
From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 05 November 2025 19:17
To: Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise
<MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot>
Cc: Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
<[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted
S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>;
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Kate Higgins
<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross
Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton
<Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted
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[redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Andrew Watson
<Andrew.Watson@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted
S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director for Children and Families
<DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Deputy Director for Children's Rights,
Protection and Justice <ddcrpj@gov.scot>; Anna Donald <Anna.Donald@gov.scot>;
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
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Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Iona Colvin <Iona.Colvin@gov.scot>;
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<[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Justice Analysts <Justice_Analysts@gov.scot>;
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<[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills
<CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted
S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Justice and Home Affairs
<CommunicationsJusticeAndHomeAffairs@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE: URGENT MEDIA QUERY-
grooming gangs- GB News

Thanks [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Issuing the lines now.

Best wishes

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of**
Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise

Sent: 05 November 2025 19:02

To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Children,
Young People and The Promise <MinisterCYPTP@gov.scot>

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Subject: RE: FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE: URGENT MEDIA QUERY-
grooming gangs- GB News

Hi [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Ms Don-Innes is content to clear.

Kind regards

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

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Reid MP, who has called for an audit of group-based CSE in Scotland, similar to the review conducted by Baroness Louise Casey in England and Wales earlier this year.

Joani Reid MP will state that the Scottish government are “refusing to look” at the problem and will criticise “the lack of interest and commitment to checking that it’s not a problem”. She will say the Scottish government’s own strategic Group has said that we don’t have available data in Scotland, “so they are refusing to look into an issue which their own group has told them that they do not have sufficient data on.” She will call for a rapid case review to look at the available data and says: “then we can decide whether we need a national inquiry. And the fact that they have point blank refused to do that suggests that they don’t want to look.”

Separately, we will hear criticism of Angela Constance, who stated that there were “no current police investigations” into grooming gangs similar to the pattern exposed in many towns in England, where predominantly Pakistani men have targeted vulnerable white children.

The grooming gang victim who has spoken to us has said that her experience challenges Ms Contance's claim, because it demonstrates that the police might not have any investigations as the force has missed opportunities to look into them. She said that, with her experiences in mind, it made her feel sick when she heard the dismissal of this pattern of abuse in Scotland.

She said: “And just like the other girls in Scotland, I’ve been there and lived it. Something needs to be done ... it’s just going to keep happening and keep happening. And if it happened all these years ago, I can guarantee it’s still happening now.”

Please can you provide a response to both of these criticisms by 5pm.

This is very similar to queries we had in at the end of September in response to the column Joani Reid MP placed in the Herald. SpAds, policy and comms are content with the response below, grateful if you can also confirm Minister is content.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“We fully recognise the devastating impacts such abuse has on victims and their families. That is why we formed the expert National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group which brings together key services and expert stakeholders including Police Scotland and Professor Alexis Jay to inform and improve our collective response to this horrendous form of abuse. It is uniquely positioned to assess current challenges and make informed recommendations to tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE). The decision to conduct a grooming inquiry remains under review, and legislating through the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill was not the right route to address this most serious of issues.”

Many thanks

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From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of**
Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise

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Subject: RE: FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE: URGENT MEDIA QUERY-
grooming gangs- GB News

Hi [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Ms Don-Innes is content to clear.

Kind regards

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

The piece will include criticism about the government's decision to vote against an amendment to hold an inquiry into this pattern of offending. We will hear from Joani Reid MP, who has called for an audit of group-based CSE in Scotland, similar to the review conducted by Baroness Louise Casey in England and Wales earlier this year.

Joani Reid MP will state that the Scottish government are “refusing to look” at the problem and will criticise “the lack of interest and commitment to checking that it’s not a problem”. She will say the Scottish government’s own strategic Group has said that we don’t have available data in Scotland, “so they are refusing to look into an issue which their own group has told them that they do not have sufficient data on.” She will call for a rapid case review to look at the available data and says: “then we can decide whether we need a national inquiry. And the fact that they have point blank refused to do that suggests that they don’t want to look.”

