

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ORAL EVIDENCE  
TAKEN BEFORE THE  
HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**LOCALISED CHILD GROOMING**

TUESDAY 8 JANUARY 2013

EMMA JACKSON and MR JACKSONACKSON

Evidence heard in Private

Questions 743 - 798

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## Oral Evidence

Taken before the Home Affairs Committee

on Tuesday 8 January 2013

Members present:

Mr Keith Vaz (Chair)  
Nicola Blackwood  
James Clappison  
Michael Ellis  
Lorraine Fullbrook  
Dr Julian Huppert  
Steve McCabe  
Mark Reckless  
Mr David Winnick

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**Examination of Witnesses**

*Witnesses:* **Emma Jackson**, and her father, **Mr Jackson**, gave evidence in private.

**Q743 Chair:** Thank you very much for coming, Emma. Is this a member of your family?

*Mr Jackson:* I'm her dad.

*Emma Jackson:* Yes, my dad.

**Q744 Chair:** Oh, right. I promise you that what you saw just now is not going to be repeated for you. This is very informal. It is just an opportunity to talk to you, and we are just going to put various questions—Nicola Blackwood, my colleague from Oxford, James Clappison from Hertfordshire and David Winnick for Walsall, and indeed Michael Ellis has now returned. We are only going to be about 15 to 20 minutes. We are really grateful to you for coming down here. Emma, you have obviously suffered terrible abuse in your life, and I gather that you actually lived in Rotherham?

*Emma Jackson:* Yes.

**Q745 Chair:** To some extent now we really regret you not coming in before we had the Rotherham people, but we will be having more people from Rotherham, so don't worry, some of the points that you put to us we will certainly be putting to them. Can you tell us a bit about your history? How old are you at the moment, for example, and when did it start?

*Emma Jackson:* I am 23 now. I was groomed at the age of 12, and that started in Meadowhall, which is a local shopping centre. I used to go on the weekends with my friends. Back then that was the place where children went on a weekend and they hung out. They have the children's arcade, and we used to go in there. I got targeted by young boys who were a couple of years older than me, so they were not grown men.

**Q746 Chair:** How old would they have been?

*Emma Jackson:* They would have been 13, 14, and I would have been 12. This went on where I would see them every Saturday for about a year and this fellow started to introduce older brothers or cousins or friends who were about 16, 17, 18. Some of them had

cars. At that age—I was coming up to 13 then—I was a teenage girl, and I quite liked the idea that some of them were a bit older and that they had cars, because that is teenage girls. You start wanting a bit more freedom. Your parents start to give you a little bit more freedom, and you do things that you should not do or that your parents tell you not to do. You still do, and that is kids.

**Chair:** I have a 15-year-old daughter. I know exactly what you mean.

**Emma Jackson:** You tell them not to do something and they will do it.

**Chair:** Mr Clappison, indeed, has a teenage daughter.

**Emma Jackson:** Then it started where they introduced older people to us and we started to go into Rotherham town centre to hang around instead of Meadowhall. I had turned 13 at this point. Then when we started hanging around in Rotherham town centre and we were there, we were seeing these men every day, and by now they were men. The younger boys had disappeared, and it was men.

**Q747 Chair:** Men of what age?

**Emma Jackson:** In their 20s. They started to get older as time went on; some were in their 30s.

**Q748 Chair:** From the time you started to meet them to the time you got to the 30-year-olds, was there any activity that you were doing with them—any sexual activity? Was there any abuse, any grooming, going on?

**Emma Jackson:** When I was just seeing these men at Meadowhall, no. As soon as it moved into Rotherham town centre I was actually befriended by one of the men who was talked about in the report, who had a lot of—you know, that family.

**Q749 Chair:** Yes, the family I mentioned in my questions?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, and that is when my sexual exploitation started. I was actually sexually assaulted in front of other men and in front of a girl. I did not really know or understand that I had been sexually assaulted because I come from a really good family. I have always been loved and cared for and supported. I was taught about paedophiles, but these men did not fit into what I had been taught. They were not old.

**Q750 Chair:** Did they look like kind of normal people?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q751 Chair:** As opposed to very old men with hats and coats who wandered round in the middle of the night?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, and they are quite attractive. Even though you knew they were older, it was as though you were sat with somebody who was your age because they would have the same interests that I did as a 13-year-old girl.

**Q752 Chair:** Sure. At that stage, you did not know this was wrong? You thought it was normal?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes. I felt really uncomfortable with what had happened and it really upset me, but none of the men or anybody else made out that it was abnormal. It was made out as though that is relationships and that is sexual intercourse and that is life, and you just get on with it.

**Q753 Chair:** When did you feel that actually this was not normal and you needed to go to a social worker or somebody else or your dad or your mum or someone like that? When did you feel that? How old were you then?

**Emma Jackson:** I was still 13 at that point, because from then on I was being raped every week on a regular basis. I also started to be sold to his friends and his brothers.

**Q754 Chair:** You knew this was going on? You became property?

**Emma Jackson:** I did not know I was being sold. By that point he had turned quite violent towards me also.

**Q755 Chair:** What was his name?

**Emma Jackson:** xxxxxxxx and his brothers, xxxxxxxx and xxxxxx. [Check/redact names]

**Q756 Chair:** Do they still live in Rotherham?

**Emma Jackson:** They moved away for a bit, but I think they are back now.

**Q757 Chair:** Have they ever gone to jail?

**Emma Jackson:** They have but not for this. They have gone for drug offences.

**Q758 Chair:** Who did you tell first? When you found out it was wrong and you felt that you were being an object, who did you go to first?

**Emma Jackson:** Well, the first person I actually told was my mum because the night before he had hit me and he tried to set my face on fire. I had said to him that I was going to tell somebody what he was doing to me because it was wrong, and he sent two men up to my house to come and kidnap me. My neighbours actually saw them and phoned 999 because they thought we were being broken into. Then the police came and they were there five minutes, then they went. I went up to bed and the next day when I came home from school my mum was sat waiting for me because she saw there was something definitely not right. She said, "As a mum I know and as a parent I know that." I just blurted out to her that I was being raped, and she phoned 999 straight away.

**Q759 Chair:** Then what happened?

**Emma Jackson:** The police came out. There were PCs who came out and they asked me—

**Chair:** How many?

**Emma Jackson:** Two, a man and a woman. They asked me if I knew who had done this, so I said, "Yes" and I gave their names. When I told them the names, they said that I had got involved with some very dangerous people and the Serious Crime Squad needed to come in and deal with this, they could not. They then asked me if I had any evidence of these crimes, and I said, "Yes, I have saved all my clothes that I've been raped in".

**Q760 Chair:** Really? That was sensible.

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, and I brought them downstairs and they took them away in evidence bags. Then they lost them.

**Q761 Chair:** They lost them? They lost the evidence?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, the police lost my evidence. It was a rape charge, but when it came down to it was my word against his. They also could not offer me any protection, even though these men were really dangerous. They were actually at that time on bail for

kidnapping a witness and breaking his jaw and holding him hostage because he was going to court to be a witness against them for another crime.

**Q762 Chair:** Was the council ever involved in this? Did you have a social worker?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, I had a social worker. I used to attend Risky Business, and I had a youth worker. Education was aware of it. The NHS was aware of it, and Rotherham council was, because I used to have strategy meetings.

**Chair:** With the social worker?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, with all—

**Chair:** They knew about all this? They knew about the xxxxx They knew about the rapes and all this?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q763 Chair:** What did they do?

**Emma Jackson:** Nothing.

**Mr Jackson:** It was us as parents who got social workers because we did not know who to go to when this happened. We did not realise that this went on. When you have never been involved with police or social workers you think, “Well, who do I turn to?” Obviously, we turned to the police first, and then we turned to the social workers at Rotherham.

**Q764 Chair:** Did you feel a bit vulnerable? I would be terrified if I knew that the person I was complaining about had broken somebody’s jaw and kidnapped somebody and was trying to kidnap my daughter. I would be terrified. Actually, I may not even complain, I would be so worried. Were you worried about it?

**Mr Jackson:** We were worried, but the thing that was in our favour was that we did not actually live in Rotherham. We lived eight miles out of Rotherham, so we were not living on the doorstep of where these perpetrators lived. Where we lived was a mining area. These perpetrators were Asian guys and they stood out like a sore thumb in our village if they came into the village, so we were more, I would say, protected than actually being in the centre of Rotherham living on the estate.

**Q765 Chair:** Mr Jackson, are you clear that this was actually Asian men?

**Mr Jackson:** Yes.

**Q766 Chair:** Who were perpetrating this against white girls or, Emma, were there Asian girls or were they all white girls?

