Dear Des,

ASSAULTS ON EMERGENCY WORKERS – METHODOLOGY OF ESTIMATED PROSECUTIONS

I write to clarify a point raised at the Second Reading debate on 29 June on the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill. During the debate you asked me about the government’s estimate that there will be approximately 15,000 prosecutions under this Bill if it is commenced. You also asked if I would undertake to publish the methodology by which this estimate has been reached, and how much of this would be displacement of what would otherwise have been prosecuted under other current offences.

With regards to the methodology of how this estimate of approximately 15,000 was reached, analysts from the Ministry of Justice used data on proceedings for offences that already existed against emergency workers e.g. the 2016 proceedings for “Assault on a constable” or “Assaulting a prison custody officer.” This was used alongside data from the 2014 Crown Court Sentencing Survey which showed that 7% of defendants sentenced to prison for assault offences in the Crown Court had the aggravating factor of “offence against public sector/service workers” applied to their sentence. This figure was applied to the total number of proceedings for common assault in 2016 (9,300) to derive a figure of 4,900, which provided an estimate of assaults committed against other emergency workers (e.g. NHS workers) who are not currently covered under a specific offence. The combining of these two figures provided an approximate volume of assaults per year against emergency workers as a whole. This total volume was estimated to be approximately 15,000, the number of estimated prosecutions for the new offence of assault against an emergency worker.

A copy will be placed in the House Library, and sent to all Peers who spoke during the Second Reading of the Bill.

Yours, Charlotte

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON

Lord Browne of Ladyton
House of Lords