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STATISTICS PUBLISHED BY THE FOOTBALL LICENSING AUTHORITY

I refer to our conversation last week about the letter from Sir Michael Scholar to Mr Malcolm Clarke of the Football Supporters Federation about the statistics published by the Football Licensing Authority.

As I mentioned to you, I am very disappointed that the UK Statistics Authority replied to Mr Clarke about the work of the FLA without informing us in advance and without giving us the opportunity to correct the allegations in Mr Clarke's letter and accompanying paper.

I think it also disappointing that the tone and phrasing of the UKSA reply can be read as giving credence to the FSF's allegations.

The FSF is a small vocal pressure group that has for many years been campaigning against the Government's policy on seating at football stadia. It contends that that this policy is solely about spectator safety and that it is underpinned by the statistics published by the FLA. Neither argument is correct.

The FSF appears to believe that, if it can damage the credibility of the FLA figures, the underlying case for the Government's policy and thence the policy itself will collapse. Its paper relies on a set of figures that contained a mathematical error, which we had identified and drawn to the attention of the researcher before the document appeared.

I am copying this letter to David Deaton in the Cabinet Office, to Vivienne Avery in DCMS and to the policy division in DCMS.

JOHN DE QUIDT
Chief Executive