

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Our Ref: Fol 4836

DATE: 17 January 2017

Dear John Petere

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Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 21 December 2016. You asked:

*The Director General of the Universal Credit Service Neil Couling has recently confirmed that advisers cannot use implicit consent to assist claimants in the universal credit full service, in giving evidence on universal credit roll-out to the Scottish Social Security Committee. See <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10700&i=98241&c=1960250#ScotParlOR>.*

*The existing published guidance "Working with representatives: guidance for DWP staff" is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-representatives-guidance-for-dwp-staff>. From Mr. Couling's evidence, this guidance appears that this has been superseded.*

### **DWP Response**

In Universal Credit live service, that is in most jobcentre areas throughout the country, the claimant does not have access to the claim information themselves via an online account. We therefore have implied consent arrangements in place so that someone can act on a claimants behalf. As the Universal Credit full service rolls out, claimants have access to their personal information via their online account - a claimant can specify explicit consent at any time via the online account or on the phone, so an advocate can enquire on their behalf. Instructions to operational staff reflect these arrangements.

All Universal Credit full service guidance can be found in the House of Commons library. Please see link below:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/deposited-papers/#toggle-778>

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Fol Team

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**Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing [freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)