

Wirral Borough Council

Weightmans reference: SG/186789/1

**Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Tom Anderson, Paul Hayes and Ian Lewis**

SG 10

3rd October 2017

to Councillor Paul Hayes

my ref
service Wirral Safeguarding Children Board
tel 0151 6664314
email davidrobbins@wirral.gov.uk
secure david.robbins@wirral.gcsx.gov.uk

Please ask for David Robbins WSCB Manager

Dear Councillor Hayes,

Thank you very much for your questions regarding the decision I have made, as Independent Chair of Wirral Safeguarding Children Board, not to publish the Serious Case Review report on Child H. I respond to each of them below, in the order in which they were asked. Forgive the length and detail of this letter. It seeks to give you as much detail as possible.

1 – Since Serious Case Reviews (SCR) have taken place in England & Wales, how many have not been published?

I am not aware of any published statistics about SCRs which have not subsequently been published. The numbers are not published, given there is no benchmark and the National Panel is expected to take each case put to it individually, on its own merits. Given the sensitivity of the issues covered in a typical SCR, the Department may or may not release any figures you might request. I am aware, regionally in the North West and sub-regionally in Merseyside, of a small number of cases whose SCR reports have not been published, for similar reasons to those stated by me to the DfE National Panel. The WSCB also previously refused to publish a SCR to protect the identity of the children whose cases it covered, as the Council's Legal team will confirm. It is worth noting that when SCRs were first instituted as part of the 2004 Children Act, the intention was that they would not be published, but used fully and frankly in localities to ensure lessons were learned. Therefore there will be substantial number from before around 2013 which were not published. Former Minister Tim Loughton MP, when he was part of the Ministerial team at DfE, used changes to Statutory Guidance (Working Together 2005, relating to Section 11 of the 2004 Act, amended 2013, 2015) to establish the requirement that LSCBs must be independently chaired and SCRs independently authored. The presumption for their publication was added. The National Panel was instituted at a later date.

2 – Have you sought legal advice regarding your decision not to publish? If so by whom and please provide me with a copy of the same.

The WSCB sought initial advice from the SCR's independent author, whose own LSCB in Rochdale had refused to publish a SCR under the same circumstances as those applying to the case in Wirral. As LSCB Independent Chair she, not the LA, sought independent legal advice from a barrister, which supported the Rochdale LSCB's position. Given the expense of seeking such an opinion, the ongoing state of the WSCB budget, and the barrister's indication that the opinion was not only applicable in the

Rochdale case but could apply elsewhere, the Rochdale LSCB agreed to allow Wirral to access the opinion at no cost. Such carefully managed and confidential co-operation across LSCBs is encouraged. A summary of the legal advice is below:

By virtue of section 1 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, once an allegation has been made that a relevant offence has been committed (but includes rape and indecent assault) there is a prohibition on publication of details that might lead to the identification of the victim.

In *Attorney General v Greater Manchester Newspapers Ltd* [2001] EWHC QB 451, a High Court case, Dame Elizabeth Butler Sloss considered that the "likely to lead" requirement was met where the material published was likely to lead to identification when taken together with other local knowledge.

In short, the "likely to lead" requirement means that the matter published must create the real risk, danger or chance that a member of the public, particularly one who had knowledge of matters already in the public domain.

By virtue of section 5 a person publishing such information commits a summary offence carrying a level 5 fine.

3 – *You mentioned that the National Panel agreed with your view that this report should not be published. Could you share with me correspondence which corroborates this assertion? I would be particularly interested in your representation to the panel in this regard and their considered response.*

I am happy to forward our confidential correspondence with the National Panel in this matter. It is attached.

4 – *Have you made the DfE aware of your decision?*

The national panel is a function of the DfE. It is made up of independent experts and serviced by DfE Civil Servants. It answers to Ministers, in this instance Robert Goodwill MP, who took over the role when Edward Timpson lost his seat in the June 2017 General Election. The DfE also provides scrutiny to the Wirral's improvement journey post-Ofsted through Tony Crane, who chairs the Improvement Board whose membership includes Elected Members from all major parties. Mr Crane meets me privately before every board meeting, to assess post-Ofsted progress of both the WSCB, and the public bodies it statutorily holds to account. He has been kept aware of the issues surrounding the Child H SCR and has accepted my decision, which I explained to him in detail. He reports directly to Ministers and senior officials, including providing an expert view on the borough's progress post-Ofsted.

