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Rt Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP
House of Commons

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18th
May 2018

Dear Oliver,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February on behalf of Bridport Citizens Advice regarding Universal Credit. I apologise for the delay in replying.

We are committed to ensuring that claims from terminally ill patients are dealt with as quickly as possible and claimants are treated with the utmost sensitivity and care and receive the support they need to make a claim to Universal Credit. As we continue to deliver the full Universal Credit service, with its expanded claimant base, we are continuing to review and further develop the customer journey for claimants with complex needs, including how we support terminally ill claimants to engage in the process.

We do accept information directly from claimant representatives, such as claimant appointees, third party organisations representing the claimant, as well as details supplied to the Department's Universal Credit partnership managers or external engagement officials. We also continue to ensure that our Work Coaches have the flexibility to tailor support for individuals in difficult circumstances.

Finally, I would like to thank Bridport Citizens Advice for its suggestion that Regulation 4 in the Universal Credit Regulations 2014 could be used to allow a claim for a legacy benefit, such as Employment and Support Allowance, in the instance of a cancer diagnosis for example. However, I can confirm that we use Regulation 4 if we need to suspend taking on new Universal Credit claims in order to protect or test the Universal Credit system. We do not use Regulation 4 to refuse an individual claim for Universal Credit.

Kind regards
Rt Hon

Rt Hon Esther McVey MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS