
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

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Dear David

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Thank you for your email dated 23 October regarding employment statistics, in particular remarks made by the Prime Minister during Prime Minister's Questions on 16 October and 23 October. I apologise for the delay in responding but I wanted to check the matter carefully before doing so.

My office has established with officials at the Cabinet Office that when the Prime Minister said "...there are 1 million more people in work than there were when this Government came to office"¹ and "...a million more people in work in our country than when we came to office"², he was referring to the seasonally-adjusted difference in the total number of people employed in Great Britain in June-August 2013 (29.869 million) compared to February-April 2010 (28.842 million), a difference of almost 1.028 million.³

As I have set out in previous correspondence with others, the use of particular reference periods is largely a matter for political debate, and the Authority will only seek to intervene in cases where the choice of a particular reference period is particularly misleading, although I note that the last general election took place on 6 May 2010.

We encourage all parties to public debate to exercise caution to ensure that, in cases where confusion might potentially arise, they are explicitly clear in their statements about which reference periods they are using, and why.

Yours sincerely



Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

¹ HC Deb 16.10.2013, c732

² HC Deb 23.10.2013, c301

³ Source: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/october-2013/statistical-bulletin.html>, table A01 Labour market statistics summary data tables, Table 2(1), published 16 October 2013