

Full Fact  
[fullfact.org](https://fullfact.org)  
[Twitter](#) • [Facebook](#) • [LinkedIn](#)

The Prime Minister  
Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
10 Downing Street  
SW1A 2AA  
London

Thursday 24 February 2022

Dear Boris Johnson,

I write to request you correct a claim you made during Prime Minister's Questions yesterday about the number of people in employment<sup>1</sup>.

You claimed there are 430,000 more people "in employment" now than before the pandemic began. This is not true, as explained in our fact check.<sup>2</sup>

You have made this claim on at least seven occasions in Parliament and we previously wrote to you about this in December 2021 and January 2022 to ask you to correct the official record. Following a letter from Full Fact, the Director General of the Office for Statistics Regulation also wrote to Downing Street about your repeated use of this claim<sup>3</sup>. In his letter Ed Humpherson confirmed it is "incorrect to state that there were more people in work at the end of this period than the start."

As we have explained before, figures from the Office for National Statistics<sup>4</sup> show the number of people in employment has actually fallen by 588,000. It was 33.1 million in December 2019 to February 2020 and by October 2021 to December 2021 it was 32.5 million (the latest data).

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/d57b5481-5675-44dd-b82b-a52c14316282?in=12:23:20>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fullfact.org/economy/february-2022-boris-johnson-employment/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/ed-humpherson-to-laura-gilbert-statements-on-the-number-of-people-in-work/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/mgrz/lms>

The number of payrolled employees in January 2022 was up by 436,000<sup>5</sup> compared to the level in February 2020, but this does not include all people “in employment”. Notably it excludes self-employed people.

The Ministerial Code states that ministers should give accurate and truthful information to Parliament, correcting any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity. We ask that you arrange corrections in Hansard for all of the occasions you have made this claim in Parliament. It is very important that ministers set an example by correcting mistakes as this helps build trust in public life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Will Moy", written over a horizontal line.

Will Moy. Chief Executive, Full Fact

---

<sup>5</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationuk/latest>