**Emma Jackson:** When I was being sexually exploited I never saw any Asian girls. It was all white girls. But I work in sexual exploitation and I have worked in sexual exploitation around the UK, and they do target Asian girls, they target black girls, they target white girls, they target Chinese girls. It just seems whoever they can get access to.

**Q767 Chair:** Who is “they”? These are these Asian men, or are they—

**Emma Jackson:** They are the perpetrators.

**Chair:** They are perpetrators.

**Emma Jackson:** Depending on which parts of the country you go to depends on—

**Q768 Chair:** It could be a different area, no Asians involved, some areas, Asians involved, is that right?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes, but what we find is—

**Chair:** But in the Rotherham area it was very clearly Asian men and young white girls?

**Emma Jackson:** In the Rotherham area, and also knowing and working for Rotherham council as well in their sexual exploitation service, we do not have a white perpetrator. All we have is Asian perpetrators.

**Q769 Chair:** Emma, you have heard the evidence today from Rotherham council. We were not impressed with Rotherham council. You work for them now, don't you?

**Emma Jackson:** Not now, but I did.

**Q770 Chair:** They seem to be in a world of their own. They are having conferences, giving out leaflets, but this seems to be going on and nobody seems to be doing anything. Is this right or is it just what we think? Is that the case?

**Emma Jackson:** No, that is right.

**Q771 Chair:** Why? When they have all this money to do something, why aren't they doing something?

**Emma Jackson:** I can't see what their issue is by their not tackling it. Because someone is committing a crime, then you stop them, especially if they are committing crimes against children and abusing children and you know about it. You do whatever you can to stop that. But it seems as though it is easier to not, and it is as though they do not want to tackle it because if they start tackling it then we are going to find out how big the problem is and is it opening a tin of worms.

**Q772 Chair:** Is it a big problem?

**Emma Jackson:** I think it is in Rotherham.

**Q773 Chair:** Is it still happening today? If we went to Rotherham town centre would there be—

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Chair:** Today?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Chair:** Tonight?

**Emma Jackson:** The areas where this happens, where the abuse takes place, are in central Rotherham and in the areas that are mainly Asian areas. I spend a lot of time in the Asian areas, and such as Joyce Thacker might not see it but because I spend my time there I see it.

**Q774 Chair:** Because you know what it looks like?

**Emma Jackson:** I see it, yes, and it is happening all the time. People do talk about it as though it is normal life now. People do name people and say, "He has sex with children. He is having sex with so and so".

**Q775 Chair:** People know this? They know the names, they know the people, but nothing happens?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q776 Nicola Blackwood:** What kind of attitude did you encounter from the police and the social services as a victim when you first came forward?

**Emma Jackson:** It was as though I was lying because I had an issue with these people, and as though they had not really done anything that bad to me and I was just complaining and kicking up a fuss for no reason.

**Q777 Nicola Blackwood:** Even though you provided evidence?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes. The police officers actually said to me—one of them, my child protection officer, said to me, “If it is any consolation, you are not the first girl that has been abused and raped and you are definitely not the last”. Then one of the CID officers who was in charge of the case said to me, “If you go back to these men, we just think that it is little white slappers running around with Asians”, and that was their attitude.

**Q778 Nicola Blackwood:** What about the social workers? Was it any better there?

**Emma Jackson:** My social worker just seemed not to even be on this planet. It was like she did not have an opinion at all on anything. In fact, she gave one bit of advice, and that was that these men had said I owed them £500 for alcohol and drugs and they would have to come and kidnap me and take me away for a few days so I could pay my debt off. The social worker advised my parents to meet the men and pay them £500.

**Q779 Nicola Blackwood:** In all these multi-agency meetings did anyone in those meetings in any of those agencies offer any proper help to you?

**Emma Jackson:** No, social care closed my case.

**Q780 Nicola Blackwood:** How long did it take for that to happen?

**Emma Jackson:** A few months. Social care closed my case because I come from a supportive family and they said that they could not protect me any more than what my family could. The police said that there was not enough evidence, nothing could be done, and then actually “non-crimed” what I had reported. They sent me a cheque out to cover the cost of the clothes that they had lost that were evidence.

I had to leave education at 14. They excluded me because I was involved in sexual exploitation, and my last school report actually states that I was a child prostitute. Then they also did not want me on the premises because I was seen as a danger to other children and staff because if these men came to get me, then they could harm the children and staff also.

