



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Robert Chote
Chair – UK Statistics Authority
Fry Building
1st Floor, 2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

3rd January 2024

Dear Sir Robert,

I am writing to raise concerns about the misrepresentation of asylum backlog figures by the Prime Minister on social media.

On 2nd January, Rishi Sunak wrote on X that “I said that this government would clear the backlog of asylum decisions by the end of 2023. That’s exactly what we’ve done.”

As you will know, the Government originally defined their pledge to “clear the backlog” in relation to so-called “legacy” asylum applications made before 28 June 2022.

However, the latest Home Office release has shown that 4,537 “legacy” asylum cases are still subject to further investigation by the Home Office before a final decision can be made. Although these cases have been reviewed, they have not yet been resolved.

Similarly, new Home Office figures have shown that the total backlog of asylum cases - including applications lodged after June 2022 - now sits at 99,000.

The Prime Minister’s claim has been branded as “misleading” by the Refugee Council.

As such, it would appear that there is no justifiable basis for the Prime Minister to claim that the Government has “clear[ed] the backlog of asylum decisions”, given that both “legacy” cases and overall asylum cases remain unresolved.

I therefore ask that you investigate the Prime Minister’s statements and offer your guidance on whether they are misleading.

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Carmichael MP
Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Home Affairs