

Dear Sir/Madam,

We note that the signatories from the Herald article on 20th September claim "We represent a diverse range of researchers, academics, practitioners and data users working in universities, higher education agencies and other organisations across Scotland and the UK. Together we possess a breadth of expertise in the collection and use of data on identity characteristics, equality monitoring, statistical analysis and experience of working with complex datasets, including census data."

[www.heraldscotland.com/news/17917647.academics-urge-msps-not-change-census-sex-question/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17917647.academics-urge-msps-not-change-census-sex-question/)

We think the committee needs to be aware that, having examined the signatories' background as far as we were able to in a short time, it appears that they are drawn overwhelmingly from backgrounds which make no use of population level data and to include no statisticians working in this area. Three-quarters are drawn from academic backgrounds (mainly in the sciences, and arts and humanities) where population data will not be relevant to them at all and, of the rest, only a small minority appear likely to work with such data regularly. None of these appear to have a specific research interest in issues which would be affected by decisions which reduced the reliability of sex-based data in the census.

Before the Committee treats this an input from academics with relevant expertise, we would strongly urge that it seeks clarification from the senders themselves of the signatories' areas of academic expertise.

Kind regards,

Trina Budge  
on behalf of forwomen.scot