Health was quite good. I had a lot of support from the GUM clinic. I had a lot of support from gynaecologists and from the children’s department. If anything, they were the best service. It actually got to the point where it was that bad my parents had to move me out of the country to stop the sexual exploitation because the authorities were not doing anything. The sexual exploitation was not stopping, because these men were still coming.

**Q781 Nicola Blackwood:** You have now been working in this area, and you worked at Rotherham for a while.

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q782 Nicola Blackwood:** Do you think that those attitudes are still there or do you think that it is getting any better for other people?

**Emma Jackson:** I think it is more talked about now. I do not think that how we deal with it has got any better and people still have the attitude that, “She is a problem child and she drinks, she smokes, she takes drugs. She wants to have sex with loads of men. If that is what she wants to do, then leave her to it. She is making a choice. She is voting with her feet”.

**Q783 Nicola Blackwood:** What do you think it would be now? Do you think that you would get a better hearing than you did back then?

**Emma Jackson:** I think in a way I would because it is more talked about, so more people understand it. More people have heard of it and they know that it is a crime. But in certain ways, probably in how I would be treated by the authorities, no, you know, and if they would take it seriously.

**Q784 Mr Winnick:** As the Chair said, we most appreciate your coming along. We have witnesses of senior officials, social services, police and what have you. As someone who has experienced this terrible business that you have gone through, it is very valuable for us in trying to make an assessment and recommendations accordingly. What I would like to ask you is this, Rotherham council, rather like other local authorities, say, in effect, “Well, we were not aware of the problem really before 2010”, and, therefore, it is their excuse for no action being taken. What do you say to that?

**Emma Jackson:** They have been very aware of this for a number of years. They were aware of this even before I was sexually exploited because they were having meetings about it then. I know that from working for the council. I just think that they have chosen not to tackle it because it was easier not to. I think also the fact that a lot of these girls, these children, are from care or what the council describe as dysfunctional families—although I am not really sure what that means because we are all a bit dysfunctional at some point in life at things—they just see that that is how they are going to end up anyway. You know, is there anything else that they are really going to do? They are going to end up as teenage parents, so just leave them to it. I think it has been easier to do that.

**Q785 Mr Winnick:** These criminals, because obviously they are criminals and if they have not been brought to justice they certainly should be, in your area and your experience they were Asians. You were saying that such crimes can be committed by anyone—white, black, Asian—as indeed they are. Would you take the view that the Asian people that you have met, not the criminals but ordinary people leading lawful lives and all the rest of it, would be quite shocked by what occurred and they would not find any kind of alibi just because the criminals are Asian? Would that be your view?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes. The Asian community in Rotherham know this is happening, and they are absolutely appalled by it. They want these people out of their community like anybody else would. They do not want their children around these people. But I think also what has happened—and not just with the Asian community but with everybody in Rotherham who is a young person or in their early 20s—is it is spoken about and it is almost accepted in a way because it has been going on that long. It is just normal. It has been going on that long, and been left to go on, that we have normalised it. That is just part of growing up; that is what happens.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Q786 Mr Clappison:** You are quite clear that when this was happening you were still a child, weren't you?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q787 Mr Clappison:** You were only 13, so that would have been evidence to all those who were supposed to be dealing with it. The council said to us earlier that they were now disrupting this activity; they were concentrating on disruption. Do you think it has been disrupted?

**Emma Jackson:** No, I think actually you should probably ask for Rotherham council's figures on how many abduction notices they have sent out, because I do not think they are disrupting. They class things like pulling them up because their tax has run out on the car as disrupting them from abusing children and selling them, but that is not stopping them from abusing a child.

**Q788 Mr Clappison:** If we were to go down to the Meadowhall shopping centre or Rotherham town centre, this would still be going on?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q789 Chair:** I gather you won compensation against the police for their failure to investigate your case?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Mr Jackson:** No, we took it to—we did not get compensation but—

**Emma Jackson:** We won criminal—

**Chair:** Criminal injuries?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Mr Jackson:** Right, but when this happened to Emma, I actually got my local MP involved, which was Kevin Barron at the time, and still is our local MP. I knew Kevin because I used to work with him in the coal industry. He was very, very good. He wrote to Rotherham police because we did not feel that it was being investigated correctly. We asked for meetings with Rotherham police, which was Chris (inaudible - 5.32.10) at the time, and she refused a meeting. I also wrote to David Blunkett, and I have a letter, not from David—

**Q790 Chair:** Was he Home Secretary then?

**Mr Jackson:** Yes, he was the Home Secretary then. I did not get a reply from David, but I had a letter from Mr Hedges, who was the South Yorkshire Police Commissioner or Chief Constable at that time, saying that, "No stone will be left unturned, and we will get these people". That never happened.

