
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Rob Wilson MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

28 July 2014

Dear Mr Wilson

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Thank you for your letter dated 8 July about an article written by Chuka Umunna MP on 7 July 2014 on the website of the *New Statesman* in which it was said that “the number of young people claiming Jobseekers’ Allowance nationally has increased by 60 per cent since May 2010, in the North East that figure is 263 per cent”.¹ As you correctly observe, the published National Statistics on claimants of Jobseekers’ Allowance (JSA), produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) at the time the article was published, show that this statement is factually incorrect.² After having made representations to Mr Umunna’s staff, my office has been told that arrangements have now been made to correct the article. This was a necessary step which the Statistics Authority welcomes.

The published official statistics show that the number of young people claiming JSA in the UK fell in the period between May 2010 and May 2014 by 163,700 (38 per cent), and by 6,310 (27 per cent) in the North East. The figures that were quoted in the article appeared to be those for all people aged 18 to 24 who claimed JSA for *12 months or more*, in the UK as a whole and in the North East region, rather than for all people in that age group who had claimed JSA. This difference is an important distinction. The relevant published official statistics are reproduced in the table below:

Jobseekers' Allowance: claimant count by age and duration, seasonally adjusted

	All aged 18-24		All aged 18-24	
	All durations		Claiming over 12 months	
	UK	North East	UK	North East
May 2010	429,300	23,375	28,300	1,045
May 2014	265,600	17,065	45,400	3,790
Difference	-163,700	-6,310	17,100	2,745
% change	-38%	-27%	60%	263%

Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Statistics, June 2014; and Nomis database (regional statistics)

¹ <http://www.newstatesman.com/staggers/2014/07/why-government-s-claims-regional-growth-don-t-stac>

² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/june-2014/table-cla02.xls>, and https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/gor/2013265921/subreports/gor_ccadr_time_series/report.aspx

The Authority believes that all parties to public debate have a clear direct and personal responsibility to ensure statements made on the basis of published official statistics are as accurate, reliable, and well explained as possible.

I am copying this to Chuka Umunna MP and to John Pullinger, the National Statistician.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'D'.

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

