

## Why aren't we bothered about small business?

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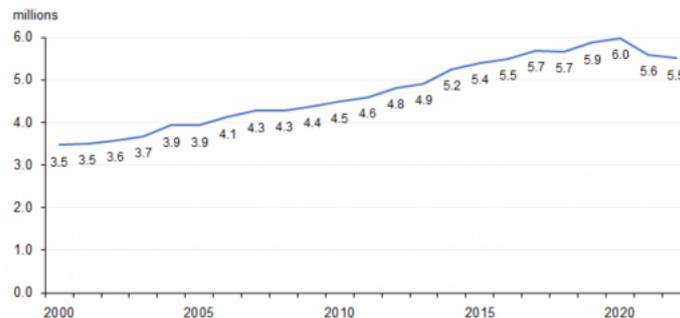
I missed this data when it came out, but it seems worth sharing:

### BUSINESS POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR THE UK AND THE REGIONS 2022

6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 National Statistics

- There were **5.5 million private sector businesses** in the UK at the start of 2022.
- The private sector business population consisted of:
  - > 5.47 million small businesses (with 0 to 49 employees).
  - > 35,900 medium-sized businesses (with 50 to 249 employees).
  - > 7,700 large businesses (with 250 or more employees).
- Compared with 2021, the private sector business population has decreased by 1.5% (82,000 businesses).

Figure 1: Number of private sector businesses in the UK, 2000 to 2022



The first thing to note is that Covid killed one in twelve small businesses, in aggregate.

Second, what the data betrays is that the focus of the government on big business is very much misplaced: we remain a small business economy where much that actually happens is delivered by micro and small enterprises. They hardly get considered in policy discussions, however. Nor are they offered the protections that they need to trade fairly because successive governments have made no real effort to eliminate tax cheating from our economy.

Third, when ministers talk about entrepreneurs as if they are the leaders of big business, they are wrong. There is an entrepreneurial group in our society - but they

are running small enterprises.

How are the Tories so out of touch with reality? And why isn't there a narrative about this business sector?

Could it be that as Andrew Dilnot once told me, "We don't need to worry about small businesses because if they were any good they'd be big businesses, but they aren't so why waste time on them?" Is that the attitude?