



# Diana Johnson

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Sir Michael Scholar KCB  
Chair of UK Statistics Authority  
UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

13<sup>th</sup> December 2011,

Dear *Sir Michael*

**RE: Statistics Release by Minister of State for Immigration, Damian Green  
MP on the 4<sup>th</sup> November**

I am writing to you about the above press release. I know you have previously written to Damian Green about inclusion of certain statistics within this press release, and I am writing today because I am concerned that Ministers continue to refer to these statistics.

I know that you share my belief that Government statistics should be available to all and released on a pre-determined timetable, set 12 months in advance. As your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> November illustrates, the statistics contained in Damian Green's press release did not meet this criteria because their release was not pre-determined and nor were the statistics equally available to all. Indeed the statistics published were highly-selective and did not allow proper scrutiny. I share your concern that the nature of the statistics released and the timing of their release may have been to counter negative headlines likely to be generated by the release of official statistics.

I had hoped that Damian Green would heed the guidance you offered in your letter. Unfortunately, Ministers have continued to refer to the statistics contained in the press release - which have still not been made publically available for proper scrutiny. Yesterday in the House of Commons I asked the Home Secretary about seizures of drugs by the UK Borders Agency, in response she dismissed my question about the official figures by reference to the statistics released on the

4<sup>th</sup> November (Official Record: 12 Dec 2011 : Column 502). I also raised this as a Point of Order (12 Dec 2011 : Column 580).

As a Member of Parliament my role is scrutinise Government performance. MPs are prevented from doing this when Ministers refute genuine queries on official statistics by reference to unofficial, unverified figures which have not been made publically available.

I would therefore be grateful if you would investigate continued use of these statistics by Ministers.

I am copying this letter to the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office and to the Cabinet Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diana Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Diana Johnson  
Member of Parliament for Hull North