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Thank you for your letter of 4 February.

As I indicated when we spoke earlier, a wide range of other organisations - amongst them the Home Office, the Liberal Democrats and media outlets including the BBC - have used these figures in the same way as the Conservative Party. I have enclosed herewith a document which gives examples of these.

I therefore trust that you will make similar public statements in respect of each of them over their use of the statistics, in particular in relation to the caveat on the change of methodology.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grayling

# Crime statistics

Home Office and BBC both use recorded crime stats to compare crime trends over time, without caveats

## Measuring crime for 25 years

### Trends in crime, 1981 to 2005/06

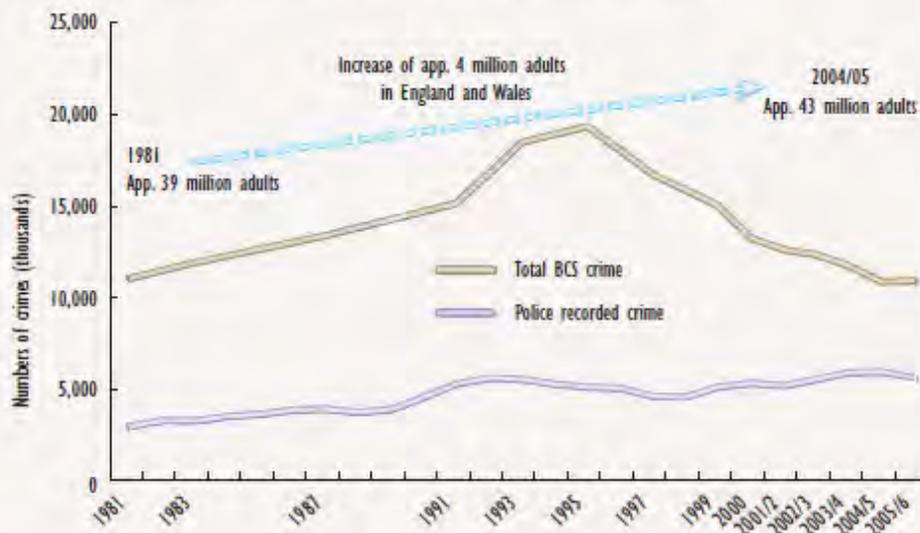
The number of crimes as estimated by the BCS increased throughout the 80s and early 90s, reaching a peak of 19 million crimes in 1995. The levels of crime then decreased and have stabilised in the last year.

Based on the 2005/06 BCS there were 10.9 million crimes, a similar level to 25 years ago.

Numbers of crimes recorded by the police have risen over this period largely due to changes to the counting rules for crime, reporting by the public and police recording practices.

The BCS count of crime includes crimes against people aged 16 or over living in private households in England and Wales, so crimes against businesses and people aged under 16 are excluded. The BCS also excludes crimes termed as victimless (e.g. drug offences) and crimes such as murders (where the victim cannot be interviewed).

### Trends in BCS and police recorded crime, 1981 to 2005/06



Source: Crime in England and Wales 2005/06 (Walker, Kershaw and Nicholas, 2006)

included here. Exposure (previously referred to as indecent exposure) forms a large component of 'other miscellaneous sexual offences'.

- The police recorded 13,787 other sexual offences in 2006/07, eight per cent fewer than in 2005/06. Within this total there were some contrasting trends, with a 39 per cent increase in incest or familial sexual offences (from 966 to 1,344 offences) offset by a 21 per cent fall in soliciting of women by men (from 1,640 to 1,290 offences). Both categories are still being affected by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, as a dwindling number of offences recorded in each successive year actually occurred before the Act came in.
- Based on the 2005/06 BCS self-completion module on intimate violence, approximately three per cent of women and one per cent of men had experienced a sexual assault in the previous 12 months<sup>2</sup>. The majority of this was accounted for by less serious sexual assaults. Less than one per cent of both women and men had been a victim of a serious sexual assault (Coleman *et al.*, 2007).