5 – *You will doubtless be aware of the guidance given by HM Government on the publication of SCRs. Are you satisfied that this guidance has been followed in this case given your decision not to publish?*

I can confirm that these guidelines always inform how the WSCB commissions reviewers and authors. I can also confirm they were followed when my predecessor as Chair commissioned the independent author in this case, who is a very experienced LSCB Chair, SCR reviewer and author. The WSCB ensures all decisions taken in any SCR process are compliant with statutory guidance. In this case the author made every endeavour to construct a report that could be either sufficiently general, or sufficiently redacted, as to make the young woman concerned unidentifiable. The SCR process was longer than it might have been, not only because there was a court case ongoing throughout whose process could not be compromised, but because the author took exceptional care to try to write a coherent report from which lessons could be learned, without risking identification. She eventually advised, and after lengthy consideration the WSCB concluded, that the SCR could not be published in a way which firstly would

guarantee Child H could not be identified, and secondly would not compromise the purpose of the report which is to ensure that statutory agencies and others with contacts with the child on whom it is written learn the lessons concerned. The DfE's National Panel agreed with this decision without further discussion.

6 – Please provide as full an account as possible as to the steps you have taken to reach your decision, including the advice or counsel sought from third parties and fellow members of the Board.

The SCR process is overseen by the multi-agency Case Review committee of the WSCB. Like the WSCB, the committee has no representation from, and cannot be directed steered or influenced by either Elected Members of the Council, or executive or other individuals or bodies of WSCB's member organisations. Its purpose is, without fear or favour, to capture and advise all agencies on what must be learned and acted on when safeguarding is at fault and a child is seriously harmed. It is chaired by the CCG's designated lead paediatrician for safeguarding in the borough. This designated Lead Doctor post is a requirement in law. The SCR committee has representatives from all statutory services and can call on other experts where a case merits it, for example Domestic Abuse services.

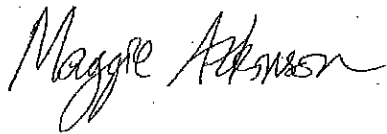
The DfE's National Panel has ultimate direction powers as to whether a SCR is required. The WSCB's SCR committee is then responsible for ensuring SCRs are undertaken in line with statutory guidance, including appointing an independent author who has right of access to all agencies and key staff involved, all case files and other materials, including day files or the notebooks of practitioners. Foremost in the entire process is the welfare of the child who is the subject of the review, and where possible they and their family are interviewed by the independent author to ascertain their feelings and wishes. This contact and interviewing happened in this case.

It became apparent very early in the process, given wide interest in this case, that both the author and the SCR committee would have to consider whether publication was in the child's best interests, advising me accordingly as Chair. As well as the SCR committee considering the issues, a medical opinion was sought from the health care professionals caring for the young woman in a secure setting. Their professional view was that possible identification through publication would likely have a very adverse effect on Child H's health and ongoing recovery. The committee weighed this view with the advice from the independent author and the barrister who had advised Rochdale's LSCB in the same circumstances. Based on a combination of my knowledge and direct experience of media interest in this case, the legal opinion shared by Rochdale and this medical opinion, I concluded that we could not publish and yet guarantee Child H's anonymity. To publish a report that could in any way lead to her being identified would also, as advised, be a criminal offence. The situation was further discussed at length by both the Executive and the wider WSCB. The decision not to publish was made by me as the Independent Chair, then shared with the National Panel who could have, but did not, challenge the decision. Officials servicing the Panel were advised in courtesy phone calls what my reasoning and stance would be, before they received the letter detailing that decision. They were grateful for this, but made their decision to agree non-publication on the basis of the confidential letter of which you now have a copy.

I will, as the law requires of any LSCB Chair, ensure the lessons to be learned by every agency are acted on. There are 34 recommendations, many of them detailed. Were I to publish them in full, those details could also lead to the identification of the young woman concerned, who was of course a child when the abuse took place and is still extremely vulnerable. I will therefore shortly be advised by the SCR committee chair on the committee's progress in translating the lessons to be learned into a meaningful action plan that does not run that risk. I will then publish that plan. That Child H started to suffer and report CSE in 2010-11, of course means that the lessons to be learned are pertinent now, and also bear historical significance for the borough, its services, its partners, elected and community representatives. That will become clear in what I discuss with the Task Force the next time I can attend.

In closing, I can confirm that on an anonymised basis, the lessons from this case and the wider national knowledge of the prevalence of CSE and CSA in the Wirral and many other communities are already being shared, in both face to face and web-based training for staff across all agencies, from schools through social care, health, police and the voluntary sector. Similar lessons have also been shared by Catch22, the commissioned provider of services on CSE and CSA, at a members' seminar. The WSCB website also contains easy to access, very direct and insistent materials that take users through both aggregated national and more bespoke local lessons to be learned from cases of CSE and CSA, and give pointers for practice in all agencies. The progress being made by all concerned is held to account by me, and through me the WSCB.

Yours sincerely



Maggie Atkinson
WSCB Independent Chair

cc. Leaders of Wirral Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat political groups
Chief Executive
Director of Children's Services

enc. Letter from WSCB to National Panel
Letter of reply from National Panel to WSCB

The National Panel of Independent Experts on Serious Case Reviews
c/o Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Dr Maggie Atkinson
Independent Chair
Wirral Safeguarding Children Board
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 4FD

21 August 2017

Dear Dr Atkinson

Wirral Safeguarding Children Board – Child H

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the above case.

The panel considered carefully the information provided at their meeting on 14 August. Given the particular circumstances you identify, of concern at the impact publication may have together with the advice you have received, the panel accepted your decision not to publish.

In such cases should you decide to publish in anonymised form on the NSPCC website where it does not pose further risk to those involved, the panel encourages you to do so.

Yours sincerely

National Panel of Independent Experts on Serious Case Reviews

Wirral Borough Council

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SG 11



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Town Hall
Brighton Street
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Wirral CH44 8ED

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Email: tomanderson@wirral.gov.uk

18th January 2018

Dear Mr McCourt

Re: Standards Complaint by Prof. Maggie Atkinson

I write in reference to your letter dated 22 December 2017 regarding the standards complaint made against me by Prof. Maggie Atkinson. I wish to formally provide an initial written response prior to my meeting with external investigator Simon Goacher – whom I will also forward a copy of this letter.

I am deeply offended by the nature of Prof. Maggie Atkinson's complaint, to the point I believe it is vexatious. I will endeavour to address each point raised:

My conduct during the Children's Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 14th November 2017

Prof. Atkinson uses inflammatory language in her complaint and states I 'hijacked' the meeting, my questioning was 'belligerent' and repeatedly claims this was an 'attack' on her. Fortunately the entirety of the meeting was filmed by a member of the public, Mr John Brace, who publishes his recordings on YouTube. This part of the meeting in question can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-bFu7GqCx8>

My questions to Dr Atkinson started at 29:49 and concluded at 32:49. As you can see for yourself this was no way an 'attack' or 'belligerent' as Prof. Atkinson sensationalises.

Prof. Atkinson mentioned in her annual report the commissioning of a serious case review. How my three questions, lasting all of 3 minutes (with answers) on something Prof. Atkinson mentions herself, can be seen as 'hijacking' is preposterous.

It has and remains my belief that this serious case review should have been made available to the councillors of the committee so that to ensure proper and effective scrutiny. Sadly, the Council's history has been littered with failings of protecting it's vulnerable citizens. The purpose of my questioning was to help prevent these failings

happening in the future and that councillors should be privy with the FULL findings as to ensure they can hold officers to account.

Prof. Atkinson may not like being challenged on her decisions, however, my sole motivation was to protect the Borough's vulnerable children. Not as she claims use them as 'political pawns' – a statement I find disturbing and defamatory.

Prof. Atkinson states: *'that was an attack, and by no means the first by these members'* I have never met, spoken to, corresponded with or made any statements concerning Prof. Atkinson prior to the 14th November 2017. How she can make this claim is astounding, something I consider she knows is false and again, defamatory.

Claim that I knew the answers to the questions asked

This was the first occasion councillors could ask questions in a formal meeting regarding the serious case review. For the record I had not seen sight of the letter Prof. Atkinson refers to in her complain, nor did she send it to me. Public scrutiny is part of the democratic process. My questions to Prof. Atkinson were directly concerning her decision not to share her findings with councillors and to challenge the rationale behind that. To infer anything else in her complain is disingenuous.

My approaching the media

Prof. Atkinson stated: *'... these 2 members subsequently decided that approaching the press...'*

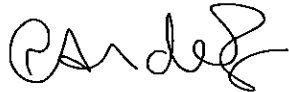
I never approached the press. I did not give a written statement or consult with colleagues as to the content of their statement. Yet again Prof. Atkinson makes a false allegation without checking facts – something I find quite alarming for an independent chair of a safeguarding board.

Conclusion

These allegations against me are entirely false, question my integrity, and go beyond the parameters of reason. I find it deeply worrying that Prof. Atkinson feels the need complain with such mendacity. I discharged my duties in the committee as I saw fit, with Wirral's vulnerable children at the forefront of my mind. I continue to believe that Prof. Atkinson's decision not to make the report public, or at the very least share with councillors, after all we are the protected children's corporate guardians, is the wrong decision. By not doing so those members of the committee are unable to fully assess the failings and be as effective in future scrutiny.

I do not apologise for my questions. If Prof. Atkinson feels that this is an attack, causes her distress, or fails to consider the feeling of the former Cabinet Member or Director of Children's Services, then I respectfully suggest she considers her position.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Anderson', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Tom Anderson

Councillor for Greasby, Frankby & Irby Ward

Wirral Borough Council

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CHILD GROOMING R

Wirral's Children's Services Department was condemned as 'inadequate' by Ofsted, following an inspection in 2016.

This was followed by the resignation of the Labour Councillor responsible for the service and the appointment of a new Director on a massively-increased salary of £160,000.

Now, in a further development, it's been revealed that a number of teenage girls were failed by the Department, in a shocking child sexual exploitation scandal.

The guidelines for reports into these kind of failings are clear that reports **MUST** be published, while protecting the identity of the victims. However, authorities have decided the report into this scandal will **NOT** be published.

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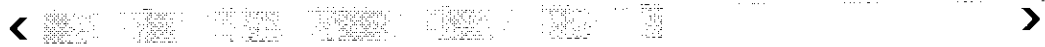
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NEWS

Wirral grooming scandal report will NOT be made public sparking "cover up" claims

A serious case review into the sickening campaign of the Rajenthiram brothers will be kept secret, sparking "cover up" claims



By [Liam Thorp](#)

07:14, 29 NOV 2017 | **UPDATED** 07:29, 29 NOV 2017

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JOE THOMAS ON THE RAJENTHIRAM BROTHERS SENTENCING

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The report from an inquiry into how two twisted paedophile brothers ran a campaign of child sexual exploitation and abuse will NOT be made public, it has been revealed.

The serious case review looking at council failings which **allowed Ilavarasan and Vinothan Rajenthiram to groom girls** as young as 14 from their convenience shop in Wirral will not be published - prompting allegations of a "cover up."

The decision not to publish the review has been taken by the local safeguarding board and independently of Wirral Council - with the decision being made to protect the identity of one of the victims.

The safeguarding board denies any cover has taken place, adding that: "It would be morally wrong, and absolutely illegal, to risk identifying the victim of a sexual crime."

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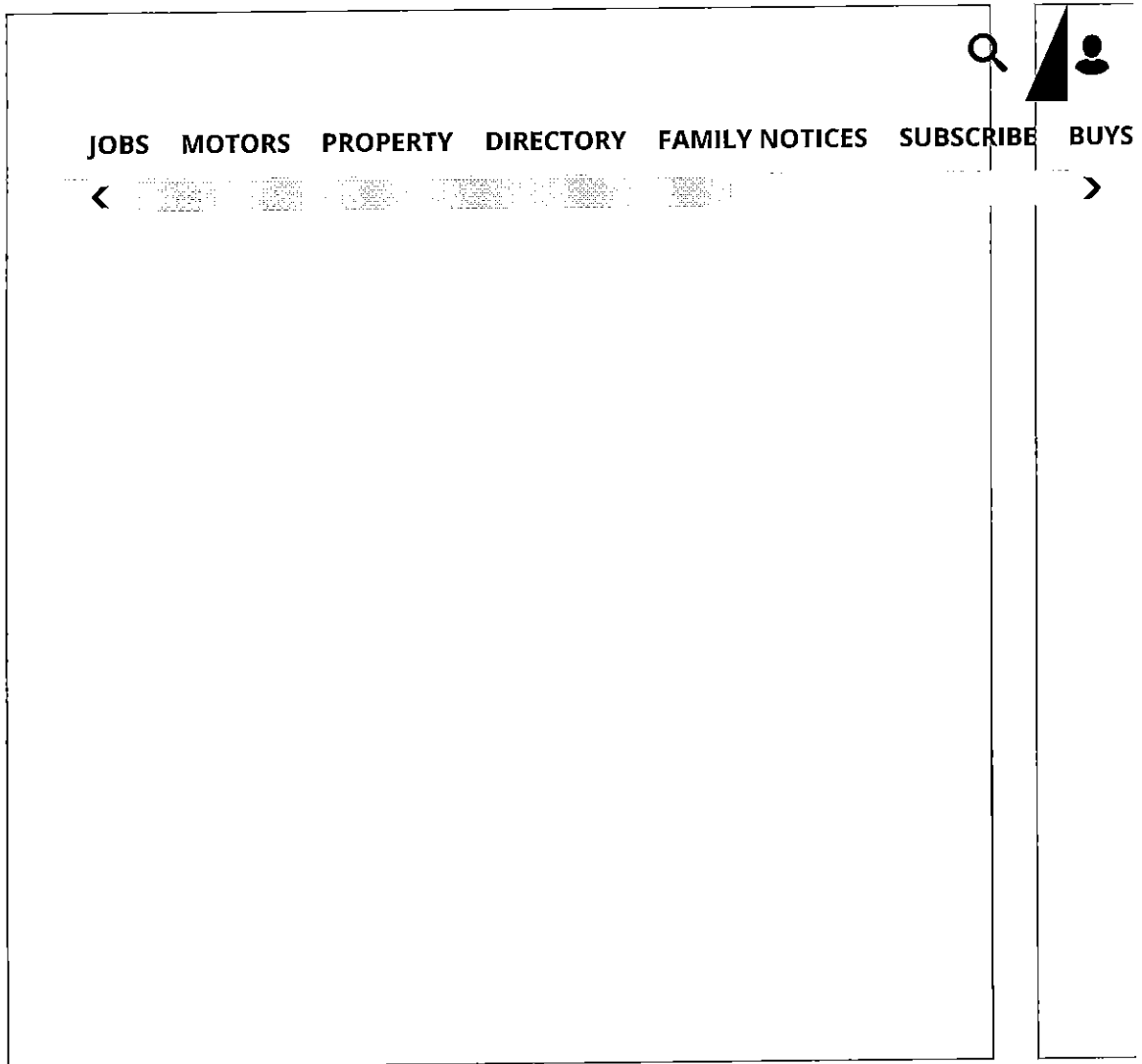
Council officials believe "there was no way to publish the report which did not lead to a high risk of this child being identified."

The sick **Rajenthiram brothers** targeted schoolgirls as young as 14 in a 6-year campaign from the Birkenhead shop run by their family, winning them over with free crisps and sweets.

They would then take advantage of the girls after whisking them out on drives in flash cars or plying them with alcohol at private flat parties.

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Rajenthiram Brothers



Paedophile newsagent brothers jailed

After they were both jailed in May, the ECHO revealed how a catalogue of failings at the council allowed the pair to continue their campaign despite fears being raised, paving the way for them to commit more crimes and target more victims.

LOADING



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Brothers Ilvarasan (left) , 25, and Vinothan Rajenthiram, 27, who have been jailed at Liverpool Crown Court for committing a string of sexual offences after they used their convenience stores to groom teenage girls with free sweets and crisps

The revelations followed an Ofsted inspection last year which rated Wirral Council's Children's Services department as inadequate.

This led to Dr Maggie Atkinson, a leading expert in the field, being drafted in to overhaul the department.

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But, at a meeting at Wallasey Town Hall last night it was revealed that the Serious Case Review, which has looked into the multiple failings of the council to protect victims from serious sexual assault at the hands of the Rajenthiram brothers will not be made public.

It is a decision that has been strongly criticised by the council's Conservative group.

Cllr Paul Hayes, who was at the meeting, said: "We owe it to the victims of this tragic case to ensure that those who failed them are held accountable and that lessons are learnt, how could this possibly happen if this report remains secret and doesn't see the light of day?"



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NSPCC- PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

"Government guidelines are clear, reports such as this should be written so that victims cannot be identified but they should be published. The victims of these horrendous crimes should have their anonymity protected but the people in Wirral Council and other agencies who failed them should face public scrutiny. The decision to keep this report under lock and key will undoubtedly lead to accusations of a cover up."

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He added: "**Wirral Council** have already been condemned by OFSTED for failing the most vulnerable, if we are serious about ensuring children are protected the council should welcome public scrutiny of this report and I invite the Labour leadership of Wirral to join me in calling for its publication,"

Dr Maggie Atkinson, chair of the Local Safeguarding Board, said: "This Serious Case Review examines – in great detail – the circumstances surrounding the sexual abuse of a child.

