

Operation Deerness - special investigation Newsletter

Issue 4 - January 2025



Welcome to Issue 4 of the Operation Deerness newsletter.

We are sending you this newsletter because you received previous updates, because you took

the trouble to contact the Operation Deerness team in connection with the special investigation into Medomsley Detention Centre, or because you asked to be kept updated on our work.

If you do not wish to receive further communications from us please let us know in response to this message and we will remove you from the list.

Hello. I'm Steve Lusted and I am the Operation Deerness team's Witness Liaison Co-ordinator. Thank you for your interest in our special investigation.

Since the last newsletter we have continued to identify, approach and interview witnesses to gather as much information as we can. We have continued to receive testimonies from former detainees and staff, including some from people in various countries around the world, which shows the unfortunate scale of this investigation.

The national Call for Evidence that we issued in the summer continued to bring in information and evidence for us to assess throughout the rest of the year. As a result of this, we engaged with 50 organisations. We have been continuing to go

through the material, which has led to further investigation and more interviews. We are very grateful to those organisations who have provided us with evidence, some of it from a long time ago.

In the last newsletter sent out on 15 October, I said that we were holding a drop-in event in Consett on 24 October 2024. We did so and I want to personally thank any of you who attended. We are grateful for your time and for the bravery you showed in attending the event.

As we move into the next phase of our investigation, from the beginning of February we will not be taking any further evidence. We have no further interviews scheduled and our dedicated telephone and mailbox will no longer be routinely monitored. If you do have anything you would like to share with us, please get in touch before **7 February**.

As you will imagine, there is a vast amount of information that we have collected, and we are now collating and organising this to inform the final report.

Leading the investigation team:



Richard Tucker
Senior Investigator



Sarah Kirwan
Deputy Senior Investigator

Support agencies:

As ever, there are several agencies you can get in touch with if you feel that you would like some support. These are listed below. Thank you again for your contributions over the last year. I will be in touch soon as the investigation progresses.

Steve Lusted - Witness Liaison Coordinator

email: ppomedomsleyinvestigation@ppo.gov.uk

phone: 07511 165266

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