

Aylesbury sex ring: How it started with an investigation into the victim

From the [Yahoo News](#)

The Aylesbury child sex ring was not discovered as most would expect – with a victim complaining to the police, a parent voicing concerns or online surveillance. It began with the main victim – known throughout the case as child A – trying to prevent her own children being taken into care.

The efforts of Buckinghamshire social services to have Child A's two young sons taken into care were halted when she spoke out about sexual abuse she had suffered. The case – heard in the Family Court – had centred on her own fitness to be a mother. The police investigation into Child A's claims started soon after.

Social services were well aware of the victim – she had been on its children-at-risk register from the age of seven. And over the years the records held by various public organisations about her life swelled.

Former Aylesbury mayor Niknam Hussain says the case raises serious questions about how the girl had been handled and treated by social services.

"They have not come out of this at all well," he said. "The authorities are under severe pressure all of the time, social care is expensive and the county council struggles to keep its social workers and is dependent on agency staff."

It is understood Child A may have raised issues of sexual abuse previously with social services but nothing was done. David Johnston, managing director for children's

services at Buckinghamshire County Council, declined to comment on any "previous contact (Child A had) with social care".

But he did say: "We will carry out our own learning as a result, as we do with other cases, and have already taken on board recommendations and improvements in the light of other national reports. We are as appalled by these cases of child sexual exploitation in Buckinghamshire as every parent and member of the community will be . . ."

Barnardo's said they worked with the girls in 2008, and made a referral to the appropriate agencies about one of the victims. Michelle Lee-Izu from the charity told the BBC Radio 4 Today programme they felt not enough had been done at the time.

She said: "In 2008, we worked with both these young people and our work with these young women was very specific to them as individuals. We had concerns about the safety of one young woman and we made a referral to the local authority and the relevant agencies. At that time, the agencies didn't respond in a way that we wanted, that we expected them to, although some actions were taken by the local authority, so we escalated those actions further. But insufficient action was taken as far as we were concerned."

On Friday David Johnston, Buckinghamshire County Council director for children's services, apologised to the two young victims, saying: "We are as appalled, as all parents and the community of Buckinghamshire will be, by the despicable acts of cruel abuse committed by those found guilty at the Old Bailey today. These girls were just children when they became victims to such manipulation that lasted so many years.

"I want to thank each of these young women for taking the brave step to come forward, to speak to the police and re-live their horrific experiences in court to bring these men to

justice. On behalf of the council, I would also like to apologise to both of them for letting them down during this period in their lives. We know a great deal more about child sexual exploitation than we did back then and I hope that young people who are worried about themselves or someone they know will have the same courage to come forward."