
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Peter Schofield
Permanent Secretary
Department for Work and Pensions
(by email)

29 July 2022

Dear Peter

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Way to Work target and use of figures by government.

In January 2022, DWP set a target to move 500,000 people into employment from Universal Credit Intensive Work Search or Job Seekers Allowance.

On the 30 June, DWP posted [a tweet](#) and [press release](#) claiming that over half a million people have been helped into work by the Way to Work campaign in 5 months, therefore reaching the above target. This figure was subsequently quoted in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister on 6 July.

DWP has since confirmed that the ‘half a million’ figure was taken from an answered [Parliamentary Question \(PQ\) on 30th June](#), using management information, which estimated that as of 29 June, at least 505,400 unemployed Universal Credit claimants and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and end of 26 June 2022. This is the latest in a series of answered PQs on this topic over the last two months.

In line with [our expectations](#) and to support equality of access, when management information is used publicly to inform Parliament, the media and the public, it should be published in an accessible form, with appropriate explanations of context and sources. We note that there is a clear statement that the figures are not official statistics and are not quality assured to that standard. However, there is no clear explanation of how the Way to Work target was defined, how it would be measured, and the methods used to support claims, such as those in the tweet and press release, that the target has been reached.

It is difficult to attribute and quantify publicly the impact of a campaign like the Way to Work campaign in the absence of a clearly defined and published target, and details about how the target will be measured and reported, at the start. Measuring government programmes in a robust and transparent way is important and the statistics/data underpinning any measurement should uphold principles of being

trustworthy, of high quality and offer public value. The way the Department has communicated information in this case does not uphold these principles.

Given the level of interest and repeated claims and use of the half a million figure, the reliance on information given in response to Parliamentary Questions is not sufficient. DWP should set out plans for more formal, structured reporting of statistics related to this programme in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#), for example, publishing a DWP ad hoc statistical release.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation