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Rotherham Grooming Survivors Allege Rape by Police Officers

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Five women who endured years of sexual abuse by grooming gangs in Rotherham have now come forward with disturbing allegations that they were also raped by officers from the very police force meant to protect them. These claims have triggered a renewed investigation into South Yorkshire Police (SYP), with three former officers arrested and a fourth identified posthumously.

The women, some of whom were as young as 12 at the time, say that corrupt officers not only ignored their abuse but in some cases directly participated in it. One survivor recounted to the BBC that after she was pressured by gang members to undergo an illegal abortion, she was left devastated when the officer who had raped her was assigned to her

case. Another claimed she was raped in a marked police vehicle and threatened with further violence if she refused to comply.

The allegations span a period from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, during which time it is estimated that at least 1,400 girls were victims of grooming and abuse in Rotherham. These latest claims suggest the problem was not merely a failure of oversight but, in some instances, involved active criminal participation by those in uniform.

South Yorkshire Police confirmed it is leading a criminal inquiry into its ranks, overseen by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). However, critics have raised serious concerns about the integrity of an internal investigation. Professor Alexis Jay, who chaired the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, said she was “shocked” by the allegations and stressed that victims had every reason to mistrust the force at the time. She also stated that investigations of this gravity should be conducted by an external body, such as His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Switalskis Solicitors, a Yorkshire-based law firm representing several of the survivors in a civil case, expressed deep scepticism over SYP’s handling of the investigation. Amy Clownrey, a solicitor from the firm, said: “There has been no accountability in the town and without accountability, there will continue to be a distrust of South Yorkshire Police.”

Since December 2024, three former officers have been arrested, although none have yet been formally charged. One of the accused, Police Constable (PC) Hassan Ali, died in 2015 shortly after being placed on restricted duties due to alleged misconduct in connection with the grooming scandal. One survivor told the BBC that Ali coerced her by saying: “You do it for the other officer. So you’re gonna do it for me.”

South Yorkshire Police has said it has a “dedicated team of detectives” working on the case. Assistant Chief Constable Hayley Barnett acknowledged the force’s troubled past, stating: “We know how hard it must be for a victim or survivor who has been so badly let down in the past to put their faith into the South Yorkshire Police of today.”

She emphasised that the investigation is victim-centred and being conducted in partnership with the National Crime Agency (NCA) through Operation Stovewood, a specialist operation launched to address non-recent child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. According to Barnett, the combined effort aims to ensure no lead is ignored and no perpetrator shielded.

While arrests mark a significant development, the survivors and their legal representatives remain cautious. The call for transparency and external oversight continues, as trust in local authorities remains critically damaged. For many in Rotherham, justice delayed has long meant justice denied, and now, the hope is that these fresh revelations may finally lead to the accountability that has eluded them for far too long.