"It was my view, as chair of the safeguarding board and entirely independent of the council and all public agencies involved, that there was no way to publish the report which did not lead to a high risk of identifying the victim."

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"I could not countenance that risk. It would be morally wrong, and absolutely illegal, to risk identifying the victim of a sexual crime.

"My opinion was ratified by legal advice from barristers and my assessment on this matter was specifically sent to, and agreed by the Department for Education. "

I do agree that it is important the lessons which were learnt as a result of this tragic case are in the public domain and, to ensure they are, I had already requested that a report explaining the recommendations coming from the review – alongside the work which has been done since to address them – was published. This report will be published in the coming weeks."

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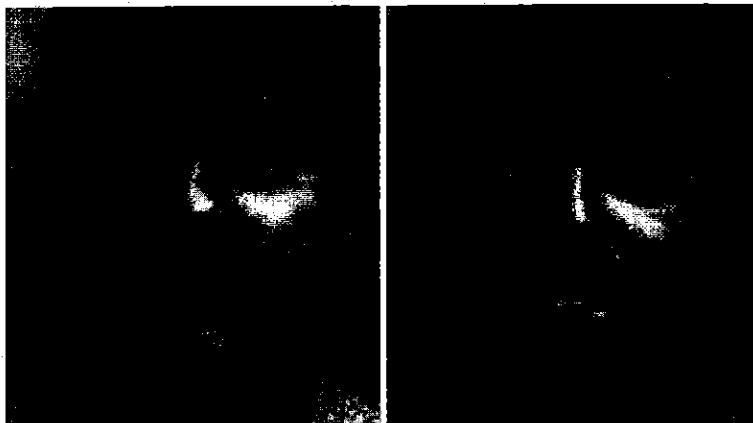
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UPDATED 15th November 2017

Cover-up claim as inquiry into Wirral child sexual exploitation scandal is kept hidden from the public

Leigh Marles, Editor



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Brothers Vinothan and Ilavarasan Rajenthiram jailed for 40 years for grooming and sexual exploitation of vulnerable young girls in Wirral

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THE report from an inquiry into how two paedophile brothers ran a sickening campaign of grooming and child sexual exploitation of teenage girls is to be kept secret.

The move has been blasted as a "cover up" by bureaucrats determined to protect themselves from criticism.

The Wirral community was shocked last May when the perverted crimes of Ilavarasan and Vinothan Rajenthiram were revealed in court.

The pair worked at convenience shops owned by their family and at another owned by a friend of their father's in Birkenhead.

26-year-old Ilavarasan, known as "Ara", received a 22-and-a-half-year sentence involving 18-and-a-half years behind bars with an extended licence of four years.

Vinothan, who raped one victim, received 18 years involving 14 years in jail and an extended licence of four years.

But now it has been revealed the Serious Case Review which looked into the multiple failings of Wirral Council to protect victims will NOT be made public.

"I am appalled by this decision," said Conservative councillor Paul Hayes.

"We owe it to the victims of this tragic case to ensure that those who failed them are held accountable and that lessons are learnt.

"How could this possibly happen if this report remains secret and doesn't see the light of day?"

"Government guidelines are clear, reports such as this should be written so that victims cannot be identified but they should be published.

"The victims of these horrendous crimes should have their anonymity protected - but the people in Wirral Council and other agencies who failed them should face public scrutiny.

"The decision to keep this report under lock and key will undoubtedly lead to accusations of a cover up."

He continued: "Wirral Council has already been condemned by Ofsted for failing the most vulnerable.

"if we are serious about ensuring children are protected the council should welcome public scrutiny of this report and I invite the Labour leadership to join me in calling for its publication."

Dr Maggie Atkinson, who chairs the Local Safeguarding Board, said: "This Serious Case Review examines in great detail the circumstances surrounding the sexual abuse of a child.

"It was my view, as chair of the safeguarding board and entirely independent of the council and all public agencies involved, that there was no way to publish the report which did not lead to a high risk of this child being identified.

"I could not countenance that risk. It would be morally wrong, and absolutely illegal, to risk identifying the victim of a sexual crime.

My opinion was ratified by legal advice from barristers and my assessment on this matter was specifically sent to, and agreed by the Department for Education.

