



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th February 2019

Dear Colleagues

The figures, published yesterday by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), showed that in addition to the number of people in work being at a record high, wages have again outpaced inflation for the eleventh month in a row, their joint fastest in ten years.

It is also particularly important that 145,000 more disabled people found work since last year, an overall increase of 930,000 in the last five years. Nobody's ability to work should be dictated by their disability and everyone deserves to fulfil their career ambitions, which is why we have relentlessly focussed on breaking down barriers to work.

More women, too, are in the workplace than ever before, 15.31 million. The female employment rate is also a record – 71.4 per cent.

Since 2010, we have helped over 3.5 million more people into the workplace.

This is absolutely vital to our prosperity because behind every employment number is a person and a family whose self-esteem, mental wellbeing, economic circumstances and life chances are all vastly improved by being in the workplace.

We are helping people into work by reforming welfare so work always pays, while backing businesses to create more, better paying jobs across the whole country through our modern Industrial Strategy.

The new figures today confirmed that 2018 was a year of widespread employment opportunity showing that a record high employment rate for people from ethnic minority backgrounds of 66.2%

We are continuing to helping even more people benefit from a well-paid job by:

- backing businesses to create good jobs with our modern Industrial Strategy, while ensuring they play by the rules, so we are closing tax loopholes, strengthening workers' rights, and tightening the rules big businesses must follow
- investing in the infrastructure, training and apprenticeships we need for our future, with public investment at the highest sustained level in 40 years
- helping people stay in work longer with our Fuller Working Lives strategy which supports employers to recruit, re-train and retain older workers
- tackling inequalities in employment highlighted by the Race Disparity Audit, through targeted support in 20 areas around the country and £90 million announced by the Prime Minister to help young people.

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS