

Here to lead, not mislead

Boris Johnson makes the claim 24 November 2021

During **Prime Minister's Questions** (PMQs) Boris Johnson claims “There are now more people in work in this country [...] than there were before the pandemic began”.¹

Full Fact publishes fact check 25 November 2021

We publish a **fact check** about why this is wrong. The check explains² that whilst there are more payrolled employees, the total number of people in paid work is below the level seen just prior to the pandemic.

Boris Johnson repeats the claim 1 December 2021

Boris Johnson repeats “we have more people in work now, as a result of the balanced and proportionate approach that we are taking, than we had before the pandemic began” in **Parliament**.³

Full Fact writes to PM 2 December 2021

We write to Boris Johnson's office asking him to correct the official record in relation to the claim made on 24 November.

Boris Johnson repeats claim 15 December 2021

Boris Johnson repeats in **Parliament** that “we now have 500,000 more people in work than there were when the pandemic began”.⁴

¹ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

² [Numbers 'in work' not yet back to pre-pandemic levels - Full Fact](#)

³ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

⁴ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

Full Fact writes to Cabinet Secretary 22 December 2021

We write a letter to **Cabinet Secretary, Simon Case** asking him to take the necessary steps to ensure the Ministerial Code is fulfilled by arranging corrections to the Parliamentary record.

Boris Johnson repeats claim 31 December 2021

Boris Johnson repeats the claim in his end of year message: “We have more people in work now than there were before the pandemic began”.⁵

Boris Johnson repeats the claim 5 January 2022

Boris Johnson repeats the claim in **Parliament** during PMQs: “We have 420,000 more people in jobs now than there were before the pandemic began”.⁶

Full Fact writes to PM again 7 January 2022

We write to Boris Johnson again, following his repeat of the claim on 5 January, pointing out **we are yet to receive a response** to the letter sent on 2 December.

MP repeats the claim 11 January 2022

Paul Scully MP repeats the claim in Parliament: “we now have 400,000 more people in work than before the pandemic”.⁷

Boris Johnson repeats the claim 12 January 2022

Boris Johnson repeats the claim in Parliament: “it is an astonishing fact that we have 420,000 more people in work now than before the pandemic began”.⁸

Boris Johnson gets it right 18 January 2022

Boris Johnson appears to **slightly change the way he words the claim** in a tweet⁹ saying “record numbers of people are on payrolls.”

⁵ [Prime Minister celebrates success of vaccine programme in New Year's message - GOV.UK](#)

⁶ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

⁷ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

⁸ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

⁹ twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1483402662720819201

Boris Johnson repeats the claim 18 January 2022

He repeats the claim on Sky News¹⁰ 'We now have 420,000 more people in employment than there were before the pandemic began'.

Boris Johnson repeats the claim¹¹ and **also gets it right**¹² 19 January

During PMQs the PM gets his figures right, however he goes on to repeat the false claim shortly after.

Full Fact publishes a fact check 19 January 2022

We publish a **fact check** about Boris Johnson repeating the claim on Sky News¹³ on 18 January.

Full Fact writes to stats watchdog, the OSR 21 January 2022

We write a letter to **Ed Humpherson** (Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation) about this claim.¹⁴

MP repeats the claim 24 January 2022

Jerome Mayhew MP repeats the claim in Parliament¹⁵: "There is now more employment in this country than in pre-pandemic times—over 400,000 more jobs".

Office for Statistics Regulation 1 February 2022

Ed Humpherson (Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation) writes to **Laura Gilbert (Director of Data Science, 10 Downing Street)** about the Prime Minister's statements about the number of people in work,¹⁶ following a letter from Full Fact.

¹⁰ [YouTube: Prime Minister: 'Nobody told me' Downing Street party was 'against the rules'](#) (14:00)

¹¹ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

¹² [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

¹³ [PM misleads on employment figures, again - Full Fact](#)

¹⁴ [Letter to Ed Humpherson](#)

¹⁵ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

¹⁶ [Ed Humpherson to Laura Gilbert: Statements on the number of people in work – Office for Statistics Regulation](#)

Boris Johnson repeats the claim 2 February 2022

PM repeats the claim **in Parliament** "There are more people in work now than before the pandemic began, and that is the record of this Government."¹⁷

Various Ministers and MPs use the claim 11 February 2022

By this date we've seen Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Nadine Dorries¹⁸, now leader of The House of Commons Mark Spencer MP¹⁹, Nigel Mills MP²⁰, Rob Butler MP²¹, Stephen McPartland MP²² and MP and Attorney General Suella Braverman²³ all repeat the claim on social media or during interviews.²⁴

Boris Johnson repeats the claim 23 February 2022

PM repeats the claim during PMQs²⁵ telling the house "There are 430,000 more in employment now than there were before the pandemic."²⁶

Full Fact publishes a fact check 23 February 2022

We publish a **fact check** about PM repeating claim during PMQs²⁷ on 23 February.

UK Statistics Authority 24 February 2022

Sir David Norgrove (Chair of UKSA) sends a letter to Boris Johnson saying "it would be a selective use of data" if his use of employment figures referred only to the increase in the number of people on payrolls.²⁸

¹⁷ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#).

¹⁸ twitter.com/NadineDorries/status/1481545968415821834

¹⁹ twitter.com/Mark_Spencer/status/1481376205739859970

²⁰ twitter.com/nigelmills/status/1478397676609806345

²¹ twitter.com/RobBAylesbury/status/1483382673905270788

²² facebook.com/100057717536093/posts/396310775636170 and

twitter.com/SMcPartland/status/1492067506655305735

²³ twitter.com/SuellaBraverman/status/1481357272047665153

²⁴ [Nadine Dorries on Sky News](#)

²⁵ parliamentlive.tv/event/index/d57b5481-5675-44dd-b82b-a52c14316282?in=12:23:20

²⁶ [Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

²⁷ [Boris Johnson repeats misleading claim on number of people in employment - Full Fact](#)

²⁸ [Sir David Norgrove to the Prime Minister – Employment Statistics](#)

Full Fact writes to PM again 24 February 2022

We write another letter to Boris Johnson asking him to correct the official record,²⁹ making this **the third time we have written an official letter to Boris Johnson about the employment claim.**

PM's deputy spokesman in the press 25 February 2022

An article is published in the **Mirror**³⁰ in which the **PM's deput official spokesman** said: 'I haven't seen that specific letter' in relation to the UK Statistics Authority letter. Adding 'The PM has spoken about employment levels in the UK on a number of occasions and is extremely proud of the work this government has done to get people back into work.' Following this, we write to the PM's deputy official spokesman pointing to our past correspondence and linking to letters from the OSR and UKSA.

PM says he "thinks" he's taken steps to correct 30 March 2022

Boris Johnson tells the Liaison Committee he "thinks" he's taken steps to correct the record on false claims about employment.

When questioned on employment by Stephen Timms MP, the PM was asked whether he recognised that his claims were incorrect. The Prime Minister replied saying "I think I have repeatedly", following this with "I think I took steps to correct the record earlier".³¹

Full Fact writes to PM once again 31 March 2022

We write to the Prime Minister yet again, welcoming his commitment to correcting the record whilst acknowledging he is actually yet to do so.

²⁹ [Boris Johnson letter repeat employment claim 02.2022](#)

³⁰ [Watchdog blasts Boris Johnson for making claim he's already been told is false - Mirror Online](#)

³¹ [committees.parliament.uk/committee/103/liaison-committee-commons/news/161815/boris-johnson-questioned-on-the-situation-in-ukraine-and-the-cost-of-living](#)

Boris Johnson repeats the claim³² yet also gets it right³³ 20 April

2022

Despite acknowledging his mistake to the Liaison Committee, during PMQs the PM makes the incorrect claim again, but goes on to correctly say there are more payrolled employees now than there were before the pandemic began.

We are yet to receive a conclusive response from No. 10.

The Prime Minister has still not corrected the record.

³²[Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

³³[Engagements - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)