



CHRIS GRAYLING MP

Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell
Shadow Home Secretary
House of Commons
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Sir Michael Scholar
UK Statistics Authority
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29 March 2010

Dear Sir Michael,

I am writing to you regarding the Prime Minister's use of immigration statistics in his comments on 26 March. I know that you are unwilling to become involved in political controversy, but I think it is clear that the Prime Minister's use of immigration statistics will, if unchecked, damage public trust in official statistics. I therefore ask you to request that he clarifies his remarks and undertakes not to mislead the public during the approaching General Election campaign.

The remarks were made in a podcast aimed at the general public, still available on the Prime Minister's website at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page22960>. In the podcast, Gordon Brown claimed that net inward migration has been going down for each of the last three years. He said that 'Some people talk as if net inward migration is rising. In fact, it is falling – down from 237,000 in 2007, to 163,000 in 2008, to provisional figures of 147,000 last year.'

To make this claim he used two different sets of statistics that should not be directly compared without caveats.

For 2007 and 2008 he used Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates. As you will no doubt be aware, these include data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), the Irish border (separate until recently), incoming asylum seekers and migrants who arrive on short-term visas but stay longer, or vice versa. For 2009 he only used the Provisional IPS estimates. These do not include asylum seekers or people who overstay their initial visa. Unsurprisingly, this gave a smaller figure.



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You will also be aware that when the Long-Term International Migration estimates for 2009 are published they may well be higher than the LTIM figures for 2008. The gap between the IPS and LTIM figure in most years is greater than 16,000, the number required for the Prime Minister's insinuation to be true.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

pp. Chris Grayling