



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport



Cabinet Office

Ed Vaizey MP  
All Party Parliamentary  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

TO2019/07410/DC  
19 July 2019

Dear Ed

We are writing to communicate our next steps for enabling the growth of a secure digital identity market in the UK. We are keen to work collaboratively with you and the All-Party Parliamentary Group to realise this vision.

The UK Government wants everyone to be able to have a secure digital identity that they can use for transactions across the economy, in both the private and public sector. While the UK has a world leading digital economy, a missing building block is the ability for individuals to easily prove their identity online. In order to realise this vision, building on existing collaboration and aligning with other organisations is essential.

In the UK, a wide range of evidence can be used to prove someone is who they say are. While this approach promotes social inclusion and privacy, it also provides a wide scope for every organisation, even in areas where there is prescriptive regulation, to devise their own rules and standards. This means that even when someone has proved their identity, they are often unable to reuse that identity and instead must resubmit documentation and be reverified. This lack of a consistent approach to identity verification is expensive and can also lead to weaknesses that damage our ability to combat fraud.

The UK Government has established identity standards and has built and run GOV.UK Verify, which is a secure technical platform and commercial framework to deliver digital identities for public services. While GOV.UK Verify has not yet been widely adopted, the assets and understanding developed provide a good starting point for the next phase of the development of the UK digital identity marketplace. Crucially, this will focus on working collaboratively across the public and private sectors.

We are establishing a joint Digital Identity Unit between DCMS, who are responsible for digital identity policy, and GDS, to drive the development of the digital identity market by working collaboratively with stakeholders in all sectors. We propose to invite a number of private sector partners to work with us, to ensure that all can jointly develop an evolving framework and standards for identity. This will accelerate adoption and build trust in digital identity, such that users can use it to securely access public and private sector services.

In October 2018, I (the Minister for Implementation) set out in a Written Ministerial Statement the need for a successful, standards-based, private sector led digital identity market that broadened the usage and application of digital identity in the UK.

As part of plans to achieve this, today we are publishing a call for evidence which will enable us to work with industry and consumers to build the 'rules of the road' for a thriving and innovative digital identity market. Simultaneously, we will announce a pilot which will allow a small cohort of organisations to digitally check the validity of passports for a range of private sector services.

We are grateful for the valuable work and views of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Digital Identity and look forward to working with you and members of the Group to enable growth of the UK digital identity market. We would like to thank you and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for all the work you have done and continue to do on digital identity.

Copies of the call for evidence and a copy of this letter will be placed in the House library.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Wright". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**RT HON JEREMY WRIGHT QC MP**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA & SPORT**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Oliver Dowden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'O' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**RT HON OLIVER DOWDEN CBE MP**  
**MINISTER FOR IMPLEMENTATION**