



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Robert Chote
UK Statistics Authority
1 Drummond Gate
London SW1V 2QQ
(by email: cc)

22 March 2023

Dear Sir Robert,

During Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons today, Rishi Sunak asserted that "since the Conservatives came into power, crime is down 50 per cent."

As you will be aware, your predecessor was forced to issue a reprimand in February last year, after a similar claim was made in Parliament by the former Prime Minister, who – like Mr Sunak today – wrongly excluded fraud and computer misuse from an assertion about what had happened over recent years to the total levels of crime.

Given that the same error has now been made at the despatch box by two Prime Ministers in the space of just over a year, I wonder if you would consider writing to Mr Sunak not just urging him to avoid repetition of his misleading statement, but also to order an internal inquiry into how this kind of mistake was allowed to recur so soon after the UK Statistics Authority's last reprimand to Downing Street on the subject.

As you are well aware, fraud is now the UK's most commonly-experienced crime, and it does a disservice both to the millions of victims of that pernicious crime and to the public as a whole when Prime Ministers choose to ignore it in their statements to Parliament. It would be greatly appreciated if you could advise the current incumbent to take more care in the future.

I am grateful in advance to you for looking into this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Thornberry".

The Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP
Shadow Attorney General