

Women abused as children by Rotherham gangs say police also sexually assaulted them

This has been spoken off for years, but it has hit the National press today, first breaking in the [BBC](#).

Five women who were exploited by grooming gangs in Rotherham as children say they were also abused by police officers in the town at the time. One says she was raped from the age of 12 by a serving South Yorkshire Police (SYP) officer in a marked police car. He would threaten to hand her back to the gang if she did not comply, she says.

“In a world where you were being abused so much, being raped once [by a police officer] was a lot easier than multiple rapes [by the gang] and I think he knew that,” she tells the BBC.

We have seen written accounts from these women, plus testimony from 25 other victims of grooming gangs, with some of those women saying that corrupt police officers worked alongside the gangs or failed to act on child sexual exploitation.

A new criminal investigation into the involvement of police officers in the Rotherham grooming scandal is now being led by SYP’s major crime unit, under the direction of the police watchdog.

Prof Alexis Jay (*landmark report of 2014*) has told the BBC she is “shocked” that SYP is investigating its own former officers and says the criminal investigation should be handed to another force or independent body.

The 30 witness accounts seen by the BBC detail shocking allegations:

- Years of abuse from serving police officers, from the mid-90s to early 2000s, at the same time as being exploited by Rotherham grooming gangs
- Most alleged victims were in their teens but some were as young as 11
- One woman says as a child she would hear a police officer having sex with girls in exchange for drugs and money
- Another woman says as a child she witnessed a police officer supplying illegal class A drugs to a grooming gang
- Three women describe being beaten up by officers as children – one says this happened in a police cell

The women's accounts, seen by the BBC, have been redacted to protect their identities. They were collected by a specialist child abuse legal firm, Switalskis Solicitors, as part of a bid to bring a separate civil claim against SYP and secure compensation for alleged victims.

One of the women, Willow – not her real name – says she was sexually abused by hundreds of men over five years after first being targeted, as an 11-year-old in 1997, by a grooming gang.

Two police officers also sexually abused her, she says. Over three years, one of the SYP officers would repeatedly track her down and pick her up in a police car in Rotherham town centre, she says.

“He knew where we used to hang out, he would request either oral sex or rape us in the back of the police car,” she tells the BBC. If she tried to refuse his requests, says Willow, he would even contact the grooming gang directly to threaten her. “I would rather be raped once, or give one man oral sex, than to be taken somewhere where I know it'd be 15... 20 guys

one after another. That was just easier," she says.

After she was pressured into an illegal abortion by the grooming gang, she says a youth worker contacted social services and the police. But she was left "destroyed", she says, when one of the officers who had been abusing her turned up to interview her. A few days later, the same officer ripped her statement up in front of her and threw it in the bin, she says, and no further action was taken.

Of the 30 women who gave their accounts to Switalskis Solicitors, only 17 have agreed to their testimony being given to the police.

Some of the remaining potential witnesses have withdrawn from the SYP investigation, say the solicitors, with some saying they do not trust the force or have lost faith in the justice system.

"It's beyond belief, the accounts we have heard," says Amy Clowrey from Switalskis, who has been collecting testimony of alleged police abuse, corruption and misconduct in Rotherham for 10 years. There has been no accountability in the town – and without accountability, there will continue to be a distrust of South Yorkshire Police," she says.

Another survivor of a grooming gang, Emma – not her real name – says the current investigation into former officers and their role in the Rotherham scandal should have happened decades ago. "We're forgotten children. We're dirty little secrets. That's how they look at us," she says.

David Greenwood from Switalskis Solicitors says he doesn't have confidence that there are not officers who are "burying evidence or just not finding evidence deliberately", because they may know some of those involved in the allegations. I'm sure that the full truth in terms of the level of corruption and the extent of it in Rotherham has yet to come out," he adds.

We cannot see the names of the former SYP officers referred to in the accounts of their alleged victims, because the women's accounts have been redacted.

But three former officers have been arrested since December 2024 on suspicion of historic sexual offences – including attempted rape, indecent assault and misconduct in a public office. The crimes are alleged to have taken place between 1995 and 2004 while the officers were on duty as PCs. None has been charged.

But the BBC understands that one alleged victim, Willow – in a report to police – has named PC Hassan Ali as having raped her.



| In January 2015, PC Ali died after being hit by a car - on the day he had been put on restricted duties

"The first time, he literally said: 'You do it for the other officer. So you're gonna do it for me,'" she tells us.

PC Ali died in January 2015, a week after he was hit by a car. On the day the collision took place, he had been put on restricted duties because of an investigation into alleged

misconduct in the abuse scandal. He was never arrested. *I always thought there was something very suspicious about that.*

Willow also says that both officers who abused her, including PC Ali, were also involved in supplying drugs.