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Rt Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP
House of Commons



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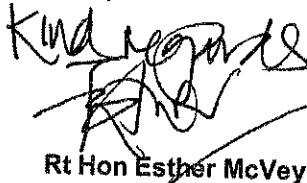
Thank you for your letter of 21 June regarding Universal Credit. I apologise for the delay in replying.

Universal Credit operates in a fundamentally different way to any other benefit. The Universal Credit online account contains all the information relevant to the claim, including bank details, savings, capital, medical history, family relationships and information about a claimant's landlord and employer.

We need to ensure a high level of security and protection against those who try to dishonestly access the information we hold, whilst protecting our claimants and their data. The current system is working well. These arrangements provide the right balance between enabling data security for claimants and swift resolution of any questions or issues raised by the claimant or their representatives.

With Universal Credit, for the first time, explicit consent is easy and instantaneous. Claimants can give their explicit consent via their journal, over the phone, or in person when accompanied by their adviser.

We have worked closely with the National Audit Office and we will consider the recommendations of their recent report.



Rt Hon Esther McVey MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS