
Ed Humpherson, Director General for RegulationMark Brooks OBE
Chairman
ManKind Initiative
(by email)

25 August 2020

Dear Mr Brooks

Thank you for your letter on 6 August regarding the [draft statutory guidance framework for the Domestic Abuse Act](#), published in July 2020. You requested that my team review the two paragraphs below, specifically whether the use of the word 'vast' to describe the number of male perpetrators in relation to female perpetrators of partner abuse, and the number of female victims of domestic abuse in relation to the number of male victims of domestic abuse is appropriate.

- Paragraph 23 (Page 8): "Domestic abuse most commonly takes place in intimate partner relationships. The vast majority is perpetrated by men against women, but men are also subject to abuse by female partners, and both men and women experience abuse from same sex partners."
- Paragraph 61 (Page 18): "Whilst the statutory definition of domestic abuse is gender-neutral, we recognise that more women than men are affected by domestic abuse. Statistics from the last ONS bulletin showed that in the year ending March 2019 women were around twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse as men. Research also suggests that when controlling or coercive behaviour is taken into account, the differences between the experiences of male and female victims becomes more apparent, with the vast majority of victims being women."

The first paragraph (Paragraph 23) refers to partner abuse. We contacted the Office for National Statistics (ONS), who confirmed that they currently provide data on the sex of the perpetrator in partner abuse (see annex 1). The statistics illustrate that when women are the victims of partner abuse, the majority of the perpetrators are men; however, we agree that the use of the word 'vast' is not an appropriate description of how large the majority actually is.

We also agree that the use of the word 'vast' in second paragraph (Paragraph 61) is not appropriate, given a lack of suitable data available on this issue. We support the [work](#) ONS has already done in this area, to fill the information gap, and look forward to seeing how this work develops.

As a result of our investigation, we spoke with the Home Office about their use of the word 'vast' in the two paragraphs detailed above. After discussion between Home Office statisticians and policy officials, the Home Office has said it will remove the word 'vast' from both paragraphs in the next version of the statutory guidance framework, it agrees this it is not an appropriate description. We support the work Home Office has done to build relationships between statisticians and policy officials, to ensure this issue does not happen again and look forward to seeing the draft guidance when it is updated.

I am copying this letter to Daniel Shaw, Head of Profession for Statistics at the Home Office and Liz McKeown, Director of Public Policy Analysis at ONS.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

Annex 1:

Table 2: Sex of perpetrator(s) of partner abuse experienced in the last year, by sex of victim, year ending March 2018 CSEW¹

Table taken from this release ([Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales: year ending March 2018](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/partnerabuseindetailenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018/relateddata)): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/partnerabuseindetailenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018/relateddata>

	England and Wales			Adults aged 16-59
	Men	Women	All	
		Victim		
		Percentage		
Men	1.0	56.2	39.3	
Women	61.0	2.2	20.2	
Both men and women	4.4	2.2	2.9	
Don't know/can't remember	11.8	6.2	7.9	
Don't wish to answer	21.8	33.2	29.7	
Unweighted base - number of adults	146	400	546	

Source: Office for National Statistics - Crime Survey for England and Wales

1. Caution should be taken interpreting these figures due to the relatively large proportion of “don't know” or “don't wish to answer” responses for these questions.