

Dear Sir Robert Chote,

I write to report to you the use of statistics by the Minister for Immigration, Robert Jenrick, both in the House of Commons and on his recent appearance on the ITV show, Peston. I would like to seek your guidance on their validity on this occasion and in future.

In response to an Urgent Question [on the 7th of November](#) in the House of Commons, the Minister for Immigration claimed there was “unprecedented strain on our asylum system”.

Yet, figures from the [House of Commons Library](#) clearly demonstrate that this is not the case. The annual number of asylum applications to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132. After that the number fell sharply to reach a twenty-year low point of 17,916 in 2010. It rose steadily again throughout the 2010s and then sharply in 2021, to 48,540, which was the highest annual number since 2003.

Furthermore, during the Minister’s appearance on Robert Peston’s show on the 2nd of November, he alluded to the significance of the number of Albanian immigrants coming to the UK.

However, [Migration Watch’s](#) figures show that the most common country of origin for migrants to the UK is India, taking over from Poland.

According to reporting from [the Daily Mail](#), Robert Jenrick has also claimed that most arrivals are economic migrants. However, the [Government’s own figures](#) show that 76% of initial asylum claims are granted, meaning they cannot be classed as economic migrants.

The public has a right to always expect the Government’s interpretation of data to be robust. This is even more important when that data is being used to justify new pieces of legislation as they pass through Parliament.

Public confidence in these statistics must not be put at risk. There must be no bias, spin or manipulation. However, I am concerned that these statistics may have been seriously twisted.

I would be grateful if you could advise on whether the official statistics should have been portrayed in this way and whether the Minister for Immigration should continue to report statistics in this manner.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Paddick