

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **POLITICIANS WARNED: DON'T PLUCK NUMBERS OUT OF THE AIR DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

**Giant numbers were floated outside Parliament today to warn politicians not to “pluck figures out of the air” during the upcoming General Election campaign.**

*\*\*\*Low res and print quality photos can be downloaded at [www.rss.org.uk/balloons](http://www.rss.org.uk/balloons)\*\*\**

The foil balloons were lofted into the sky for the Westminster stunt this morning, organised by the Royal Statistical Society. The charity is calling on election candidates and political parties stick to accurate figures during the campaign, and to avoid quoting unsubstantiated or misleading numbers.

The photo call is part of the #ParliamentCounts campaign launched by the RSS, which aims to improve statistical literacy in the House of Commons. The Society, which has 6,000 members, is also asking all parliamentary candidates to agree to attend a statistics workshop in Westminster if they are elected on 7 May. ([www.rss.org.uk/lobby](http://www.rss.org.uk/lobby))

As well as the various claims published in party manifestos, candidates are set to appear at numerous local hustings around the country where they will be quoting statistics on anything from schooling to the armed forces. Party leaders are also likely to be rolling out the numbers during the TV debate next week.

Claims made in the 2015 General Election are set to be heavily scrutinised by campaigners and voters, with facts and figures rapidly analysed for accuracy through social media.

#### **Commenting, Hetan Shah, Executive Director of the Royal Statistical Society said:**

“Facts and figures are a vital part of political debate and should be encouraged, but to have any value they need to be honest and accurate. Our message to politicians is: don’t just pluck figures out of the air during this election campaign.”

“The Royal Statistical Society believes all MPs should have a solid grasp of the numbers they are using on a day-to-day basis. That’s why we are asking all MPs elected in May to take some basic training in statistics and data handling after the election.”

ENDS

## NOTES

## CONTACTS

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The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has 6000 members around the world. [www.rss.org.uk](http://www.rss.org.uk)