



RACHEL REEVES AND CHUKA UMUNNA MP  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE  
Chair – UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

11th August 2014

Dear Sir Andrew,

We are writing to ask if the Office of National Statistics (ONS) would look at whether improved statistics are needed to better reflect the contribution that self-employed people make to the economy.

As you will be aware, self-employed people now make up almost one in six of those in work, and according to the most recent Labour Force Survey statistics published last month, account for 38 per cent of the increase in employment since 2010.

However the monthly Labour Force Survey published by the Office of National Statistics does not include the earnings of self-employed people. This means that it risks giving an incomplete picture of labour market conditions, and generates figures for average earnings growth that risk distorting perceptions of what is happening in our economy.

This is a particular concern when analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, among others, suggests that gross self-employment income has fallen much more sharply than overall earnings in recent years (*Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2014*, 15 July).

Given the increasing importance of self-employment in our economy we believe it is important that we have the best statistics possible to inform public debate and ensure policy reflects the vital contribution self-employed people make to our country.

Therefore, we would be grateful if you would ask the ONS to look at

- whether it would be feasible to publish earnings from self-employment on a monthly basis alongside the Labour Force Survey; and
- what further measures might be needed to fully reflect the contribution of self-employed people to the economy, as well as the challenges they face in the cost-of-living crisis

We look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Reeves. 

Rachel Reeves MP  
Shadow Secretary of State for Work and  
Pensions

Chuka Umunna MP  
Shadow Secretary of State for Business,  
Innovation and Skills