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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove**

Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP  
Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition  
(via email)

17 May 2021

Dear Sir Keir,

At Prime Minister's Questions on 28 April you said that "*crime is going up*"<sup>1</sup>. You made a similar claim during the Commons debate on the Queen's Speech on 11 May: "*Since 2015, recorded violent crime has doubled*"<sup>2</sup>.

As the Office for National Statistics says in every release of crime statistics, and I said in a letter to your predecessor, the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a better indicator of long-term trends than police recorded crime. It is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices. The CSEW shows a reduction in violent crime of 28% between the year ending March 2015 and the year ending March 2020.

Total crime levels have been falling since the mid-1990s, including last year (though comparisons involving last year are complicated by a change in the method of collection).

The risk with the statements you made is that people may be alarmed by figures that do not reflect reality, which could affect their behaviour and lead to pressure for policy changes not supported by the data. I am sure you agree that this would not be desirable.

I am copying my letter to Kit Malthouse MP, who wrote to me about your statements.

Yours sincerely,



**Sir David Norgrove**

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<sup>1</sup> [Hansard, vol. 693](#), 28 April 2021

<sup>2</sup> [Hansard, vol. 695](#), 11 May 2021