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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE**

Chris Kelly MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

27 November 2013

Dear Mr Kelly

**CRIME STATISTICS**

Thank you for your letter dated 31 October 2013 about a statement made by Jack Dromey MP on a social media website about the recent trend in crime statistics in the West Midlands.

Sub-national estimates of crime are available from official statistics published by ONS based on police crime records<sup>1</sup>. The latest police recorded crime statistics for the West Midlands police force area, published by ONS on 17 October 2013<sup>2</sup>, show that, overall, in the year ending June 2013, police recorded crime was 5 per cent lower than it was in the previous year, and was 18 per cent lower than for the year ending June 2010.

While most categories of police recorded crime have been falling in recent years, there have been some exceptions. As reported in the latest ONS release, theft from the person (i.e. pick pocketing and snatch theft) increased by 42 per cent in the West Midlands police force area compared with the year ending June 2010. There have also been increases in shoplifting, which has risen by 8 per cent compared with the year ending June 2010.

It remains my view that it is important to summarise statistical trends accurately and with appropriate balance and caveats. I note that the social media platform used by Mr Dromey on this occasion limits statements to 140 characters and this may present challenges when summarising more complex statistical trends using such a medium. However, we would expect sufficient steps to be taken to summarise trends appropriately as much as possible to convey an accurate statistical picture.

I am copying this to Jack Dromey MP, and to Jil Matheson, the National Statistician.

Yours sincerely



**Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE**

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<sup>1</sup> The Statistics Authority has recently set out in written evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee that possible inconsistencies in crime recording by the police, and the potential distorting effect of performance targets, are matters for concern <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/WrittenEvidence.svc/EvidencePdf/3563>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-june-2013/index.html>