

Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Conservative Party Chair
Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister & Leader of the Conservative Party
4 Matthew Parker St
London
SW1H 9HQ

Friday 13 October 2023

Dear Mr Hands and Mr Sunak,

On 21 September we wrote letters to each of you regarding a misleading claim that Labour is pledging to open Britain's borders to 100,000 more migrants each year. We informed you that this claim was not based on reliable information and asked you not to repeat it.

We did not receive a response, and you have both since repeated this claim.¹ This is unacceptable.

Spreading misinformation about political opponents is damaging to our democracy and it is important that you stop repeating this claim. Past Full Fact research showed that 9 in 10 members of the public thought it was unacceptable for a politician to repeat claims that have been shown to be misleading.²

We are publicly calling on you to show leadership and not initiate or contribute to the spread of misleading claims, including about other political parties.

As elected representatives, you have a duty to voters to lead with honesty. Any claims you make should be based on reliable information. With a general election on the horizon, we want to be reassured that you will do everything possible not to mislead voters.

We informed you that the 100,000 figure was not reliable because it is based on a number of assumptions about a hypothetical returns agreement, including that the UK would be part of an EU quota system even though it is not in the EU, that the UK would be "forced" to relocate migrants rather than contribute financially (as is an option for EU member states), and that the quota system would relocate all asylum applicants arriving in the EU among member states, which is a misinterpretation of the EU proposal. Labour has said it will not sign up to an EU quota scheme.

¹<https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1821391/gregg-hands-keir-starmer-immigration>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32lebdCymaw&t=5512s>

² https://fullfact.org/media/uploads/ff_election_research_report_final_version_16.12.19.pdf

More than 2,700 people have now written to the Prime Minister to ask that this claim was not repeated. Just days later, it was repeated by the Conservative Party Chair in a national newspaper.³ This is deeply disappointing.

It is vital that political parties ensure claims they make about their opponents are accurate and based on reliable information, particularly when claims such as this have the potential to affect people's opinions of individuals and parties, and how they choose to vote.

The public are deeply concerned about untruthful behaviours from politicians, as are we. We would be grateful if you'd let us know what action you take in relation to our request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Dudfield". The script is cursive and fluid.

Andrew Dudfield
Interim Chief Executive, Full Fact

³ <https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1821391/gregg-hands-keir-starmer-immigration>