



# Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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## **Response to Child abuse/exploitation – March 2017**

Thank you for contacting me about child abuse and exploitation.

Let me assure you that tackling all forms of abuse and exploitation of children by anyone is a priority for this Government. Ministers are continuing with the urgent work of overhauling how police, social care and other agencies work together to protect vulnerable children, including from the kind of organised grooming and sexual exploitation that has come to light in Rotherham, Rochdale and other towns and cities across the UK.

Similarly the Government has been clear that any and all allegations of child abuse should be thoroughly and properly investigated. However I should point out that decisions about arresting and charging are an operational matter for the police and Crown Prosecution Service and it would be inappropriate for the Home Office to comment further.

The previous Conservative-led Government published a report into the response to the failures in Rotherham, which were identified by Professor Alexis Jay and Louise Casey in their reviews. The report includes tough new measures to tackle child sexual exploitation and sets out a comprehensive, targeted set of actions, bringing together healthcare, social care, education, law enforcement, criminal justice agencies, and local and national government. I particularly welcome the launch of a whistleblowing helpline for employees to speak out about child protection failures. Employees will be offered advice about the whistleblowing process and will be legally protected from any future workplace discrimination arising as a result of their concerns.

The Home Office's Minister for Preventing Abuse and Exploitation leads and coordinates work to tackle child sexual exploitation, as well as missing children and adults, child sexual abuse online, violence against women and girls, and modern slavery including child trafficking. Please know that this Government is utterly committed to protecting all children from abuse by anyone.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP