# Metropolitan Police admits scale of historic grooming gang cases in London



In a notable shift, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, acknowledged to the Greater London Assembly (GLA) that the force is grappling with a “very significant” number of historic grooming gang cases across London, marking a clear departure from the Met's previous stance. This admission comes just a day after investigations by MyLondon and the Express highlighted discrepancies in official narratives about the presence and scale of grooming gangs in the capital.

Rowley indicated a “steady flow” of ongoing multi-offender child sexual exploitation investigations in London accompanied by historic cases requiring reinvestigation. However, he cautioned that addressing these cases would demand "many many many millions of pounds" annually over several years, emphasizing the resource challenges involved. The commissioner also stressed the necessity of safeguarding current child protection work, warning against diverting specialists from ongoing cases to historical inquiries without additional funding, as recommended by Baroness Casey’s review.

This evolution in the Met's position appears prompted by the exposure of internal reports and inspections revealing grooming gang activity, contrasting with earlier official denials. Until recently, the force, including Mayor Sadiq Khan, had minimized the extent of the problem. For example, as recently as mid-2024, the Mayor stated he had "no indication" of a large number of cases in London, a position now challenged by government data indicating more than a thousand grooming-related cases nationally, with London believed to hold a significant portion.

Prominent campaigners welcomed the Met's newfound candour, describing it as a "180-degree turn-around." Maggie Oliver, a whistleblower detective famed for exposing grooming gang failures in Rochdale and other northern towns, criticised earlier denials, alleging a cover-up culture within the Met and London's authorities. Speaking to MyLondon, Oliver argued that this belated acknowledgement reflects persistent pressure from victims and advocates revealing systemic failings that protected perpetrators while discrediting victims.

Similarly, social work author Chris Wild emphasised that grooming gangs have been an ongoing, pervasive issue in London. He called for urgent and tangible action to follow the Met’s recognition, underscoring how years of warnings from frontline workers were ignored. Both Oliver and Wild highlight the urgent need for not just apologies but accountability and reform to prevent further abuse.

Further criticism surrounds concerns of misinformation and possible concealment of grooming gang data within the Met. Veteran Scotland Yard detective Bernadette Murray accused the police of deceiving the Mayor and mismanaging vital safeguarding reports, raising questions about transparency and the true scale of exploitation in the city.

Despite the Met’s current commitment to addressing child sexual exploitation, the complexity and scale of the issue remain vast. The force's spokesperson reiterated that grooming in London does not conform neatly to patterns seen in other regions, highlighting the diverse backgrounds involved and the varied nature of criminal activity. Concurrently, the Mayor’s office affirmed continued efforts through initiatives like the £15.6 million Violence and Exploitation Support Service, which supports vulnerable youth and enhances policing approaches to tackle exploitation and county lines crime.

In the wider context, the revelations reflect national concerns sparked by earlier scandals such as Rotherham, where systematic failures let grooming gangs operate unchecked for decades. Lessons from these failures inform the magnified scrutiny on London’s response, pressing for systemic change within policing and social services.

Nevertheless, challenges remain in securing enough funding, resources, and political will to thoroughly investigate and prevent grooming gang crimes while rebuilding trust within affected communities. Sir Mark Rowley’s recent transparency marks a significant, albeit overdue, step towards acknowledging and confronting these deep-rooted issues—one that demands sustained commitment to justice and protection for vulnerable children across London.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon), [[6]](https://unherd.com/2025/10/why-is-london-ignoring-its-grooming-gangs/) (UnHerd)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon), [[2]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/grooming-gangs-scandal-cover-up-sadiq-khan-blasted-maggie-oliver) (GB News)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon), [[2]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/grooming-gangs-scandal-cover-up-sadiq-khan-blasted-maggie-oliver) (GB News)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/former-scotland-yard-detective-warns-met-police) (GB News), [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon), [[4]](https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/Fresh-action-announced-by-Mayor-and-Met-Commissioner-to-tackle-disproportionality-and-improve-community-confidence-in-policing) (London.gov.uk)
* Paragraph 8 – [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotherham_child_sexual_exploitation_scandal) (Wikipedia), [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912) (MyLondon)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/recognition-long-overdue-met-police-32717912> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/grooming-gangs-scandal-cover-up-sadiq-khan-blasted-maggie-oliver> - Former Detective Constable Maggie Oliver criticises London Mayor Sadiq Khan over alleged concealment of grooming gangs in the capital. She highlights the Met Police's denial of such gangs operating in London, despite evidence to the contrary. Oliver draws parallels with previous cases in Rochdale and Rotherham, emphasising the need for transparency and accountability in addressing child sexual exploitation. She expresses concern over the lack of action and the potential cover-up by officials, urging for systemic change to protect vulnerable children.
3. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/former-scotland-yard-detective-warns-met-police> - Veteran Scotland Yard detective Bernadette Murray accuses the Metropolitan Police of deceiving Mayor Sadiq Khan regarding the extent of grooming gangs in London. She alleges systemic data mismanagement within the force, leading to inaccurate reporting on such criminal networks. Murray highlights past instances where child safeguarding reports were concealed, raising concerns about the Met's commitment to protecting vulnerable children. She calls for greater transparency and accountability within the police force to address these serious issues.
4. <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/Fresh-action-announced-by-Mayor-and-Met-Commissioner-to-tackle-disproportionality-and-improve-community-confidence-in-policing> - The Mayor of London and Met Police Commissioner announce new actions to address racial disparities and enhance community trust in policing. Initiatives include stricter oversight of stop and search practices, increased recruitment of Black officers, and improved transparency through publishing data on police custody and searches. The plan aims to transform the Met to better reflect London's diversity and strengthen community involvement in reviewing the use of police powers, addressing concerns raised by Black communities.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/mark-rowley-met-police-integrity-london-assembly-david-carrick-b1055482.html> - Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley discusses efforts to address integrity issues within the force. He acknowledges the need to confront 'painful' and 'ghastly' new crimes committed by officers, including the case of David Carrick, a Met officer convicted of multiple offences. Rowley warns that uncovering such cases will take time and may expose further troubling incidents. He appeals to Londoners not to lose heart and expresses determination to root out rogue officers and rebuild public trust.
6. <https://unherd.com/2025/10/why-is-london-ignoring-its-grooming-gangs/> - An analysis of London's response to grooming gangs, highlighting the reluctance of the Met Police and Mayor's Office to acknowledge and investigate such issues. The article discusses the denial of the problem by officials and the need for greater transparency and action. It references the experiences of campaigners like Maggie Oliver and Chris Wild, who have been advocating for recognition and action against grooming gangs in London. The piece calls for systemic change to protect vulnerable children.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotherham_child_sexual_exploitation_scandal> - An overview of the Rotherham child sexual exploitation scandal, detailing the abuse of approximately 1,400 girls by grooming gangs from the late 1980s to 2013. The article discusses the investigations, trials, and convictions related to the scandal, highlighting systemic failures and the need for accountability. It also touches upon the ethnic and cultural factors involved, noting that the majority of perpetrators were of Pakistani heritage. The piece underscores the importance of addressing such issues to prevent future abuse.