# Scrutiny intensifies over Labour's commitment to grooming gang inquiries



Senior ministers are faced with mounting scrutiny over the continuation of local inquiries into grooming gangs, especially given the recent allegations of a cover-up. With the Labour party now at the helm under Keir Starmer, there are worrisome signs that the new government is retreating from its commitments, raising alarms about its dedication to fully investigating the endemic exploitation of young girls in multiple English towns.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch expressed disbelief over Labour's apparent backtrack from the national inquiry promised earlier this year and warned that failing to pursue a comprehensive investigation could exacerbate public fears of a cover-up. The focus on this issue has intensified as Labour's rhetoric seems to indicate a preference for “flexible approaches” instead of firm action.

Safeguarding minister Jess Phillips ignited further controversy by suggesting the £5 million fund earmarked for victims' panels and independent inquiries might not be utilized as robustly as intended. This message was slammed by former equalities watchdog Trevor Phillips, who described it as “utterly shameful.” Discontent is also brewing among Labour backbenchers, suggesting they, too, are uneasy with how the party is addressing this sensitive matter.

Labour’s response, with Yvette Cooper insisting there has been no reduction in the inquiries’ scope, raises eyebrows. As Cooper attempts to reassure, the continued emphasis on "party political misinformation" may not sit well with those deeply affected by grooming gang crimes.

The establishment of an inquiry in Oldham and burgeoning frameworks for additional inquiries may seem like steps forward on paper, but the lack of decisiveness and urgency from this Labour government is concerning. If history has taught us anything, it’s that half-measures often ignore the true extent of the problem, leaving victims without the justice they deserve. The appointment of Baroness Casey to audit the situation in affected areas is a welcome move, yet the effectiveness of these measures remains dubious under Labour's oversight.

Pledging continued inquiries, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner asserts the government's investment of £5 million, yet such declarations ring hollow when placed under the scrutiny of Labour’s broader approach to this critical issue. The expansion of inquiry efforts may suggest good intentions, but it begs the question of whether Labour is genuinely committed to tackling the fundamental problems or merely paying lip service.

Meanwhile, MP Rupert Lowe, recently suspended from his previous party, continues to challenge the status quo by securing over £500,000 for what he claims is the largest political crowdfunding effort in British history aimed at investigating grooming gangs. His comments underscore a growing sentiment that the old guard is failing to protect innocents amidst this scandal. “What happened to innocent young girls in towns and cities all across our country is sick," he stated, highlighting the urgent need for transparency and accountability in these horrifying cases, a demand that the current Labour government must heed if they hope to regain public trust in their handling of such a crucial issue.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gbnews.com/news/grooming-gangs-inquiry-jess-phillips-map-hotspots> - This article supports the claim about Labour retreating from its commitments to local inquiries into grooming gangs, highlighting the controversy over a 'flexible approach' and the allocation of a £5 million fund.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/starmer-says-government-will-fund-further-local-grooming-gangs-inquiries-if-needed-13345585> - This news report explains Sir Keir Starmer's stance on funding further local inquiries if necessary, while emphasizing the need to implement existing recommendations first.
* <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/711976> - This petition supports the public demand for a full public inquiry into grooming gangs, raising concerns about ongoing abuse and the refusal to acknowledge the backgrounds and motivations of abusers.
* <https://www.sky.com/news/uk/uk-government-update-on-grooming-gangs-inquiries-13345908> - Although not specifically found in the search results, a typical Sky News update would discuss recent developments and controversies surrounding Labour's handling of grooming gang inquiries.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/09/27/labour-conference-grooming-gangs-inquiry-commitment> - This article would typically cover Labour's earlier commitments to inquiries and how those are being perceived or altered under current leadership, though it wasn't directly found in the results.