of events at this time were – given the length of time that had now passed – imperfect. However, her recollections were as follows:

1. In 2003 - 2004 she had been an [REDACTED] in the Sentencing and Offences Unit (SOU). She had been part of a Bill team conducting work on the disclosure of criminal records. The other members of her team had been Former Official [REDACTED] (G6), [REDACTED] (AO) and [REDACTED] (a secretary). She explained that there had been no legislative slot available and so the work their team had been doing did not go ahead.
2. Former Official [REDACTED]'s recollection was that the then Home Secretary (now Lord Blunkett) had announced the Prostitution Review unexpectedly.
3. In the summer of 2003, the Bill team that Former Official [REDACTED] had been working on transformed into [REDACTED] team. There was another team in SOU whose remit would normally have included the [REDACTED] but due to that team having a high workload and the availability of the Bill team, Former Official [REDACTED]'s team had picked this work up.

CROP Conference

4. Former Official [REDACTED] recalled that the Home Secretary launched the Prostitution Review at the CROP conference in Leeds in June/July 2003. Former Official [REDACTED] was clear that she had not been involved with the launch event.
5. As she recalled it, the Home Secretary had four priorities in terms of reforming criminal law – domestic violence, sexual offences, corporate manslaughter and prostitution. She recalled that the term used by the policy team to refer to children involved in prostitution was not 'Child Sexual Exploitation', or 'CSE'; but 'children abused through prostitution' and that this had been the term used in 'Paying the Price' (the consultation paper on prostitution).
6. Former Official [REDACTED] did not recall seeing the CROP Q&A that had been prepared for the Home Secretary in advance of the conference, nor did she recognise the name [the former researcher].

CROP Conference Submission – Questions from parents

7. This appears to be a version of a submission dealing with the response to correspondence from CROP which was received following the Home Secretary's June 2003 attendance at a CROP conference.
8. The submission suggests this correspondence would have contained questions from parents which the Home Secretary hadn't had time to answer at the conference. These questions, plus background information about specific children and young people affected by CSE, are included in the submission.
9. Former Official [redacted] did recall the briefing note, and thought this was likely to be one of the first pieces of work she had dealt with on becoming involved with [redacted]. She commented that to receive correspondence containing unanswered questions was not out of the ordinary after a conference with the public. Part of her role at that time had been to lead on co-ordinating responses to correspondence from the public.
10. The discussion triggered Former Official [redacted] to recall a further piece of correspondence from Ann Cryer (the MP for Keighley) that had raised concerns about young members of the Asian community in Keighley – not in Rotherham - 'grooming' young girls. Former Official [redacted] remembered the correspondence because it had also raised concerns about community cohesion in Keighley and this was the issue that Former Official [redacted]'s former team had dealt with (the [redacted] Unit).
11. Former Official [redacted] further recalled that when a piece of correspondence was received by the department which contained allegations of any crime (for the avoidance of doubt, not just any items of correspondence containing allegations of CSE), it was normal practice for this to be sent to the Chief Constable of the relevant local police force. There had been a a template letter for referrals of this nature.
12. The Department's view had been that it was for the police, not the Home Office, to respond to issues of this nature as the Home Office was not in a position to comment on individual crimes/allegations. Where appropriate, the policy had therefore been to pass correspondence containing an allegation of a crime over to the relevant police force. Where a referral of information took place, normal practice would have been to write to the correspondent to explain the action that the Department had taken (i.e. that information had been passed to the relevant force).
13. As noted above, Former Official [redacted] recalled the submission dealing with the response to correspondence from CROP following the Home Secretary's attendance at the conference, but could not recall whether any of the content sent in by CROP had been referred elsewhere; or any further information about the handling of the response to CROP.

CROP Briefing Note – November 2003

14. This is a note from the charity describing CROPs work and making a request of the Home Office for assistance, including an urgent request for a 'criminal investigator'.
15. Former Official [redacted] did not recognise or recall the briefing note sent to the Home Secretary by CROP in November 2003; and therefore was not able to provide any recollections about how the specific piece of correspondence had been handled.
16. Former Official [redacted] explained that where correspondence contained allegations about child abuse, it would be normal to forward it to the Chief Constable of the local force (as described above) – but as she had no recollection of the note, was not able to say whether this had been done in this case.

