

Is Telford the next Rotherham: Horrific abuse scandal in town dubbed 'child sex capital of Britain'

From the [Rotherham style](#) " abuse scandal in a town dubbed the child sex capital of Britain.

Officers are accused of taking too long to probe allegations contained in files stretching to 150 pages. It is claimed reports of grooming in Telford, Shrops, were logged incorrectly and not taken seriously enough despite an earlier probe that led to seven men being jailed in 2012.

Today, one victim who was hawked among paedophiles and forced to sleep with a string of men, said: "The police have betrayed the children of this town for a second time." Leading calls for an independent inquiry, the abuse victim said: "I never want any other girl to go through what I did. We need a Rotherham-style inquiry in Telford. It has been going on for at least two decades. When will it stop?"

She spoke after it emerged detailed reports had been handed to police by "street pastors" on night patrol.

They include eye-witness accounts of teenagers being sold drugs at underage discos and gangs of older men grooming drunk children. The reports, compiled over three years, allege older men operate in gangs and circle disco venues, take-aways and kids' haunts in cars, often approaching youngsters in the street.

Police admitted multiple incidents were markers of potential exploitation, but confessed the reporting system was initially flawed – stunting the gathering of intelligence.

Trained pastors – local church volunteers – began providing information in 2013 after Operation Chalice, which had probed earlier exploitation.

We attended discos in licensed premises on several occasions and witnessed older men circling the venue in cars. We also saw three men in their 20s attempt to gain entry to one venue. They sped off after spotting the street pastors, who alerted police immediately.

Street pastors co-ordinator, the Rev Keith Osmund-Smith, told how his team had provided information to police – but he doubts they were always acted on. He said: “In the early days, the reports went to a number of senior officers. Because it was going to so many people, no one was really taking responsibility for it. I was never quite sure the things we were reporting were resulting in any serious action. . . It’s part of child sexual exploitation to get children hooked on drugs. We have also walked girls away from cars containing adult males.”

Underage discos in licensed premises have been stopped, in a bid to protect potential victims. Movie mouse Stuart Little was used on some social media ads enticing kids to discos.

Allegations go back at least 20 years of child sex abuse at the hands of