

27 March 2010

Dear Sir Michael,

Immigration statistics

I am writing to make a formal complaint about the mis-use of immigration statistics in the Prime Minister's pod cast yesterday.

According to the text released by 10 Downing St he said:

"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".

The first two of these statistics are from the Long Term International Migration (LTIM) series and are correct. The third is from the International Passenger Survey and refers to the cumulative total up to June 2009. It is thus not comparable to the first two. Furthermore, the second series is normally adjusted by about 38,000 a year in order to produce the annual LTIM total.

In short, the third figure is from a different series and over a different timescale. The effect is to give an apparent steady decline in net immigration although the true number for 2009 cannot yet be known. To describe it as a "provisional" figure does not help for the reasons outlined above.

Given the sensitivity of immigration numbers, may I ask you to take the matter up with the Prime Minister's office and invite them to issue a clarification?

Yours sincerely,

A. F. Green,
Chairman, MigrationwatchUK