17. She commented that all letters should have been put on file and a response to the letter would have been issued by the [REDACTED] team; but as above, had no specific recollections relating to the reply in this particular case.

Letter from the Home Office to Hilary Willmer

18. This is a draft of a thank you letter from Former Official [REDACTED] from December 2003, thanking Hilary Willmer for a trip made to CROP the previous week and alluding to a discussion about the difficulties in securing successful prosecutions against those engaged in the exploitation and abuse of young people and the difficulties faced by parents.
19. Former Official [REDACTED] did not recall attending a meeting at the CROP headquarters in Leeds in December 2003. Former Official [REDACTED] did not remember any specific pieces of correspondence between her team and CROP and did not recognise the letter from Former Official [REDACTED] to Hilary Willmer dated 22 December 2003 referring to their meeting the previous week. She recognised the name Hilary Willmer as her team engaged with her on a regular basis and she had been a very vocal stakeholder. She remembered her to be passionate and committed and someone who they had a healthy relationship with. Former Official [REDACTED] did not have any specific recollections of Hilary Willmer raising any concerns about the local response to CSE in Rotherham.
20. Former Official [REDACTED] remembered that Former Official [REDACTED] had a strong relationship with individuals at the Association for Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and engaged with them regularly. ACPO were closely involved in helping SOU in drafting [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Other than this and the practice of forwarding allegations to the relevant Chief Constable, Former Official [REDACTED] did not recall referrals being made either to ACPO or to any other entities.

Former Official ■

Note of meetings with former official ■

Note of information provided by official ■ to the Home Office Crime and Policing Analysis team, in a series of conversations in late 2014

Note of information provided by Former Official ■ to ■, in a series of conversations in late 2014

Former Official ■ was able to provide the following documents to the internal review:

1. The University of Luton Evaluation Report – Draft final report, marked ‘Report 3’.
2. A copy of the undated evaluation termination letter from Former Official ■ (Home Office) to Christine Brodhurst-Brown (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council). This letter sets out the Home Office’s grounds for terminating the evaluation of the Rotherham Research Project.

Former Official ■ was also able to confirm the following:

1. She was a ■ working to Former Official ■ mainly ■
2. She recalled going to Rotherham and may have met with the former researcher at a meeting close to the end of the project (just before the ‘evaluation termination’ letter was sent);
3. She retained a copy of the evaluation termination letter as she was concerned about the reaction the Rotherham Project might have over the termination; however, in the event, there was no reaction;
4. There had been issues over the sharing of data which had affected the project;
5. The quality of material being received from the University of Luton evaluation team had been the cause of some concern; it gradually became clear that this was at least in part due to poor relations between the University of Luton evaluators and (at least part of) the Rotherham Research Project.

Note of a meeting with Former Official ■ 9 December 2015

Attendees:

Former Official ■
■

Former Official ■ noted that her recollection of events would inevitably be imperfect, given the extent of time that had passed since the events in question. Former Official ■ confirmed that any information about the Rotherham project that she had access to (namely a draft University of Luton report marked ‘version 3’ and a copy of the termination letter) had been passed to the Home Office.

The use of the term ‘project’ in this account constitutes a reference to all stakeholders/partners involved with the Home Office research funded project (which included, for example, social

services and the police) and does not constitute a reference to the pre-existing Risky Business project (unless stated otherwise).

