
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Dr Eoin Barry Clarke
Founder of *Labour Left*
Editor of *The Green Benches*

17 March 2014

Dear Dr Clarke

LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS

Thank you for your email dated 13 December 2013 regarding a statement made by the Minister for Employment on the floor of the House of Commons on 14 October 2013.¹ I apologise for the delay in responding but I have wanted to check the matter carefully before doing so while also allowing time for my office to speak directly with the office of the Minister for Employment at the Department for Work and Pensions.

The statement that ‘unemployment is down by 400,000’ is not supported by the published National Statistics on the labour market produced by the Office for National Statistics. My office has spoken with the Minister’s office and has been told that the Minister intended to refer to the combined fall in the number of unemployed and economically inactive people², rather than the number of people who were unemployed. The relevant statistics are reproduced in the table below. Data for the full quarter immediately preceding the last General Election on 6 May 2010 (i.e. February to April 2010) and the quarter May to July 2010 are shown together with data for the latest quarterly period available at the time the Minister made her statement.³

Labour market statistics 2010 and 2013

Seasonally adjusted

thousands

	Unemployed <i>All aged 16+</i>	Economically inactive <i>All aged 16-64</i>
Feb-Apr 2010	2,494	9,407
May-Jul 2010	2,475	9,270
May-Jul 2013	2,487	8,961
<i>Change</i>		
Feb-Apr 2010 to May-Jul 2013	-7	-446
May-Jul 2010 to May-Jul 2013	+12	-309

Source: ONS Labour Market Statistics (September 2013)

¹<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131014/debtext/131014-0001.htm#1310143001092>

² Economically inactive people are not in employment but do not meet the internationally accepted definition of unemployment because they have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or they are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/september-2013/statistical-bulletin.html>

I am copying this to the Minister for Employment, Esther McVey, to Robert Devereux, the Permanent Secretary at DWP and to Jil Matheson, the National Statistician

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE