
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove

Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

19 January 2018

Dear Sir Keir,

Thank you for your letter of 16 January, in which you sought the Authority's views on reported statements by the Foreign Secretary about the UK's financial contributions to the EU. Specifically, you asked about a quote from the Foreign Secretary that "there was an error on the side of the bus. We grossly underestimated the sum over which we could take back control".

The original claim said: "We send the EU £350 million a week; let's fund our NHS instead. Let's take back control." £350 million per week was the UK's gross contribution to the EU for 2014, as listed in the UK's 2015 Pink Book.¹

As my predecessor pointed out at the time, the UK never sends the full gross contribution to Europe. A rebate is applied before any money is transferred out of the UK.²

This is true for 2014, and for subsequent years (including the 2017-18 to 2020-21 periods, which you ask about in your letter).

In contrast to the original claim, the Foreign Secretary acknowledged in his interview that the gross contribution will not be available to allocate to public spending when we leave the EU. He is quoted in the Guardian as saying that "about half" of the gross contribution might be available to allocate to public services.³

Yours sincerely,



Sir David Norgrove

¹ Office for National Statistics [Pink Book 2015](#) Table 9.9

² For further detail on official statistics relating to the UK's financial contributions to the EU see [Sir Andrew Dilnot's letter of April 2016 to the Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP regarding UK contributions to the EU](#).

³ See: www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/15/leave-campaigns-350m-claim-was-too-low-says-boris-johnson