

The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
By Email

27 March 2026

Dear Home Secretary,

### **Statutory Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs – Submission of Updated Terms of Reference for Agreement**

We are writing as the Chair and Panel of the Statutory Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs to seek your agreement to the updated Terms of Reference (ToR), following the conclusion of our consultation and engagement activity.

Over recent weeks, we have undertaken extensive work to test and refine the draft Terms of Reference published for consultation. This has included:

- in-person, trauma-informed engagement with victims and survivors across England and Wales;
- an online consultation, which received almost 1,000 substantive responses from individuals and organisations, and a total of 25,494 responses overall. Of these, 24,522 were identified as responses submitted in response to an online campaign called 'Grooming Gang Justice' (the GGJ Campaign). The vast majority of these responses were automated;
- a significant volume of direct correspondence from victims and survivors;
- roundtable discussions with Parliamentarians across parties; and
- engagement with key stakeholders across policing, safeguarding, children's services, justice agencies and the voluntary sector.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who engaged with us, especially the victims and survivors whose willingness to speak about profoundly difficult experiences has been central to refining these Terms of Reference.

Across all groups, we heard consistent themes about what survivors, professionals and the public expect from this Inquiry if it is to deliver the clarity, accountability and confidence that Baroness Casey's National Audit recognised as urgently needed.

Based on this feedback, we have made a number of important and considered changes to the draft ToR. The principal updates include:

- A strengthened focus on victims and survivors, ensuring their experiences before, during, and after abuse remain central to the Inquiry's work.
- A more explicit requirement to consider how ethnicity, religion, and culture, both in relation to perpetrators and victims, may have influenced offending patterns, as well as institutional responses.
- Setting out a wider, non-exhaustive range of statutory services and related organisations that may be scrutinised should evidence suggest this is necessary.
- A revised historical timeframe, now extending back to January 1996 to ensure appropriate coverage of the last 30 years.
- Clear mechanisms for referral of criminal allegations or evidence to Operation Beaconport (overseen by the National Crime Agency).

These changes reflect the voices of victims and survivors, the expectations of Parliamentarians, and the evidence of professionals across safeguarding and justice agencies. We have been moving at pace to ensure we engage widely and we believe the updated Terms of Reference now represent an Inquiry framework capable of achieving the objectives set for it: to illuminate failings, secure accountability, and provide a foundation for national and local improvement.

We remain determined to deliver an Inquiry that is independent, rigorous, survivor-centred, and capable of delivering strong and meaningful change. Agreement to the updated Terms of Reference is a critical step in that process, and we stand ready to provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,



**Baroness Anne Longfield CBE**  
Chair, Statutory Independent  
Inquiry into Grooming Gangs



**Zoë Billingham CBE**  
Panellist, Statutory  
Independent Inquiry  
into Grooming Gangs



**Eleanor Kelly CBE**  
Panellist, Statutory  
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