

Telford scandal: 1,000 children abused as police feared investigating Asian men

And who has been raising awareness of the [situation in Telford](#) regularly for several months? He [who must not be named](#), and our [own Peter McLoughlin](#). Comment [from TR](#) here. From [the Telegraph](#)

More than 1,000 children were sexually exploited over at least 30 years in Telford amid “shocking” police and council failings, an inquiry has concluded.

Unnecessary suffering and even deaths of children might have been avoided had West Mercia Police “done its most basic job” in acting on reports of such crime, according to findings published on Tuesday.

For decades, child sexual exploitation “thrived” in the Shropshire town and went “unchecked” because of failures to investigate offenders and protect children amid fears that probes into Asian men would “inflame racial tensions”.

Tom Crowther QC, the inquiry chairman, said: “The overwhelming theme of the evidence has been the appalling suffering of generations of children caused [by the utter cruelty of those](#) who committed child sexual exploitation. . .

Countless children were sexually assaulted and raped. They were deliberately humiliated and degraded. They were shared and trafficked. They were subjected to violence and their families were threatened. They lived in fear and their lives were forever changed.”

He said that “for decades child sexual exploitation thrived in Telford unchecked” and agencies, including the council and West Mercia Police, were “aware of it in detail”, adding: “Failure by agencies to investigate emboldened offenders; failure to safeguard put children at risk.

“So far as both the council and West Mercia Police were concerned, a number of features appear to have contributed to this shocking failure to address child sexual exploitation: a focus upon abuse within the family, at the expense of extra-familial exploitation; over-caution about acting in the absence of ‘hard evidence’ – a formal complaint from a child – about exploitation; and a nervousness that investigating concerns against Asian men, in particular, would inflame racial tensions.”

Mr Crowther described a “[culture of not investigating what was regarded as ‘child prostitution’](#) and said the force turned “a blind eye and chose not to see what was obvious”.

He said an absence of police action had emboldened offenders, . . . had West Mercia Police done its most basic job and acted upon these reports of crime.

“It is also impossible in my view, not to conclude that there was a real chance that unnecessary suffering and even deaths of children may have been avoided.” He also criticised the “glaring failure on the part of a generation of Telford’s politicians” not to regard a child sexual exploitation response as an “essential service” in the period before 2016.

The inquiry, which has [taken three years to conclude](#), looked at allegations from 1989 to the present day but Mr Crowther said he had also spoken to victims whose experiences dated back to the 1970s.

The report in [full is here.](#)