

Operation Deerness - special investigation Newsletter

Issue 2 - August 2024



**Welcome to Issue 2 of the
Operation Deerness
newsletter.**

We are sending you this newsletter because you received the first update, or because you took the trouble to contact the Operation Deerness team since Issue 1 was sent out.

**If you do not wish to receive further
communications, please let us know and we will
remove you from our contact list.**

Hello and welcome to Issue 2 of the Operation Deerness newsletter. I'm Steve Lusted and I am the Witness Liaison Co-ordinator in our investigation team.

Since the last newsletter we have continued to contact witnesses and conduct interviews, with more scheduled. Obviously, many are based in or around the North East area, but we have also been getting in touch with and speaking to people more widely around the country. This includes survivors, former staff members, and academics with an interest in and knowledge of our investigative subject. We have also spoken to relatives of survivors.

We are particularly keen to speak to more former staff members, and this will be a focus for us in the coming weeks. It is vital that we hear from those who worked at Medomsley whether as paid members of staff or volunteers, to help us build an accurate picture of how the detention centre operated.

You may have heard recent radio interviews with our Senior Investigator, Richard Tucker, on Bishop FM and Durham on Air. These interviews have been followed with a series of radio adverts, which we hope you also may have heard.

We continue to review evidence from a variety of sources and have made further trips to Durham to examine police records held by Durham Constabulary. We have also visited the National Archives to obtain historical records held there.

In July, you may have seen that we issued a Call for Evidence to authorities and organisations with links to Medomsley. We formally requested that police services, local authorities, charities, government, and other relevant organisations provide us with any information they hold relating to Medomsley. This was followed up by a round table event where we laid out what information we are looking for. The response to the Call for Evidence has been positive and over 30 organisations are actively engaging with us. The deadline set for the Call for Evidence is 9 September so will be continuing to request that those on our list come forward.

Leading the investigation team:



Richard Tucker
Senior Investigator



Sarah Kirwan
Deputy Senior Investigator

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Following the election period, our Prisons and Probation Ombudsman Adrian Usher is meeting with Lord Timpson, who has recently been appointed as Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending to discuss the investigation.

We hope you have found this update useful. We have placed a number of agencies you can contact below if you feel that you would like some support.

Steve Lusted - Witness Liaison Coordinator

email: ppomedomsleyinvestigation@ppo.gov.uk

phone: 07511 165266

Support Agencies:

The Meadows Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years and over in County Durham and Darlington that have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. The telephone line is open 24 hours a day every day of the year, or you can email.

0300 223 0099

www.sarcdurham.co.uk

Teesside Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years and over in Teesside that have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

0330 223 0099

www.sarcteesside.co.uk

The Angel Centre (Northumbria)

Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years or older in Northumbria who have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

0300 233 0099

www.sarcnorthumbria.co.uk

Sunderland Counselling Service

A charity who have supported the local community in Sunderland for more than 40 years.

0191 5147007

www.sunderlandcounselling.org.uk

**National Association for People Abused in
Childhood**

For adult survivors of any form of childhood abuse.

0808 8010331

www.napac.org.uk

The Forgotten Boys

Support group for men across all regions of the North East who have experience of childhood correctional punishment in UK institutions.

01429 686499

www.theforgottenboys.co.uk/

Victim Care and Advice Service

Support for victims of crime in the Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton or Hartlepool areas.

0303 0401099

www.vcas.uk