

Christine A Jardine MP
Edinburgh West



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

To: Sir David Norgrove, Chair, UK Statistics Authority

Dear Sir David,

I am writing to raise concerns over the misleading use of official employment statistics by the Prime Minister.

At Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons today, the Prime Minister told the House that there are:

"500,000 more people in paid employment now than there were before the pandemic began."

However, the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that there were 32.485 million people in employment across the UK in the latest three month period (December 2021 to February 2022), compared to 33.073 million in December 2019 to February 2020. That means there are 588,000 fewer people in employment now than at the start of the pandemic, not 500,000 more.

As you know, the Prime Minister made the same claim in February, after which you sent him a letter stating clearly that "it is wrong to claim that there are now more people in work than before the pandemic began". You wrote:

"If, as seems to be the case, your statement referred only to the increase in the number of people on payrolls, it would be a selective use of data that is likely to give a misleading impression of trends in the labour market unless that distinction is carefully explained."

I therefore ask for your guidance on whether the Prime Minister's latest claim is similarly misleading, and what can be done to prevent him from repeating it again in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christine Jardine'.

Christine Jardine MP
Liberal Democrat Treasury Spokesperson