

Rotherham paedophile gangs are still abusing young girls

From the [who was groomed from the age of 11](#), says that she often sees underage girls socialising with 30-year-old men and that the authorities are still not effectively protecting children from paedophilia. "You see younger girls chilling with older males. It's there in front of your eyes. Just because the report has come out, they're not going to stop. They're just going to be more discreet about it," she says. "In December I went back to the spots where I was groomed in Rotherham and there was similar activity still going on."

When Ms Wilson was being abused aged 12, her mother took her mobile phone to the police to point out the phone numbers of 177 Asian men. But the police refused to investigate, as they said it was a breach of the Data Protection Act.

Ms Wilson claims that police inaction continues today. "If you call the police, they're not interested," she says. In April, she says a friend pointed out a group of underage girls and middle-aged males to a police officer, who refused to take action. "The police turned around and said, 'There's nothing we can do, they're not doing anything wrong'," says Ms Wilson.

Last week, a National Crime Agency Investigation announced that around 300 new suspects had been identified, including two serving or former Rotherham councillors. Ms Wilson believes that her abusers could still be preying on young girls.

Councillor Chris Read, leader of Rotherham council, recognises that paedophilia is an ongoing problem in Rotherham. "We know that child sexual exploitation is still happening in communities up and down the country, including Rotherham. There will always be criminals who want to hurt vulnerable

young people,” he says. “Rotherham Council is now working closely with South Yorkshire Police to do everything we can to prevent and disrupt this abuse, to protect those young people who are at risk and to bring the perpetrators to justice.”

South Yorkshire police also admits that the abuse is ongoing, and says that tackling the exploitation is a priority.

“It is unfortunately a sad and distressing reality that child sexual exploitation continues to happen in towns and cities across the country, and that this horrific crime is not just limited to the past,” says Assistant Chief Constable Ingrid Lee. “We appeal directly to victims to come forward in the confidence that you will be listened to, taken seriously, and offered whatever support and care is needed.”

In her book, *Violated*, Ms Wilson writes that it’s still common to see young girls climbing into cars with Asian men. “I think some people mistakenly thought it was all over, that the grooming had stopped just like that and no other girls were being abused. They couldn’t have been more wrong,” she writes. “Things as serious as this don’t change overnight, even when the eyes of the whole country are upon you. These men had got away with abusing girls for so long that it was no longer they thought they could keep doing it.”