

**Councillor Victoria Cusworth – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

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23 July 2021

Councillor E Barley

By email [emily.barley@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:emily.barley@rotherham.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Barley

**Council 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

I am sorry that you I was not able to answer your question at the Council meeting. However, I have detailed the question below along with my subsequent response for your information.

***“Many survivors of child sexual exploitation feel that their voices have been ignored by the Council, and at times purposefully suppressed. Please could you tell me what steps you’re going to take to mend bridges, and ensure survivors’ voices are given the platform they deserve?”***

We recognise the importance of consultation and co-production and ensures this is built this into all areas across the CYPs Directorate, including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) provision. This was highlighted by Ofsted in their Focus Visit in 2020. RMBC was told that the ‘Voice of the Child’ was strong and our support to them was effective.

CSE survivors were integral when shaping the initial specification for Rotherham’s commissioned services. These services and that approach remains important. RMBC consults with and utilises the extensive knowledge and experience from its three commissioned providers to inform and update CSE service specifications. That consultation process includes the views and suggestions of CSE service users, which enables RMBC to continuously strengthen its offer and impact to CSE survivors. All the services that we commission are specifically tasked with hearing and responding to the voices of survivors and their families.

Most importantly survivors’ voices have been heard in ensuring that we continue to prioritise securing justice against perpetrators through the courts, maintain high standards of licensing, and fund our Children’s Services to support all vulnerable families.

That said, I am not complacent, and as Cabinet Member I am of course always open to engaging with survivors in order to hear what they have to say and see if their concerns can be better addressed.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Victoria Cusworth**  
**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**