



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA



**Jess Phillips MP**  
**Birmingham Yardley**  
**jess.phillips.mp@parliament.uk**

24<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Dear Sir Robert,

I am writing to raise concerns about a lack of intelligent transparency in the use of crime statistics by the Home Secretary and Home Office on social media and by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

All have publicly drawn attention to long term falls in violent crime. The Home Secretary and Home Office have also pointed to falls in neighbourhood crime.

These statistics are accurate as defined. But those definitions omit crimes that affect women's safety and those have not fallen (like sexual assault and stalking). Someone with little specialist knowledge might reasonably assume that, for example, sexual assault would be counted as a violent crime.

The communications from the Home Secretary and Home Office do not make these limitations clear.

The Home Office and Home Secretary each tweeted responding to the latest publication of crime statistics (25 Jan) citing the following statistic:

*"Since 2010, violent crime is down 51%, Neighbourhood crime is down 48%."*

During PMQs on 20 March, the Prime Minister said

*"Thanks to our record and plan, violent crime has fallen by 50%."*

"Violent crime" does not include indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching and rape, which collectively are put in the separate category of "sexual offences".<sup>1</sup> It also leaves out stalking and harassment.

"Neighbourhood crime" is defined as vehicle related theft, domestic burglary, theft from the person (including pickpocketing) and robbery of personal property. Beating Crime Plan<sup>2</sup>

The prevalence of sexual assault, including rape, is little changed from 2010, having fallen until about 2014 and risen since then. Stalking has risen since 2010. The Office for National Statistics are currently developing questionnaires on harassment.

<sup>1</sup> There is one violent crime with a sexual element: "wounding with sexual intent" that gets badged as a "violent" crime, but this accounts for a very small proportion of sexual or violent crime.

<sup>2</sup> Home Office's Beating Crime Plan, October 2021. It does not cover all forms of theft, leaving out bike theft and both "other theft of personal property" and "other household theft".

Communications from government should highlight when they rely on a technical definition whose meaning differs substantially from that which a non-specialist might reasonably assume. This is especially important when the statistical trends are different for each of the available definitions.

I therefore ask that you investigate the Prime Minister's and the Home Secretary's and Home Office's statements and offer your guidance on whether they meet the standards of intelligent transparency and whether they are misleading.

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jess Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jess Phillips MP**

**Birmingham Yardley**