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**Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead**

John Marais  
Deputy Director Crime Income and Wealth Division  
Office for National Statistics  
(By email)

5 April 2023

Dear John

**Redevelopment of questions to measure domestic abuse in the Crime Survey for England and Wales**

As you are aware we have recently completed a short review of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) redevelopment of questions to measure domestic abuse in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Statistics on domestic abuse from the CSEW are published in [ONS Crime in England and Wales statistical bulletin](#) as well as in ONS [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#). Our review focused on the new questions developed by ONS to better capture data on domestic abuse including the offence of controlling and coercive behaviour (CCB) in the CSEW.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 included the offence of controlling and coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship. To capture this newly recognised element of domestic abuse, ONS established a [Domestic Abuse Statistics Steering Group](#) in November 2015 to seek expert advice as well as consulting the legislative guidance to develop a new set of questions for the CSEW to include this element of domestic abuse.

Between April 2017 and March 2019 ONS asked these new questions on a split sample basis as part of the CSEW. When compared with the legislative guidance the team were uncertain whether these questions were adequately capturing the experiences of victims of CCB. Therefore, the team in consultation with topic experts decided to redevelop the questions with further testing to ensure that they were fit for purpose in capturing the experiences of victims of CCB.

We endorse the approach ONS has taken for the current round of question development. The team carried out extensive engagement with a variety of different stakeholders at multiple points throughout the redevelopment process. They consulted with topic experts at the University of Bristol, charity bodies like Women's Aid and Men's Advice Line alongside the College of Policing. To capture views from

users and involve them in the development of the new questions the team organised multiple stakeholder engagement events, some with core stakeholders only and other events open to members of the public with an interest in domestic abuse statistics. This enabled ONS to ensure that the main needs of users are being met by this set of statistics, and that they remain relevant.

It is good that the team developed a detailed list of criteria against which to evaluate the new questions. It is also good that the team included a summary of the evaluation criteria in its [latest research update](#) published today giving examples of the research questions on domestic abuse and CCB. This explains clearly to users how the team intends to ensure the new questions are accurately measuring what is intended. The team has been open and transparent about the development of the new questions throughout the process. This has included publishing research updates in [November 2021](#) and [November 2022](#).

We are pleased to see that [today's article](#) provides an open and transparent overview of the whole process for developing the new questions and enables users who weren't involved in the development of the new questions to easily understand the process including what was wrong with the previous questions. As you provide further updates, it will help users for you to ensure that all material relevant to the redevelopment and the outcomes are readily accessible.

Thank you to your team for its positive engagement during this review, including reflecting on our feedback as they prepared today's article. We look forward to continuing to engage with you, and we hope our findings inform the ongoing development of the domestic abuse statistics. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter further or if we can offer further assistance as these statistics continue to develop.

I am copying this letter to Nick Stripe and Peter Jones, joint heads of the Centre for Crime and Justice at ONS

Yours sincerely



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