



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Michael Scholar KCB
Chair
UK Statistics Authority
Statistics House
Islington
London
EC1R 1UW

9th March 2010

Dear Sir Michael

Re: Continued misrepresentation of crime statistics by the Conservative Party

You wrote to Chris Grayling on February 4th to take issue with his use of statistics on levels of violent crime which you said has the potential to “damage public trust in official statistics”. Specifically you made the following factual point to Mr Grayling:

“The evidence from the BCS is that there has not been an increase in respondents’ experience of violent crime between the late 1990s and 2008/09; and that the growth in violent crime recorded in the police statistics should be attributed, at least in large part, to a change in recording practice”.

Since that time Mr Grayling has continued to claim that there have been significant increases in violent crime. For example in a video interview for the Bradford Telegraph & Argus this week Mr Grayling said:

“the thing that really matters is has violent crime has gone up sharply since this government came to office, absolutely, I stand foursquare behind that, the official figures confirm it, however you caveat those figures, however you dice and slice those figures there is no doubt whatsoever that there has been a substantial increase in violent crime”

(http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/district/district_bradford/district_lq/district_bfd_manningham/5035725.VIDEO__Top_Tory_is_given_message_on_crime/)

Clearly Mr Grayling is again flatly contradicting your assessment of the impact to changes to the BCS and how this relates to violent crime levels. I have no doubt in my

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mind that he is deliberately misleading the public about violent crime for political advantage.

You have made it clear that the BCS is a more reliable measure of the national trend in violent crime. I would ask that you again consider this matter and use your office to seek to ensure accuracy in the way politicians comment on crime statistics. This remains vital for the integrity not just of official statistics but also so that public can have confidence that the police are able to maintain law and order.

I am copying this letter to Chris Grayling and David Cameron.

Yours sincerely
Alan Johnson

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