



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Andrew Dilnot  
UK Statistics Authority,  
1 Drummond Gate,  
London,  
SW1V 2QQ

21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

Dear Sir Andrew,

I am writing with regard to comments made by the Shadow Policing Minister, Jack Dromey MP, about the latest crime statistics published by the Office for National Statistics. These contain a number of inaccurate statements about crime:

Firstly, Mr Dromey uses police-recorded crime as the basis of his claims, with no mention whatsoever of the considerable recording and reporting concerns raised by the Office for National Statistics in regard to these figures. He says: "Police recorded crime is rising and some of the most serious crimes have soared to the highest levels in years. There has been a major increase in knife crime, up 9 per cent, a 27 per cent rise in violent crime, including a 14 per cent increase in the murder rate, while sexual offences have gone up 36 per cent. Reported rape is the highest since 2003."

This is extremely misleading, particularly in regard to sexual and violent crimes. As the ONS made clear: "As well as improvements in recording, [the rise in sexual crimes] is also thought to reflect a greater willingness of victims to come forward to report such crimes" and "improvements in recording of crime are thought to have particularly affected some categories of violent crime recorded by the police." To suggest that actual crime is rising because either the police are recording offences more successfully or because victims are more willing to come forward does a great disservice to victims and law enforcement professionals.

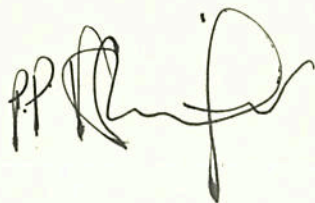
Second, Mr Dromey omits the more reliable indicator of crime from his commentary, the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales, which is accredited as a set of national statistics. As you know, this is the largest

independent survey of victims of crime anywhere in the world - a survey of 30,000 people - which has provided consistent and reliable trend data on crime over many years. In the year to September, the Crime Survey showed that crime had fallen by a non-statistically significant 6% year on year, was at historic lows, and had fallen by 30% since 2010. To suggest that "we see the biggest increase in recorded crime in a decade" is a great misrepresentation of the facts.

Third, Mr Dromey says that the ONS has estimated that were online and fraud offences to be included in the Crime Survey, "the total number of recorded crimes would nearly double." The ONS has said no such thing. In October 2015, the ONS published the result of a field trial of 2,000 interviews to estimate the extent of fraud and cyber crime in England and Wales, but made clear that the estimated 5.1 million such crimes could not simply be added to existing CSEW crime to create a composite measure. In due course, the ONS will bring this dataset within CSEW, but before the two distinct datasets can be integrated it is misleading to add one to the other.

In May this year, the public will vote in the national Police and Crime Commissioner elections, in doing so judging their PCC on their effectiveness in cutting crime and maintaining public safety in their areas. It is essential that they do on the basis of clear and reliable information. I would be grateful if you could clarify whether Mr Dromey's statements are accurate or whether such a reading of today's statistics is in fact irresponsible and misleading.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P.P. [unclear]', written in a cursive style.