Separately, we will hear criticism of Angela Constance, who stated that there were “no current police investigations” into grooming gangs similar to the pattern exposed in many towns in England, where predominantly Pakistani men have targeted vulnerable white children.

The grooming gang victim who has spoken to us has said that her experience challenges Ms Constance's claim, because it demonstrates that the police might not have any investigations as the force has missed opportunities to look into them. She said that, with her experiences in mind, it made her feel sick when she heard the dismissal of this pattern of abuse in Scotland.

She said: “And just like the other girls in Scotland, I’ve been there and lived it. Something needs to be done ... it’s just going to keep happening and keep happening. And if it happened all these years ago, I can guarantee it’s still happening now.”

Please can you provide a response to both of these criticisms by 5pm.

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A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

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Many thanks

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[redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
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[redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
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S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Justice and Home Affairs
<CommunicationsJusticeAndHomeAffairs@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For SPAD views- MEDIA QUERY- grooming gangs- GB News

Evening Jeanette,

Can I check you're content with the lines highlighted below?

I'm conscious the journalist asked for our response by 1700 this evening. We'll look to send this across to PO at **1845** if there's nothing further to add.

Thanks,

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] (he/him) | Media Manager (Education & Skills)

Email: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Mobile: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

<[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Justice and Home Affairs
<CommunicationsJusticeAndHomeAffairs@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: For SPAD views- MEDIA QUERY- grooming gangs- GB News

[redacted S.30(b)(ii)]

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>;

Sent: 05 November 2025 16:23

To: Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Kate Higgins
<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross
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Subject: For SPAD views- MEDIA QUERY- grooming gangs- GB News

Hello SPADs,

We have had a query in from GB News, they are doing a piece about grooming gangs and will have Joani Reid MP on who will say that SG is “refusing to look” at the problem.

They will also hear criticism of Angela Constance, who said there are “no current police investigations” into grooming gangs similar to those exposed in England.

This is very similar to queries we had in at the end of September in response to the column Joani Reid MP placed in the Herald. Have agreed the below response with policy which focuses on lines issued then along with the angle of the op-ed that was issued.

Grateful for a SPAD view?

Full details from GB News are also below for info.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“The protection of children from harm is a priority for the Scottish Government.

“We fully recognise the devastating impacts such abuse has on victims and their families. That is why we formed the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group to inform and improve our collective response to this horrendous form of abuse in Scotland.

“Amendments to the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill were not supported by survivor organisations such as Victims Support Scotland, and did not seek an inquiry on ‘grooming gangs’.

“It would have duplicated work already underway to understand the scale and nature of abuse, with any recommendations produced much later, further delaying improvements in our response to sexual harm against children.”

Background

The National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group (CSAE) was established in 2024 to increase cross-sectoral coordination and capability to address the risks and harms of CSAE in Scotland by scrutinising existing and emerging evidence and practice to inform, prioritise and agree actions. This Group is taking forward work to better understand the scale of sexual harm towards children in Scotland as well as recommending improvements to workforce education and training. More information about the group as well as remit and minutes for the group can be found on the Scottish Government website: [National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/topics/child-protection/national-child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-strategic-group)

The independent Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is undertaking an extensive review of policy and practice in Scotland relating to the protection of children in care and will report with recommendations for further development in due course.

The Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill was approved by the Scottish Parliament in September 2025. Amendments tabled by Liam Kerr MSP called for the Victims and Witness Commissioner to carry out research into group-based child sexual exploitation in Scotland, prepare and publish a report on findings and include recommendations. In a briefing to MSPs, Victims Support Scotland opposed these amendments on the basis that the work of the Commissioner should be driven by the needs and priorities of victims and witnesses.

QUERY

Thanks for taking my call just now. As discussed, we intend to broadcast a report with a grooming gang victim from Glasgow.

The piece will include criticism about the government's decision to vote against an amendment to hold an inquiry into this pattern of offending. We will hear from Joani Reid MP, who has called for an audit of group-based CSE in Scotland, similar to the review conducted by Baroness Louise Casey in England and Wales earlier this year.

