

Jess Phillips MP
House of Commons
(via email)

24 May 2024

Dear Ms Phillips,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April regarding the use of crime statistics by the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, and the Home Office. You asked us to investigate the following statements about changes in the level of crime since 2010:

- *“Since 2010, violent crime is down 51%. Neighbourhood crime is down 48%.”*
- *“Thanks to our record and plan, violent crime has fallen by 50%.”*

These estimates of violent and neighbourhood crime come from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) headline estimates, reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The CSEW remains the best estimate of long-term trends in crimes against the household population for the crimes included in the survey.

The Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and the Home Office used the most appropriate data source for comparing trends in violent crime and neighbourhood crime since 2010. Nevertheless, it would support public understanding if they had been explicit in stating which offences are excluded from the violent crime estimates.

As you note, the CSEW headline estimate of violent crime incidents does not include all violent crimes. Almost all sexual offences, and all harassment and stalking offences, are not included due to the under-reporting of these crimes in face-to-face interviews and the difficulties of measuring the number of incidents that have occurred. The ONS's preferred measure for this subset of violent crime types is the prevalence rate – the proportion of the population who have experienced such victimisation. This is estimated using data collected through separate standalone survey modules, with higher reporting rates, from those used to produce the CSEW headline estimates referred to above.

[ONS's Crime in England and Wales bulletin](#) includes clear and prominent caveats about which crime types are excluded from the CSEW headline estimates. The ONS has also published an article titled '[Crime trends in England and Wales and how we measure them](#)', which sets out how it measures crime, and which measure is best for which crime types.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Robert Chote
Chair