New child sex abuse inquiry - Children's Society response

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Responding to Home Secretary Theresa May's statement on a new inquiry into child sexual abuse, Matthew Reed, Chief Executive of The Children's Society, said:

"The Home Secretary's announcement of a new inquiry into child sexual abuse is welcome. We support the appointment of a new chairperson and new panel with statutory powers. This is a fresh start and represents a new opportunity that absolutely must not be wasted.

"The new inquiry is a critical opportunity to identify the obstacles that have denied children justice in the past and to stop these horrific crimes from happening again, both now and in the future. We agree with the Home Secretary that hard truths must be confronted head on. Those in positions of responsibility who abuse their power, and those who cover up these crimes, must be swiftly brought to justice.

"It is right that the new inquiry is given the power it needs to investigate abuse, past and present – including the authority to compel individuals and organisations to give evidence. We welcome moves to make the appointment of panel members more transparent. For the inquiry to succeed survivors must have full confidence in the process and their voices must be central to it.

"It is absolutely essential that survivors are fully supported, and that current and future police investigations that may arise from fresh evidence are properly resourced.

"Given the two false starts already, it's imperative that the new inquiry can work effectively and promptly. We would like to see the publication of interim reports built into the process so crucial findings or urgent recommendations can be acted on quickly.

"Louise Casey's report on abuses in Rotherham underlines again the complete failure of a range of authorities to protect vulnerable children. It's important to understand that child sexual abuse and exploitation aren't unique to Rotherham – it's happening across the country. All local authorities, as well as national government, must stop at nothing to prevent a repeat of this scandal."

Notes to Editor

The Children's Society has helped change children's stories for over a century. We expose injustice and address hard truths, tackling child poverty and neglect head-on. We fight for change based on the experiences of every child we work with and the solid evidence we gather. Through our campaigning, commitment and care, we are determined to give every child in this country the greatest possible chance in life.

Media enquiries

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