

Our ref: AW/KH
Your ref:
Please contact: Cllr Wilkinson
Email: councillor.awilkinson@calderdale.gov.uk
Date: 28th July 2025

Children and Young People's Services

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Calderdale Council
Town Hall
Crossley Street
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HX1 1UJ

Dear Cllr Bellenger

Re: Response to question from Council Meeting held on 23rd July 2025

Question:

Following the recent announcement by the government of a national inquiry into child sexual exploitation and grooming gangs and the subsequent statement from the Leader of the Council, would the Cabinet member tell the Council:

What work is taking place to identify any grooming gangs active or based in Calderdale, and have any yet been identified?

Response

There are regular meetings, several times a week to identify perpetrators and any links between them that would show if grooming is active in Calderdale. Intelligence, reports and exploitation concerns are shared by West Yorkshire Police with children's services, Youth Justice and Probation. Mapping meetings take place to identify the children's networks and any connection in relation to grooming gangs, organised crime groups. The children are also discussed in weekly missing meetings and quarterly partnership missing meetings which could help identify any risky networks, hot spots, friends and associates etc. The current evidence shows there that there is no evidence of grooming gangs but we remain open to potential links between the perpetrators. There have been ongoing police investigations into historic cases over many years that have secured convictions for child sexual exploitation and investigative operations are still underway.

In April 2025 Ofsted inspected the arrangements for risk outside the home and any evidence of grooming gang activity and the work of the CSE team. This identified a rigorous approach to the identification by the partnership. They found that children at risk of exploitation received the right help at the right time.

Question:

What work is being undertaken with schools to identify signs of young girls being targeted when leaving school, a tactic known to be used by grooming gangs?

Response:

Our Child Exploitation Project Workers offer group sessions in school assemblies to young people in relation to CSE and grooming. This is to make them aware of the signs, risks and where to go for help and keep themselves safe. They also do work around keeping safe in the community. The Police have invested in an Education lesson plan called Pol Ed, this also covers in lessons the risks and what to do if you are worried or approached leaving school.

Question:

What are the current figures for Calderdale regarding reports of child grooming/sexual exploitation?

Response:

There have been a large number of investigations into grooming gang activity in Calderdale, over the past decades that have brought the criminals to justice and many successful convictions. The Council are alert to the potential emergence on new gangs which is why intelligence is shared several times a week. At present, there are 36 young people who are being protected by the CSE team from a range risks outside the home, but there is no evidence they are being groomed by gangs.

Question:

If any gangs have been identified, what are the arrest figures within Calderdale for recent years?

Response:

These are the figures from West Yorkshire Police for arrests, those awaiting trial and convicted since 2015. These figures are from investigations conducted by the non-recent child sexual exploitation and abuse team – a team of dedicated police officers who address non-recent offending within Calderdale:

Arrests – 114

Charged awaiting trial – 10

Convicted – 29

A number of investigations are ongoing; therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect further charges / convictions over the coming months / years.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Adam Wilkinson

Portfolio Holder - Children and Young People's Services