



MEN AND BOYS
COALITION

www.menandboyscoalition.org.uk

c/o The ManKind Initiative (charity), Belvedere Road, Flook House, Taunton, TA1 1BT

Mr Mervyn Stevens
Complaints Officer
UK Statistics Authority
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V2QQ

02 February 2017

Dear Mr Stevens

**Formal Complaint: Department for Communities and Local Government -
Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2016, England**

I am writing on behalf of the Men and Boys Coalition, a network of charities, academics and professionals committed to highlighting and taking action on gender-specific issues that affect men and boys.

This is a formal complaint with regard to the above statistical report which we believe is in breach of the UK Statistical Authority's Code of Practice, especially Section 2 (Integrity), and, Section 8 (Frankness and Accessibility).

The complaint against the **Department for Communities and Local Government** on this basis is made on four counts.

- 1) The complete exclusion in the dataset (Table 2 Demographics of rough sleeping in England, Autumn 2016) of the number and percentage of male rough sleepers (at a national level) and the number of male rough sleepers (at a local authority level), when the corresponding data for female rough sleepers has rightly been published. This is despite the fact that the data on male rough sleepers has been collected as part of this statistical release and therefore is available for publication by the Department. This is compounded by the fact that via a method of deduction the overwhelming majority of rough sleepers are in fact male (it is deduced that 88% of rough sleepers are male, given that the data states that 12% of rough sleepers are female).

- 2) The complete exclusion in the written report that explained and accompanied the dataset of any reference to male rough sleepers or their number and percentage of all rough sleepers, when the publication rightly presented the corresponding data for female rough sleepers. This can be clearly seen in the section on demographics and visually by Chart 2 and Chart 3. As set out in 1) above, this is compounded by the fact that the overwhelming majority of rough sleepers are in fact male.
- 3) The presentation of data which rightly includes female rough sleeping but excludes male rough sleepers who are the vast majority of rough sleepers ensures that full knowledge, understanding and awareness of the rough sleeper population in England is not made available to a range of key audiences. This includes the general public, media, Government, statutory bodies, the third sector and broader policy makers, research bodies and service delivery organisations.
- 4) Partially presenting the available data, so that it excludes the statistics on male rough sleepers, will have a negative impact in a number of ways, by reinforcing:
 - The lack of public policy and service provision for male rough sleepers
 - The lack of funds for research into the reasons why men sleep rough, and therefore the lack of targeted support
 - The lack of public and financial (statutory funding and public donations) support for third sector organisations in delivering support to male rough sleepers
 - The lack of societal acknowledgement, understanding and public recognition of the existence of male rough sleepers
 - The lack of media and public presentation of the number and percentage of male rough sleepers which compounds all of the above

The sole inclusion of female rough sleepers and the exclusion of male rough sleepers in the statistical release lead subsequently to an incomplete presentation of the facts in the media. This includes where the only gender referenced is female.

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-38719087>

Ultimately, the exclusion of this data from this statistical release has a negative impact on male rough sleepers themselves. As well as the reasons set out in 3) and 4), it also has a direct impact because the message it gives to those men is that they are invisible and that there is no official acknowledgement that they exist. This not

only compounds their sense of isolation, it also creates a further obstacle to public and policy concern for tackling the factors that have caused them to sleep rough.

It is important to make clear that this complaint is aimed at the exclusion of male rough sleepers from the statistical release dataset and not the inclusion of figures for female rough sleepers. We believe that both should be made available in the report and dataset.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I look forward to receiving a positive outcome to this complaint.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks

Co-founder
The Men and Boys Coalition

CC:

- Mr Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive, Crisis
- Mr Simon Grainge, Chief Executive, at Emmaus UK
- Mr Graeme Brown, Interim Chief Executive, Shelter
- Mr Roger Harding, Director of Communications, Policy and Campaigns, Shelter
- Mr Howard Sinclair, Chief Executive, St Mungo's
- Mr Dominic Williamson, Executive Director of Strategy and Policy, St Mungo's
- Commissioner Clive Adams, Salvation Army
- Rick Henderson, Chief Executive, Homeless Link
- Jacqui McCluskey, Director of Policy and Communications, Homeless Link
- National Media