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23rd January 2026

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Dear T

Council Meeting – Wednesday 14th January 2026

Thank you for your question to Council on Wednesday 14th January. I have set out your question and my response below.

Do you accept that the one totally consistent aspect of RMBC's culture since 2015 has been extensive efforts to silence victims, survivors and those who stand up for victims and survivors?

I do not. From the moment councillors chose to invite Alexis Jay to undertake her review, through to the support for Operation Stovewood and the partnership Trauma and Resilience approach, the establishment of support services for victims and survivors and the recommissioning of these in line with the views of those service users, through to the workings of the Evolve team, at each turn our intention has been to hear from – and more importantly to learn from – victims and survivors of CSE.


That has certainly been a difficult thing for some individuals who have been part of the council over those twelve years, and we will not have got everything right. Doubtless our successors will not get everything right in the future either. But repeated independent, external assessment has seen that there has been a sea change in the council's approach.

Because we acted, dozens of perpetrators of child sexual abuse have faced justice and more will do. Hundreds of survivors of CSE have received support and counselling that they would not otherwise have been able to access. And thousands of children are safer in Rotherham today.

The Council does not claim to have all the answers to tackling child exploitation, there is always more to do to keep children and young people safe from predatory exploiters. However, our focus remains on listening to, and learning from, our children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families in trying to eradicate this awful abuse of those who are most vulnerable.

Accordingly, as I said when you attended council in November, I am more than happy to receive representations for you, or to discuss your concerns further. You have not made contact with me during that time, but if you wish to do so then that offer of course stands.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of Rotherham Council