Joani Reid MP will state that the Scottish government are “refusing to look” at the problem and will criticise “the lack of interest and commitment to checking that it’s not a problem”. She will say the Scottish government’s own strategic Group has said that we don’t have available data in Scotland, “so they are refusing to look into an issue which their own group has told them that they do not have sufficient data on.” She will call for a rapid case review to look at the available data and says: “then we can decide whether we need a national inquiry. And the fact that they have point blank refused to do that suggests that they don’t want to look.”

Separately, we will hear criticism of Angela Constance, who stated that there were “no current police investigations” into grooming gangs similar to the pattern exposed in many towns in England, where predominantly Pakistani men have targeted vulnerable white children.

The grooming gang victim who has spoken to us has said that her experience challenges Ms Constance's claim, because it demonstrates that the police might not have any investigations as the force has missed opportunities to look into them. She said that, with her experiences in mind, it made her feel sick when she heard the dismissal of this pattern of abuse in Scotland.

She said: “And just like the other girls in Scotland, I’ve been there and lived it. Something needs to be done ... it’s just going to keep happening and keep happening. And if it happened all these years ago, I can guarantee it’s still happening now.”

Please can you provide a response to both of these criticisms by 5pm.

Thanks,
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Media Manager | Communications Education |
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot**

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 November 2025 16:04

To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>;

“The Scottish Government is clear that the protection of children from harm is a priority and fully recognises the devastating impacts such abuse has on victims and their families. That is why the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group, which brings together key expertise from the statutory, third-sector, academic and service delivery organisations, was established in 2024.

“This group is best placed to assess and make recommendations for action to tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation. We know that there many barriers preventing children from talking about sexual harm, and a key focus of the Group's current activity is to recommend improvements to workforce education and training to ensure professionals are better equipped to identify and respond when children are at risk or experiencing abuse.”

Background

The National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group (CSAE) was established in 2024 to increase cross-sectoral coordination and capability to address the risks and harms of CSAE in Scotland by scrutinising existing and emerging evidence and practice to inform, prioritise and agree actions. More information about the group as well as remit and minutes for the group can be find on the Scottish Government website: [National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/national-child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-strategic-group)

The National group set up a deep dive sub-group in the summer to review current workforce CSAE capability to explore options to improve how the workforce identify signs of CSAE and understand steps to address them. Work is also being taken forward to improve data collection to better understand the prevalence of CSAE in Scotland.

The independent Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is undertaking an extensive review of policy and practice in Scotland relating to the protection of children in care and will report with recommendations for further development in due course.

Police Scotland has advised that there are no current investigations in Scotland involving offences against children resembling those in the UK Government National Audit carried out by Baroness Casey, they are reviewing historical and current cases of this nature and will report their findings shortly.

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Please can you provide a response to both of these criticisms by 5pm.

Thanks,
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Media Manager | Communications Education |
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot**

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 04 November 2025 16:14
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: GBN Request: Grooming gangs in Scotland

I can pick up- thanks!

**[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Media Manager | Communications Education |
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot**

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 04 November 2025 15:50
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: Communications Education & Skills

<CommunicationsEducationandSkills@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: GBN Request: Grooming gangs in Scotland

Hello all

Grooming gangs query from GB News. Are you OK to take?

Thanks

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Senior Media Manager

Justice and Home Affairs

Desk: 0131 244 2718; [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Scottish Government | [news.gov.scot](https://www.news.gov.scot)

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 04 November 2025 15:48

To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: GBN Request: Grooming gangs in Scotland

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gbnews.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2025 15:17

To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: GBN Request: Grooming gangs in Scotland

Dear [redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Thanks for taking my call just now. As discussed, we intend to broadcast a report with a grooming gang victim from Glasgow.

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She said: "And just like the other girls in Scotland, I've been there and lived it. Something needs to be done ... it's just going to keep happening and keep happening. And if it happened all these years ago, I can guarantee it's still happening now."

Please can you provide a response to both of these criticisms by 5pm tomorrow?

You can reach me on [redacted S.38(1)(b)] if you would like to discuss any details.

Thanks and best,
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

National Reporter
GB News Limited

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gbnews.uk
Tel: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]



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