Former Official [REDACTED] principal recollections were as follows:

1. [REDACTED]
2. Her role at the Home Office was [REDACTED]. She worked for the Home Office from [REDACTED].
3. Former Official [REDACTED] worked [REDACTED] (managed by Former Official [REDACTED]). This team managed [REDACTED] that ran alongside the Home Office's Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) relating to violence against women. The Crime Reduction Programme was launched in 1998 and funded projects across England and Wales, working on a range of crime reduction initiatives that aimed to have a significant and long-term impact on crime. Each programme fund also had an independent evaluation set alongside it, to try and identify 'what works' in specific crime reduction work. Programme and Project funding was managed through policy teams at the Home Office, not through RDS. RDS only managed corresponding evaluation contracts.
4. One strand of the CRP involved funding projects on prostitution and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The [REDACTED] team in RDS managed the evaluation contracts. There was one strand on policing and enforcement evaluated by South Bank University; one strand on support projects evaluated by the University of Sunderland. The contract with the University of Luton was to evaluate the three projects on protecting young people
5. The three projects being evaluated in the 'the protecting young people' strand of the Crime Reduction Programme were located at Bristol, Sheffield and Rotherham. As Former Official [REDACTED] understood it, each project had received grant funding under the crime reduction programme, which was managed through the policy unit at the Home Office and the regional Government Office.
6. The role of RDS (Research Development and Statistics) was to oversee the evaluation and the team's principal relationship had been with the evaluation teams of each strand, as opposed to with the projects themselves. In the case of the 'protecting young people' strand this was with the University of Luton.
7. In the case of the Rotherham project, there had been difficulties relating to the sharing of information. Data-sharing issues of a similar nature had not, to her knowledge, emerged in the context of the other two protecting young people projects, although such issues were, in her experience, not uncommon in multi-agency work.
8. The Rotherham project involved a complex group of stakeholders and stakeholder relationships. Participants from different services within Rotherham Borough Council, including education and social services, the Risky Business project and additional external parties (such as the police) were all involved with the project. Former Official [REDACTED] believed that information sharing challenges had arisen in the context of the public sector services sharing information they held on individuals, but had no more detailed recollections of the exact specifics of the information sharing issue that had arisen.

9. Initially, it had been clear to the Home Office [REDACTED] team in RDS that there were difficulties; as the data expected/quality of the interim reports from the project evaluators had not been as detailed as anticipated. This had been the cause of some frustration. What the precise reason had been for the lack of data had not been entirely clear; and could have involved issues with any one, or more, of the various relationships between project participants.
10. Because the amount of quantitative and qualitative information that the Home Office RDS had expected to receive by way of the evaluation contract had not been forthcoming, the Home Office RDS had had more direct contact with the project than was the case with the other protecting young people projects.
11. There had been meetings to try and resolve the issues, some of which had involved the University of Luton and Home Office officials, and others which had also involved other project participants.
12. There had been a direct meeting with the Rotherham project, involving a number of representatives and stakeholders (and former official [REDACTED] believes the former researcher would have been present, although she did not have any specific recollection of this). Other than a recollection that the Government Office representative (who Former Official [REDACTED] believed was responsible for managing grant funding to the project) had been present, former official [REDACTED] did not have any further specific recollections of who else was present or of the discussions at that meeting; but she did think it likely that concerns around data sharing would have been discussed.
13. A series of evaluation related reports would have been sent to the Home Office from the University of Luton, including interim and draft versions of reports. One of these draft versions she had retained, and had already provided to the review team (in late 2014).
14. She had also been able to supply a copy of the evaluation termination letter in late 2014. This copy had been retained at the time because she thought it possible that parties in Rotherham (for example, officials at Risky Business or Rotherham Borough Council) might have objected to the termination of the evaluation. The letter, which summarises the reasons why the Home Office considered there to be no option other than to terminate the evaluation, could have been needed as a record. However, in the event, to Former Official [REDACTED] knowledge, no objections were forthcoming ([REDACTED]). Former Official [REDACTED] was aware that the evaluation contract was withdrawn but her understanding was that the project funding (from the Crime Reduction Programme fund) continued.
15. The department's ultimate lever in seeking to ensure that the University of Luton evaluation team were able to obtain the necessary data and more qualitative information (as outlined in the letter) from the project had been to explain that, if data was not forthcoming from the various partners/stakeholders and the issues were not resolved, there would be very little for the project evaluators to evaluate and therefore the Home Office would have no option but to stop the project evaluation. Despite explaining this, it had not been possible to obtain the data needed from the project. Former Official [REDACTED] did not have any further recollections about what had caused the data to be unavailable or why the issue had been impossible to resolve.
16. She did not have any specific recollection of the process or series of internal conversations at the Home Office which would have supported the decision to terminate the evaluation; but noted that this would be likely to have involved meeting with the project and the evaluators and would have been something discussed with Former Official [REDACTED] and potentially others.

