
Director General for Regulation

Dan Bell
Chief Executive
Men and Boys Coalition
(by email)

1 October 2019

Dear Mr Bell

Thank you for your letter regarding the recent comments made by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Victoria Atkins MP. You requested that my team review these statements which were made during the Commons debate on the Domestic abuse bill on 16 July 2019.

My team have considered the two points highlighted in your letter:

1. Use of the phrase “overwhelming majority”

“...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...”

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State refers to figures from the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales statistics](#) in the Debate, which state that, in the year ending March 2018, there were an estimated 1.3 million female and 695,000 male victims of domestic abuse. These statistics show that around two thirds of the victims of domestic abuse are female and approximately one third are male. The phrase “overwhelming majority” is a subjective statement. However, it may imply that a larger proportion of victims are female than the statistics show.

2. Statements on the sex of perpetrators of domestic abuse

“...we estimate that around 1.3 million [victims] are female and around 695,000 [victims] 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.”

We contacted the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and they confirmed that they do not provide figures on the sex of the perpetrators of domestic abuse against men. ONS can only identify the sex of the perpetrator for partner abuse (a subset of domestic abuse) and have not published this data recently. Nevertheless, the Minister has been cautious in how this point is expressed in a way that appropriately recognises the limitations in the data.

This is clearly an important area of public interest on which better statistics would be valuable. ONS have told us that they will in future routinely include statistics on the sex of the perpetrator for partner abuse as part of the data tables in the Domestic Abuse statistics. We welcome this action.

I am copying this letter to John Flatley, acting Chief Statistician at the Home Office; Liz McKeown, Director of Public Policy Analysis at ONS; and Sir David Norgrove, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation