

From: Ally Fogg  
To: Authority Enquiries  
Date: 05/07/2015 11:08  
Subject: Crown Prosecution service statistics, violence against women and girls

To the UK Statistics Authority

I would like to draw your attention to the recent official report published by the Crown Prosecution Service, entitled 'Violence Against Women and Girls, crime report 2014-2015'

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps\\_vawg\\_report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_vawg_report_2015.pdf)

I was among a group of 31 signatories to a letter published in the Guardian on Friday July 3rd, consisting of some of Britain's leading experts in the field of men's health, abuse and recovery, along with several survivors and advocates. The letter explains why the issue I raise with you now is of grave seriousness to many survivors of intimate violence and abuse.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jul/02/anorexia-and-are-mens-problems-too>

Despite the title, the report published by the CPS in fact reports statistics for prosecution and conviction of all intimate and sexual crimes, and the statistics it reports for 'violence against women and girls' (VAWG) include the experiences of at least 13,154 men and boys, plus around 16,000 crimes where the victims' gender was not recorded. Around one in six of all victims described, where the gender is known, is in fact male.

At no point in the report, or the accompanying press briefing, is this made explicit. One has to delve into the accompanying raw data files to retrieve this statistic. What we find most disturbing is that the text of the report appears to have been deliberately worded in order to conceal the truth of their own data. Examples are as follows:

1/ In the executive summary, it is stated that "We recognise that these offences can be targeted at male and transgender victims as well as female victims" however it does not state that statistics for such offences are in fact being included in a report entitled 'Violence Against Women and Girls.'

2/ In the section marked 'Equalities', it is stated that "From those with recorded gender, the proportion of women victims was 84%." With full information available, it becomes apparent that this means 16% were male, however the use of the word "women" in the context of a report entitled "Violence Against Women and Girls", stating that 84% of victims were "women" invites the reader to assume (wrongly) that the other 16% were "girls."

3/ In many of the case studies presented in the report, the authors specify the gender of victims as "women" and/or "girls." However there is at least one case study, describing the case of an ex-priest sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for child sex abuse offences (p78). The victims of this man (Francis Paul Cullen) were in fact boys, and only boys. In this case study, the victims are described as "young people" rather than "boys" - again concealing the true nature of his crimes. One could reasonably ask why this case study appears at all in a report on VAWG, but it is difficult not to conclude that the choice of words here was an act of deliberate deception.

4/ In the whole report, extent 109 pages, the words 'man', 'men', 'boy' or 'boys' only ever appears when describing the gender of an offender, never the gender of a victim.

Publication of the report was accompanied by press release and media pack, which was similarly misleading. As a consequence, most if not all media coverage of the publication was highly inaccurate, including statements such as “107,100 cases concerning violence against women and girls were prosecuted over the [past] 12 months.” While a small number of media reports noted that such crimes could involve male victims, none reported the significant extent to which male victims accounted for the total. Consequently, we believe the public was profoundly misled about the CPS's performance in prosecuting offences against women and girls.

It should be noted that there is evidence that the large recent rise in rape, sexual assault and child abuse crimes reported to police is being affected by a much faster rise in reports from male victims than from female. (eg <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/male-rape-has-doubled-in-manchester-in-the-last-year-10233483.html> ), so the statistics presented by CPS may be overstating or inaccurately representing their performance in prosecuting crimes against women and girls.

We must leave it to the UK Statistics Authority to decide the extent to which this report contravenes the Code of Practice, but we aver that this report may breach the requirements for integrity and honesty.

We would suggest it would be reasonable and honest to present statistics for all intimate and sexual offences against victims of any gender, if clearly described as such. It would also be reasonable to present statistics for crimes of violence against women and girls (as the CPS is compelled to do by the Home Office). We suggest, however, that it is unreasonable and inaccurate to present statistics for all intimate and sexual offences while describing them, wrongly, as describing violence against women and girls.

We would also ask you also appreciate that this is not simply an academic matter of statistical accuracy. By serving to obscure and misrepresent the scale of male victimisation, this has very real implications for evidence-based policy, for public understanding and democratic debate, and is extremely offensive and damaging to the huge numbers of male victims who have had their experiences within the criminal justice system obscured and erased in this way.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Ally Fogg, on behalf of 31 signatories to the Guardian letter.