

PRESS RELEASE

Statistics Commission

11-19 Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT

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13 September 2006

NATIONAL STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE: THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS

Statistics Commission chairman, Professor David Rhind commented today on the exchange of letters between the National Statistician, Karen Dunnell and Cabinet Secretary, Sir Gus O'Donnell, in relation to some remarks about labour market statistics made yesterday by the Prime Minister.

Professor Rhind said

"I welcome the letter from the National Statistician. I am also pleased that the Cabinet Secretary has brought this matter to a swift conclusion by taking steps to tighten arrangements in the Prime Minister's office.

"It is a fundamental principle in maintaining trust in official statistics that all political interests should have an equal opportunity to comment when figures are released. That is why the National Statistics Code of Practice does not permit comments, even very general ones, to be made about statistics before they are published."

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Tel: 020 7273 8008 Fax: 020 7273 8019
Email: statscom@statscom.org.uk Web: www.statscom.org.uk

*The Statistics Commission is independent both of Ministers and of the producers of National Statistics.
It operates openly and transparently, making its correspondence open to public scrutiny.*

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The letters can be accessed on the Statistics Commission website, to view the National Statistician's letter to Sir Gus O'Donnell please visit:
http://www.statscom.org.uk/media_pdfs/correspondence/Letter0319.pdf; his reply can be viewed here:
http://www.statscom.org.uk/media_pdfs/correspondence/Letter0320.pdf
2. The Statistics Commission was set up in June 2000 to advise on the quality, quality assurance and priority setting for official statistics, and on the procedures designed to deliver statistical integrity, to help ensure official statistics are trustworthy and responsive to public needs. It is independent both of Ministers and of the producers of official statistics. More information about the Commission's role and work is on its website www.statscom.org.uk.
3. Contact numbers:
 - a) For further information: Richard Alldritt, chief executive, 020 7273 8008

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