"I do agree that it is important the lessons which were learnt as a result of this tragic case are in the public domain and, to ensure they are, I had already requested that a report explaining the recommendations coming from the review - alongside the work which has been done since to address them - was published. This report will be published in the coming weeks."

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Jailing the brothers at Liverpool Crown Court, Judge Norman Wright said: "You both abused your position in the shops to target teenage girls.

"You groomed them systematically finding out their names, getting their mobile numbers or using the victim's modern media WhatsApp, Snapchat and Facebook.

"They were subjected to highly sexual comments and behaviour," said Judge Norman Wright.

He said that they befriended the girls, who were aged 14 and 15, and gave them free sweets, mobile phone top-ups and serving them cigarettes "to win their trust and confidence."

"Once you had built up their confidence you invited them to go for drives, listen to music, chill out.

"The final step was to take them back to unoccupied flats and ply them with alcohol. So you provided a heady environment for young adults."

He said the "catalyst of alcohol was no doubt calculated to disinhibit or make them more compliant to your sexual desires.

"It was all about your sexual gratification, not friendship, not being mates, but sexual gratification."

The day before sentence was passed - and reporting restrictions lifted - council cabinet member in charge of child safeguarding Cllr Tony Smith was sacked by his Labour group leader Cllr Phil Davies.

Within hours, director of children's services Julia Hassall had resigned.

In the aftermath of the trial Cllr Davies and Dr Maggie Atkinson - new chairwoman of Wirral's Safeguarding Children's Board - insisted "lessons have been learned."

In September 2016 national watchdog Ofsted found "serious and wide-spread failings" in children's services, giving the department its lowest possible rating - "inadequate."

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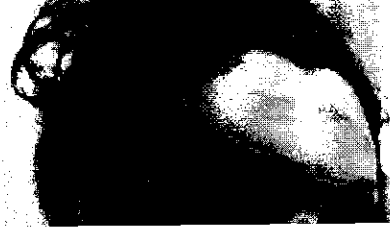
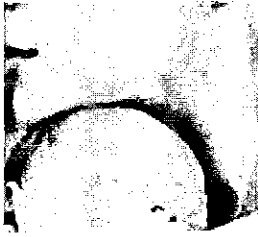
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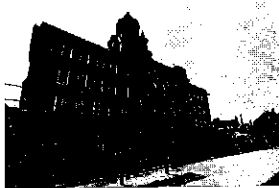
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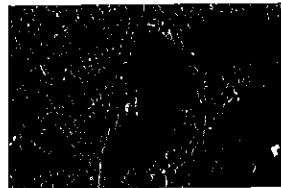
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Wirral Borough Council

Weightmans reference: SG/186789/1

**Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Tom Anderson, Paul Hayes and Ian Lewis**

SG 14

Simon Goacher

From: Maggie Atkinson
Sent: 19 March 2018 13:26
To: Simon.Goacher@weightmans.com
Subject: An update re Councillor Lewis

Hello Simon.

Re: the case you've been investigating after my formal complaint which of course is a confidential matter and rightly so. That confidence has been breached by one of those against whom the complaint was lodged, Councillor I Lewis.

I attended Wirral Health & Wellbeing Board on 14/03/18 to discuss my Boards work and the need for the H&WBB to take on more about children and young people. That meeting did not consider the matters at the heart of my complaint as that was not the purpose.

The H&WBB meetings are public and the resident who films all the council's public meetings was therefore present and filming. At the start of the meeting conflicts of interest were asked for. Councillor Lewis said (I quote him verbatim) "Chair I am the subject of a complaint by the person presenting the report at item 4 and therefore will not take part in the discussion." Thus he made a public disclosure of a confidential matter that was not the business of that Board. He was not challenged and I was given no right of response. The fact of my complaint being registered is now however on the video record that the resident who attends and films places into the public domain via the internet, given he also filmed the item I was there to present and all his films are put up.

I take grave exception to this further breach of codes of conduct and the potential risk presented to the process on which you are leading. I thought you should be made aware. If you advise I will let Legal Services know too.

Thanks

Maggie Atkinson

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the system manager.

Wirral Borough Council

Weightmans reference: SG/186789/1

**Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Tom Anderson, Paul Hayes and Ian Lewis**

SG 15

Simon Goacher

From: Lewis, Ian (Councillor) <ianlewis@wirral.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 April 2018 14:31
To: Simon Goacher
Subject: RE: Complaint against you (Weightmans Ref:186789/1)

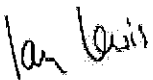
Dear Simon

Thank you for your email. I was notified of your tragic loss and can only send my condolences for what must have been a terrible shock. Losing a loved one, particularly in these circumstances, is awful and nobody can say anything to take away the pain you must be feeling.