### 3.6 ROBBERY

Robbery is an offence in which force or the threat of force is used either during or immediately prior to a theft or attempted theft. It covers a wide variety of different incidents including bank robbery, mobile phone robbery and street mugging, regardless of the amount of money or property stolen.

Recorded crime further distinguishes between robbery of personal property and business property. The former refers to goods being stolen that belong to an individual or group of individuals, regardless of the location of the robbery or whether the victim was the owner of the property. If there is no use or threat of force, an offence of theft from the person is recorded. It is sometimes difficult to make this distinction, so clear guidance is contained in the Home Office Counting Rules. A robbery of business property is where goods stolen belong to a business or other corporate body (such as a bank or a shop), regardless of the location of the robbery.

- All crime tends to be geographically concentrated, but this is particularly the case for robberies. In 2006/07, 62 per cent of robberies in England and Wales were recorded by three forces: Metropolitan, Greater Manchester and West Midlands (Table 7.10).
- Police recorded 101,370 robberies in 2006/07 compared to 98,198 in 2005/06, an increase of three per cent. This followed an eight per cent increase in the previous year. Despite these two rises, levels were still 16 per cent below the 2001/02 peak of 121,359. Ninety-one per cent of robberies in 2006/07 were of personal property, the same proportion as the previous two years. However, robberies of personal property rose at a lesser rate in 2006/07 (three per cent to 91,917) than those of business property (eight per cent to 9,453).

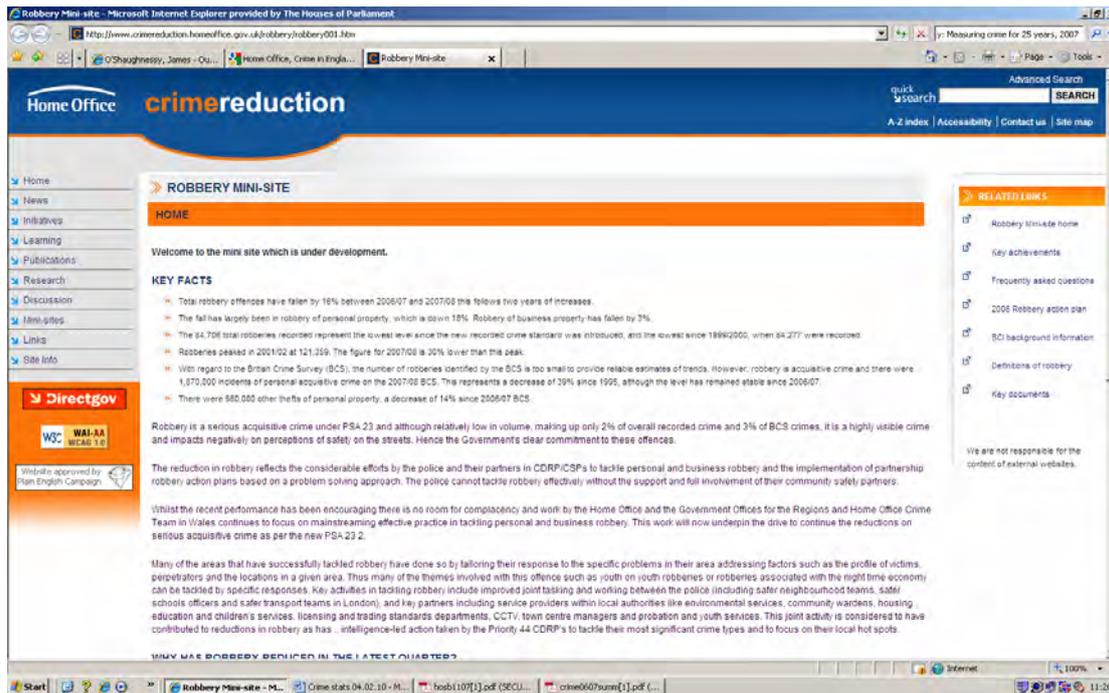
<sup>2</sup> The number of sexual offences picked up by the main BCS survey is too small to provide reliable estimates - see text box 'Violent and sexual crime - coverage of British Crime Survey and police recorded crime'.



