

Oldham grooming gangs inquiry process 'underway' after dramatic council vote

I have been looking for this to find its way into the local newspapers, the Manchester Evening news and the Oldham Times but I must have missed it. From [GB News](#).



The process for starting an independent grooming gangs inquiry in Oldham is finally underway, [GB News](#) can reveal.

The council's Labour group dramatically agreed to support an independent inquiry after losing overall control in this month's local elections.

Labour was left with 27 seats after the vote on May 2. Two Shaw and Crompton independent councillors voted in favour of a minority Labour administration at the 60-seat council.

Brian Hobin, one of the Failsworth Independent Party councillors, told GB News: "We didn't feel we could align to the coalition, we couldn't support them 100 per cent. But we've got what we wanted, which is this independent, judge-led or panel-led public inquiry. In my conversations with (Labour leader) Arooj Shah since last week, and with the executive members of the council, the plan is to push with this as

quickly as possible. The process will be formally underway from tomorrow.”

Mr Hobin’s party has been campaigning for an independent inquiry into group-based child sexual exploitation – commonly referred to as grooming gangs – since 2019.

The formerly Labour-led council has [voted numerous times to reject motions](#) for an independent inquiry into the town’s grooming gangs scandal.

The latest rejected vote came as recently as March.

News of a fresh inquiry comes after a review by the GMCA found in 2022 that police and the local authority in Oldham failed to protect children from sexual abuse.

Mr Hobin said: “There are a lot of things that will come out of a Rotheram or Telford-style inquiry in Oldham. There is stuff that we need to unearth and get into the public domain, to give survivors the belief that anyone else trapped in exploitation can have the confidence to come forward. This will ensure people are held accountable for what happened.”

“Because of what happened last week, a lot of people here have said they wanted anyone but Labour. We’ve been getting a lot of flack for letting them takeover [the council leadership], but the reason for our abstention was to get this inquiry over the line.

“How are you being a traitor when you’re getting the result you’ve wanted for five years? Who am I being a traitor to? “We need people to back off and let us do it, and then judge us on what gets done. We want to move as soon as possible but we don’t want to rush it. The inquiry will be as quick as we can under the right terms, but the process is now officially underway.”

Sam, a survivor of abuse in the town, confirmed that a group

of campaigners would be meeting with the Failsworth team tomorrow. Sam, who was also known as “Sophie” in the GMCA review, said: “There will be three of us that have come forward and have been fighting for this since 2020 on our own. We hope that when it comes to the vote that councillors make their decision based on what survivors want and not what is being fed by the leaders of each party. Nobody has more experience than us survivors and we are grateful that certain councilors are understanding of that and are giving us great power at such a time, when during the traumatic events that took place men belittled and downgraded us.”

An inquiry will need to be voted for in the council chamber.

Mr Hobin said: “I’m hoping that the other people that have always called for it vote for it. I can’t imagine them voting against it now.”

But after describing the independent councillors as “traitors”, [Raja Miah](#) told GB News: “There won’t be a Public Inquiry motion supported by Labour.”