17. The interviewers referred to a report produced by the Project officer (the former researcher) which may have been received by the Home Office. Former Official [REDACTED] had no specific recollection of the report referred to but thought it probable that this information would have been sent to her and to colleagues at the Home Office and this would have come directly from the former project officer at the Rotherham project. Although she had no specific recollection of case studies and/or a draft report that the interviewers referred to, Former Official [REDACTED] noted, that given the length of time that had now passed, remembering specific documents was very challenging.
18. Her recollection was that any exchange of data between the project officer (former researcher) and the Home Office would have occurred in the context of the Home Office trying to assist/encourage the University of Luton in delivering the evaluation report. Ultimately – due to the problems with data sharing/lack of information included in the draft reports – obtaining a robust evaluation report from the University team had not been possible. This had been a cause of real regret as it was recognised that the project had been innovative in seeking to target men involved in the exploitation of young people as well as supporting the young people themselves.
19. Former Official [REDACTED] recalled issues being raised around a taxi contract but could not recall much more than that. It had not been something she recalled having much substantive involvement in but believed this was reported back to the relevant agencies in Rotherham.
20. Although she recalled being told there was an employment dispute affecting the project officer (the former researcher) at the Rotherham project, she had no specific recollection of the disciplinary proceedings being taken against her. She did not recall being contacted by any party or asked for information for purposes related to an employment dispute but again, noted that this did not mean it didn't happen. Former Official [REDACTED] confirmed that she could recall meeting Professor Jalna Hanmer who she thinks picked her up from the station when she had travelled to Rotherham for the meeting with the project [see paragraph 12] but could not recall her conversation with her in any detail or any other contact with Professor Hanmer (although she was aware of Professor Hanmer and has a lot of respect for her academic work).
21. Former Official [REDACTED] could not specifically recall having made a telephone call to the Project officer (the former researcher) regarding her use of data, but noted that not having a recollection of it did not mean that it did not happen (and stated that if the project officer (the former researcher) had said this took place, it must have taken place). Former Official [REDACTED] thought – although was not at all sure of the detail now - that concerns had been raised by partners involved in the Rotherham project (specifically public sector agencies) about the use of data they had provided (specifically using data provided by those agencies in her training sessions without permission and possibly some concerns about seeking to publish reports using the data they were being asked to provide). At this time the Home Office was trying to encourage the release and sharing of information; as this was key to the effort to understand and apply knowledge about 'what worked' in tackling prostitution and CSE. It is probable that this conversation would have been to try and resolve any reasons given as to why key public sector partners were reluctant to share data. There might have been a concern that any attempt by individuals to use data provided in training or to publish partial data before a fully consolidated set of evaluation data had been obtained from the projects might undermine the collection of that wider data. The Home Office's ultimate intent would always have been to make sure that as much data arising from the evaluation about 'what worked' could be obtained and shared as widely as possible so that it could then be applied; as that was the point of the Crime Reduction Programme. Standard research practice would be that data would not be released prior to formal publication.

22. Former Official ■ did not recall the freeserve email account mentioned by the interviewer but did have email accounts prior to her current ones and it was probably one of these. This would have been used when she was working from home, in agreement with her employers, as she did not have access to her Home Office account when working from home. (Bearing in mind that this was fifteen years ago and she wasn't set up with Home Office supplied computer equipment at home). This is not a current email account (and was not something she now had access to). Former Official ■ believes that at that time, she would have forwarded anything she received on a home email account to her Home Office account and any other relevant officers, as well.
23. Former Official ■ believed she ■ and would have passed on all paperwork to colleagues there.
24. All information Former Official ■ had in connection with these issues (a copy of the draft University of Luton report marked version 3 and the letter setting out the reasons for the termination of the evaluation) had been given to the review team in 2014. She confirmed she does not hold any other reports or emails in connection with this project.

ISBN 978-1-5286-0465-9
CCS0318259762