



12 November 2025

I am addressing this letter to every single individual who tragically endured abuse whilst at Medomsley Detention Centre. I wish to apologise to you, on behalf of the Government.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) report has been published today. This comprehensive report highlights that those responsible for the abuse were able to hide from justice for decades.

The 'short, sharp, shock' policy of the day contributed to a culture whereby this type of abuse was wrongfully accepted.

There were shocking and systemic failures which meant those in positions of power were complicit or did not act when reports of abuse were made to them.

There were safeguards which were meant to protect you whilst being cared for by the state; these either failed or simply didn't exist.

This report paints a truly shocking picture of the environment that you had to endure at Medomsley and on behalf of this Government, I'd like to apologise for all Governments, past and present, for what happened to you.

The Government is taking this moment to properly reflect on what happened at Medomsley and is determined to use this as an opportunity to prevent anything like this from happening again.

I want to recognise that none of this would have come to light without those who bravely came forward to report the abuse. I also want to thank those of you who took part in the PPO's investigation. I know it must have taken a great deal to recount those awful experiences as part of the investigation.

Please be assured that Ministers and government officials are taking this extremely seriously and we will put the voice of victims at the centre of our work moving forward.

The PPO report rightly raises that the Government should look at how children can make complaints and discuss experiences within trusted members of staff in custody today.

As a top priority, I am bringing together a panel of experts to review the system and identify where changes are needed to our safeguarding processes within youth custody today.

I know these words cannot change what has happened in the past, but I hope they demonstrate this government's determination to take proper action moving forward.

You have my commitment; we will take the necessary steps to ensure any children within our care are protected.

And, the Government is truly sorry for what you went through and that nothing was done to stop it.

We may never fully make amends for the horrors you suffered at Medomsley. But we can, we must, and we will, take steps to prevent it from happening again.

JAKE RICHARDS MP