**Q791 Chair:** Are they still wandering around?

**Mr Jackson:** Yes.

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q792 Chair:** The witnesses from Rotherham council said that the multi-agency approach, which is now the way they are doing things, happened nine months ago. Apparently, it did not. You said that it started in December, only in December this year.

**Mr Jackson:** Well, can I just say that I was the lay member on the Rotherham safeguarding board up until a month ago.

**Chair:** Oh, really?

**Mr Jackson:** Yes. They approached me and Emma's mum to come on the board in 2011. I know safeguarding is not just about sexual exploitation—it is about other things—but we tried to work with Rotherham and we found it incredibly difficult. I can tell you now that what Mr Kimber said was a complete lie.

**Emma Jackson:** The posts for the two social workers—

**Mr Jackson:** They were not advertised until September of this year.

**Emma Jackson:** They did not get the jobs until December.

**Chair:** Really?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Q793 Chair:** We need to write to them because that is misleading the Committee to have said nine months and then—

**Mr Jackson:** We used to have a sexual exploitation sub-group meeting every quarter. We have not had one of them meetings for the last three quarters.

**Q794 Chair:** In Rotherham?

**Mr Jackson:** In Rotherham.

**Q795 Nicola Blackwood:** You have not had a safeguarding meeting for the last three quarters?

**Mr Jackson:** No. We have had a safeguarding meeting. We have a safeguarding meeting every quarter, but we have a sub-group. The sub-group is obviously off the main safeguarding board. We used to have a sexual exploitation sub-group meeting every quarter. We have not met as a sub-group for the last three quarters.

**Q796 Chair:** This is very serious and I was not very impressed with the Rotherham people. I think that we should actually get them back, not them but write to them and ask them what the position is. There are other people involved in Rotherham.

**Mr Jackson:** When I was on the safeguarding board we had the case with xxxxxx, and I actually challenged the board and said, “If xxxxxx is not being sexually exploited, why does it appear in the report?” There was quite a lengthy element of the report about sexual exploitation. If she was not being sexually exploited, why was that in the report? I could not understand why and we asked that question. I know they talked about Ofsted in Rotherham, but the Ofsted report that came out actually stated that everybody on the board must actually agree in Rotherham because it was never minuted that nobody disagreed.

**Q797 Chair:** Did you go to any of the councillors there?

**Mr Jackson:** When they had the—

**Chair:** Did you go to a councillor called Shaun Wright? He was the chair of Social Services.

**Mr Jackson:** Well, they arrested 18 taxi drivers in Rotherham.

**Chair:** For what?

**Mr Jackson:** For sexual exploitation.

**Chair:** For this? Right.

**Emma Jackson:** This was last year.

**Mr Jackson:** Last year. Now, when we were on the board, my wife was on the board and she asked the question, “What are we doing with these taxi drivers?” “Well, we haven’t done anything yet.” “Well, have they been suspended? Have their licences been suspended?” “No.” My wife said, “Well, why haven’t they been suspended if they have been arrested and what about the children all these people are picking up from school?” Because they were picking kids up from school and also children with disabilities, like in special schools.

**Emma Jackson:** They were actually on bail for—

**Chair:** This was when, last year?

**Emma Jackson:** Yes.

**Chair:** Eighteen taxi drivers?

**Mr Jackson:** Eighteen taxi drivers.

**Q798 Chair:** They were not suspended from their licences?

**Emma Jackson:** No.

**Mr Jackson:** No. I asked for a meeting as a ratepayer of Rotherham, not as a board member because I had to be careful how I approached it, and I spoke to—Rose McNeely was the mayor and we had a meeting with her and the head of the licensing committee. They said that they were going to get this sorted. I also had a meeting with Warren Carratt. He was fairly high up in children's services. He is now a team leader in one of the other areas in Rotherham. They said they are going to work with us and they were going to get these people off the street and get them prosecuted. That has never happened.

**Mr Clappison:** We have to follow that up.

**Chair:** We will follow it up. Emma, Mr Jackson, thank you very much. You have come a long way, but thank you so much for coming down. We are very, very grateful. We will make sure that we keep you informed of this inquiry. Thank you.

**Emma Jackson:** Thank you.