# Labour minister sparks outrage after dismissing grooming scandal concerns as a 'dog whistle'



A Labour minister has plunged into controversy over disturbing remarks concerning a significant grooming scandal in the UK. Lucy Powell, the leader of the House of Commons and Labour MP for Manchester Central since 2012, dismissed vital discussions surrounding the issue as a "dog whistle" during an appearance on BBC Radio 4's "Any Questions."

When Tim Montgomerie, founder of ConservativeHome, raised the alarming Channel 4 documentary titled "Groomed: A National Scandal," which delves into the tragic experiences of five women victimized by grooming gangs, Powell's flippant reaction was shocking. “Oh, we want to blow that little trumpet now, do you? Let’s get that dog whistle out, shall we, yeah?” she quipped, inciting immediate backlash.

Critics were quick to respond. Katie Lam, Conservative MP for Weald of Kent, took to social media platform X, denouncing Powell’s remarks and insisting that such grotesque trivialization of child sexual exploitation is unacceptable. “If the Leader of the House of Commons truly believes that industrialized child sexual torture is just a ‘dog whistle’ and a ‘little trumpet,’ she should retract and apologize immediately,” Lam asserted, calling for Powell's resignation if she stands by her comments.

In the aftermath, Powell attempted to backtrack, issuing an apology in which she claimed her intent was misinterpreted. “In the heat of discussion on AQ, I want to clarify that I regard issues of child exploitation and grooming with the utmost seriousness,” she stated. However, this half-hearted apology still drew fire, with Lam maintaining that acknowledging grooming gangs as a "stain on our country" ought to be an undeniable part of public discourse.

Robert Jenrick, shadow justice secretary, weighed in with equally harsh criticism, labeling Powell’s comments as a “disgusting betrayal” of the grooming gang victims. A spokesperson for a prominent opposition party noted that Powell's remarks epitomize a deeper disconnect within Labour regarding the gravity of child sexual exploitation.

The Channel 4 documentary spotlighted systemic failures, showcasing a suppressed report that identified over 330 young women at risk from grooming gangs—a report deemed "toxic" by the Home Office. Filmmaker Anna Hall presented testimonies from survivors like Jade and Chantelle, elucidating their arduous journeys of grooming and exploitation which began with seemingly innocent invitations and escalated into demands for sordid acts.

This latest controversy follows sustained criticism of Labour’s handling of grooming scandals. An independent inquiry previously uncovered widespread institutional failings, yet Labour’s response has been tepid at best. Earlier this year, Yvette Cooper announced a vague £5 million plan for inquiries in select regions, but recent statements from Jess Phillips, the minister responsible for safeguarding, suggested a lack of firm direction, further complicating an already dire situation surrounding these blighted issues in our society.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/channel-4-commissions-landmark-film-gang-grooming-featuring-devastating-stories> - This Channel 4 press release announces the documentary 'Groomed: A National Scandal,' highlighting the issue of gang grooming and featuring survivors' stories, aligning with the article's mention of the documentary.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/aug/09/channel4.otherparties> - An article detailing the controversy surrounding the 2004 Channel 4 documentary 'Edge of the City,' which investigated grooming in Bradford, providing context to the article's reference to past grooming scandals.
3. <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/accused-the-fake-grooming-scandal> - Information about the Channel 4 series 'Accused: The Fake Grooming Scandal,' which examines false grooming allegations in Barrow-in-Furness, relevant to the article's discussion of grooming scandals.
4. <https://aseannow.com/topic/1348604-the-silenced-truth-how-political-correctness-delayed-justice-for-grooming-victims/> - A discussion on how political correctness may have delayed justice for grooming victims, echoing themes in the article about the handling of grooming scandals.
5. <https://watchers.ie/2025/01/05/how-the-grooming-gangs-scandal-was-covered-up-when-people-speak-out-they-are-called-far-right-do-not-be-afraid-always-speak-out/> - An article exploring the cover-up of grooming gang scandals and the challenges faced by those who speak out, supporting the article's points on the handling of such issues.
6. <https://www.visegrad24.com/articles/the-shameful-timeline-of-the-uk-grooming-scandal> - A timeline detailing the UK grooming scandal, including the 2001 religious extremism and grooming incident, providing historical context to the article's discussion of grooming issues.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14676053/Labour-minister-resign-rape-gang-Channel-4-grooming-dog-whistle.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data