To answer your specific points:

- 1) Do you accept that you made the statement referred to? **Yes**
 - a. If not what did you say at the meeting under the declarations of interest item, if anything?
- 2) Do you accept that Dr Atkinson's complaint against you is confidential, at this stage? **Yes**
 - a. If not why not?
 - b. If you do what is your justification for raising it in a public forum? **I did not refer to any of the substance of the complaint but, had I not lodged this 'interest' and gone on to question or challenge her in a manner in which she thought incorrect, I would have compounded the original complaint. Had I chosen to simply say and do nothing, it would have appeared odd, given my previous public statements on the issues currently under her remit.**
- 3) If you did make the statement alleged did you seek any advice from any officers on your obligations prior to doing so? **No. The need to excuse myself from that item of the agenda only occurred to me at the meeting.**
 - a. If so which officer(s)?
- 4) If you did make the statement in what way do you believe that the complaint being made about you meets the criteria to amount to a personal or prejudicial interest under the Code in the item which was to be considered by the H&WBB? **I believe this is a personal interest, due to the fact someone who could be questioned/challenged by the Board would be taking questions from someone about who she has complained about. Any questions by me of her could therefore also be interpreted as 'prejudiced'. No further discussion was entered into, either in public or in private, by me about this issue during or after the meeting.**

Hope this helps



Ian Lewis
Leader of Wirral's 21 Conservative Councillors

Mobile: 07886 133571
Office: 0151 691 8652
Website: www.wirralconservatives.com
Twitter: [torycouncillors](https://twitter.com/torycouncillors)

Wirral Borough Council

Weightmans reference: SG/186789/1

**Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Tom Anderson, Paul Hayes and Ian Lewis**

SG 16

Attendee	Date of response	Response
Cllr Phil Davies	12 April 2018	Cannot recall
Cllr Bernie Mooney	12 April 2018	Does not recall Dr Atkinson saying this.
Cllr Tom Usher	20 April 2018	"really cannot recall" if Dr Atkinson said that. I can't remember that she was minded not to publish the report in full, and that despite the backlash this might face, the decision ultimately lay with herself and she would not jeopardize the identity of the person (s) mentioned in the report
Cllr Ian Lewis	11 April 2018	He recalls Dr Atkinson saying that she fully expected the media to be critical of the decision not to publish – she used the words 'cover up' but in the context of 'so be it'
Cllr Paul Hayes	Interview of 20 February 2018	Stated that DR Atkinson said at the meeting that she knew that she would be accused of "covering up" the SCR or words to that effect.
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	10 April 2018	Does not recall specifically. Provided his notes of the meeting but they are impossible to decipher
Cllr Alan Brighthouse	16 April 2018	Does not recall but cannot say that she did not.
Maggie Atkinson	6 April 2018	States that she absolutely did not say what Councillor Hayes alleges
Eric Robinson	16 April 2018	Does not remember the words used
Deborah Gornik	10 April 2018	Does not recall Dr Atkinson saying this.
Carly Brown	10 April 2018	Cannot recall whether it was said or not.
Kerry Mehta	10 April 2018	Cannot recall that discussion

Wirral Borough Council

Weightmans reference: SG/186789/1

**Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Tom Anderson, Paul Hayes and Ian Lewis**

SG 17



2017-0055520RGPO

Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Cllr Ian Lewis
Leader of the Conservative Group
Wirral Council
Town Hall
Brighton Street
Wallasey
Wirral CH44 8ED

6 December 2017

Dear Ian

Thank you for your further letter of 16 November, about the decision not to publish a Serious Case Review (SCR) in respect of a child sexual exploitation case.

I understand your concerns around the decision not to publish the findings of the SCR, however, I am unable to comment on or intervene in individual cases. This is not because of a lack of concern, but because we believe cases are best dealt with at a local level where all the facts are known.

If a local safeguarding children board (LSCB) chair considers that a SCR report should not be published, they should inform this department and the national panel of independent experts on SCRs.

The national panel will review the case and provide advice to the LSCB chair. In cases where an LSCB chair is challenged by the panel to change its original decision about publication, the LSCB chair should inform Ofsted, the department and the national panel of their decision. The final decision, on whether or not to publish an SCR, rests with the LSCB chair.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Children and Families