



# Total Reward Statements

## A new method of access

Some people may have noticed that there is a new method of accessing Government systems online, including your NHS pension statements.

The new system is known as GOV.UK Verify and is designed to be a single trusted access point for all government digital services. It allows you to choose one of five companies to verify your identity and link you through to the required services. The companies available are Barclays, Experian, Digidentity, SecureIdentity and the Post Office.

I gave it a test run to access my self-assessment account, choosing the Post Office as the identification provider. The first bit was relatively straightforward – I had to provide details and references from my driving licence and passport. I am fairly certain that I have never authorised anybody to release these details to the Post Office to enable them to check my identity, but I guess I must have done at some point!

Having entered those details, I then had to provide credit or debit card details. I entered debit card details. It didn't like it - the system is not able to use accounts with TSB or a number of other banks. It doesn't explain why. As I have no other cards of any kind, you are then required to provide other evidence.

The provision of this other evidence entails the use of an Android, smartphone, tablet or similar. I have none of these things. Very kindly, my colleague Matt Hodgson downloaded an application from the Post Office website. Having taken a snap of my passport photograph page and two of me, he then uploaded them via the application and whizzed them off to the Post Office. Presumably somebody (or something) compared the snaps of me with the photo on my passport as, twenty minutes later, I was reassured that I was who I always claimed to be.

So, fully armed with my new Verify account through the Post Office, I logged in and attempted to complete my tax return. Only it wasn't there, I still had to log in via the self-assessment system. So, it turns out that there isn't a single access point for all government online services after all. I guess they'll refine it over time though.

Anyway, the point is this. If you have been using the Government Gateway to access your Total Reward Statement, this is being phased out and may not be available by the end of 2018. You will consequently need to create your Verify account sooner rather than later. Just make sure you bank with the right bank and know your Android from your elbow! The system advises it will normally take between 5 and 15 minutes to set up. Give yourself a minimum of half an hour!



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