

Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley DBE MP
Chair of the Procedure Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

9th May 2024

Dear Dame Karen,

QUALITY OF RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Thank you for your letter of 18 April bringing Sir Christopher Chope's complaint to my attention. The transparency and helpfulness of the MoJ's responses to Written Parliamentary Questions is something that I take incredibly seriously and my office have investigated this matter thoroughly.

It is MoJ's policy that for Written Parliamentary Questions which ask for data which is already in the public domain, members should be provided with a link to where the information has already been published. This is in line with instructions for answering Written Parliamentary Questions in the Guide to Parliamentary Work issued by the Cabinet Office and wider practice across Government.

The guidance reflects the need to balance transparency to Parliamentarians against the volume of PQs received and the ability of the Department to service requests in a timely manner. The MoJ publishes a considerable wealth of data on the justice system including detailed demographics of the defendants in the million or so criminal court prosecutions each year. We are only able to do so by enabling users to self-serve.

All of MoJ's publications comply with the Statistics Code of Practice guidance around accessibility and equality of access to statistics and transparency. They are also accredited to show they meet user needs. I have personally tested the links and files that the Department provided on my own computer and was able to access the information requested.

MoJ will continue to keep its processes for Written Parliamentary Questions under review to ensure that we continue to provide accurate and helpful information to Parliamentarians in a timely and transparent fashion.

Yours sincerely,


GARETH BACON MP