## Focus on violent crime

- BCS violent crime did not show a statistically significant change over the last year but there have been substantial falls since the mid 1990s (a fall of 41% or over half a million fewer victims since 1995).
- Police recorded violence against the person fell by 1% from last year. This was the first fall in the recorded number for eight years. There was a 9% decrease in most serious violence against the person last year.
- Most serious violence against the person accounted for just 2% of total violence against the person offences in 2006/07, but includes the crimes of homicide, attempted murder and more serious wounding.
- Police recorded robbery increased by 3% over the last 12 months. This is 16% below the 2001/02 peak in robbery.





Source: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/robbery/robbery001.htm>

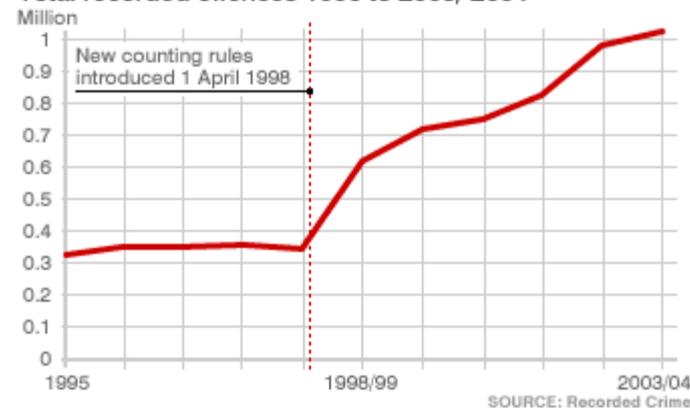
The BBC has also used recorded crime comparators itself without a caveat about the 2002/3 changes.<sup>i</sup>



- ▶ Crime overview
- ▶ Crime trends
- ▶ Regional breakdown
- ▶ Public perception of crime
- ▶ Violent crime
- ▶ Crime by offence

### Violent crime

Total recorded offences 1995 to 2003/ 2004



The statistics appear to indicate a year-on-year increase in violent crime since just after Labour came to power in 1997.

The compilers point out that this coincides with a comprehensive overhaul of the way the figures are counted.

Source:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/pop\\_ups/04/uk\\_crime\\_figures\\_2004/html/5.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/pop_ups/04/uk_crime_figures_2004/html/5.stm)

### **Liberal Democrats use of recorded crime statistics**

The Liberal Democrats use exactly the same measure of crime that we use – the recorded crime statistics. They like us, use the statistics to compare Labour’s record since 1998.

Here are three examples of where the Liberal Democrats have used recorded crime statistics to illustrate crime trends over time:

1. Chris Huhne, 4 February 2008:<sup>ii</sup>

‘There is excessive violent crime, which has doubled since the Government came to power.’

This calculation is only possible if you are using recorded crime and ignoring the effects of the recording changes.
2. Nick Clegg:<sup>iii</sup>

‘In contrast to non-violent crime, violent crime has doubled since 1998. Violent offenders are now more likely to get a caution than a conviction in court. Fewer than one in a hundred crimes is punished in court...’

Again, this calculation is only possible if you are using recorded crime and ignoring the effects of the recording changes.
3. Nick Clegg:<sup>iv</sup>

‘I could go on. [Hon. Members: “Go on.”] I will go on, and then I will give way. Overall, gun crime has doubled since 1997’

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<sup>i</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/pop\\_ups/04/uk\\_crime\\_figures\\_2004/html/5.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/pop_ups/04/uk_crime_figures_2004/html/5.stm)

<sup>ii</sup> [http://chrishuhne.org.uk/speeches/000076/police\\_grant\\_speech.html](http://chrishuhne.org.uk/speeches/000076/police_grant_speech.html)

<sup>iii</sup> , *Hansard*, 7 February 2007, Col. 920

<sup>iv</sup> *Hansard*, 7 February 2007, Col. 920