



MEN AND BOYS
COALITION

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Mr Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation
UK Statistics Authority
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V 2QQ

27th August 2019

Dear Mr Humpherson

Ref: Office for National Statistics (Domestic Abuse Statistics) / Home Office

I am writing on behalf of the Men and Boys Coalition, the national umbrella charity for over 80 organisations, academics and charities dealing with male-specific gender issues in the UK.

This letter is regarding the use of the above Office for National Statistics' domestic abuse statistics and their incorrect use on two occasions by The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department in a Parliamentary Debate on 16 July 2019 when the proposed Domestic Abuse Bill was announced on the floor of the House of Commons. This incorrect usage also compounds the stigma and sense that male victims of domestic abuse have that they are not taken seriously and that their experience is an isolated one-off instance.

I would be grateful if you could, if you agree, inform the Home Office and wider Government of the correct and allowable usage on the two points below. This is to ensure that there is an accurate understanding of the number of individuals who are victims of domestic abuse and partner abuse by gender, and who the perpetrators are, by gender.

(1) Inaccurate use of the phrase "Overwhelming"

The Office for National Statistics produce on annual basis a report entitled Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018 (published on 22 November 2018).

The Data Series for the past decade and more has been clear that with respect to domestic abuse, and, partner abuse, on average for every three victims two are female and one is male.

The latest figures are:

17/18	Female	Male
Domestic Abuse	7.9%	4.2%

In the Parliamentary Debate, on 16th July, the Minister stated:

“I am grateful to my right hon. Friend, because part of the purpose of the Bill is to raise awareness and to make the point that men can be victims of domestic abuse as well, but the overwhelming majority of victims are female, and that starts from the very beginning, so we need to teach boys and girls what to expect from healthy relationships. That is precisely why relationship education in schools is such a vital part of our programme.”

Given that one in three victims of male which was mentioned throughout by the Minister (1.3 million are female and 695,000 are male) in Parliament and also was used throughout the Government consultation and related policy papers, we contend that this does not equate to the fair or correct usage of the term “overwhelming”.

In addition, the UK Statistical Authority in its published correspondence with the Crown Prosecution Service (30 March 2009) following a complaint by the charity, Parity, set out that it did not agree with the usage by the CPS of the word ‘overwhelming’ for describing the same broad statistical results.

Given the gender ratios have not changed since 2009 and before, we would be grateful if a similar letter could be issued to the Home Office on the same basis.

(2) Unevidenced statements on the gender of perpetrators of domestic abuse

During the same Parliamentary Debate, the Minister using the same ONS reported statistics, said:

“...we estimate that around 1.3 million are female and around 695,000 are male, and within that 695,000 we believe—it is very difficult to identify this, and there are problems in doing so—that the majority of perpetrators are male.”

It is of great concern that the Minister presents figures from the ONS report and then makes a statement which has no basis whatsoever in ONS statistics and which we believe, from the best available evidence, to be categorically and wholly incorrect.

Given the relatively low numbers of men in same-sex relationships (or former same-sex relationships), the Government's claim could only be true if it were alleging that male same-sex relationships are markedly more violent and abusive than heterosexual relationships, by many orders of magnitude. This has a range of serious societal and public policy implications, especially for the LGBT+ community and therefore it is incumbent on the Government to have clear and compelling evidence before making such a claim.

We are therefore requesting that the UK Statistical Authority informs the Government that it cannot make the claim that the majority of domestic abuse against men is carried out by male perpetrators – given the statistical evidence base they are using which is the ONS.

Sources

We would like to point the UK Statistical Authority to the following sources as the best available evidence:

(i) ONS: Sex of perpetrator of partner abuse, by sex of victim, year ending March 2015 CSEW

Table 1, found that only 7% of male victims of abuse identified a male partner as the perpetrator of their abuse, and of those who provided an answer, 83% (45/54) reported a lone female perpetrator as against 13% (7/54) a lone male perpetrator This showed that the majority of male victims of partner abuse had female perpetrators:

Table 1. Sex of perpetrator of partner abuse, by sex of victim, year ending March 2015 CSEW

England and Wales	Adults aged 16-59		
	Male	Female	All
	Percentage		
Male	7	59	43
Female	45	2	15
Both male and female	2	1	1
Don't know/can't remember	15	6	9
Don't wish to answer	32	32	32
Unweighted base - number of adults	283	834	1117

(ii) Scottish Government “Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland in 2017-18”

Figures from Scotland show that the vast majority of male victims (89%) of domestic abuse are victims of female perpetrators:

	Male Victim	Female Victim
Male Accused	2%	81%
Female Accused	16%	1%

(iii) Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017-2018: main findings

Figures from Scotland, show that 91% of male victims of partner abuse (where gender was identified) had female perpetrators:

	Male Victim	Female Victim
Male Perpetrator	9%	97%
Female Perpetrator	88%	1%

(3) Summary

We are therefore requesting that the UK Statistical Authority:

- a) Issues a letter to the Home Office stating that it is not fair or correct to use the phrase “overwhelming” in reference to the proportion of female to male victims of domestic abuse.
- b) Informs the Government that it cannot make the claim that the majority of domestic abuse against men is carried out by male perpetrators.

Yours sincerely

Mr Dan Bell
Chief Executive,
Men and Boys' Coalition