

A cheer for Amyas Morse and the role of truth and honesty

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I don't always cheer for former PWC partners: that I admit. But I did for Amyas Morse, who is now the head of the National Audit Office, yesterday.

As The [Guardian](#), and many other papers, point out, he [wrote a public letter](#) to Esther McVey, the Work and Pensions Secretary, yesterday to make clear that a statement she had made to the Commons on a report his Office had prepared on Universal Credit were misleading. She had declined to meet him to discuss the issue. As a result he had no choice but point out the errors so that the House of Commons knew that a minister had misled it, which is normally a resigning issue. Esther McVey will get away with her apology to the House instead, such is the chaos in the government.

This, however, matters. Esther McVey did not mislead parliament. She shamelessly lied to it. And in the process she maligned NAO officials who had done their job properly. And in true Trump fashion, she thought she could lie whilst abusing civil service experts, who she was accusing of delivering fake news when it was, in fact, she who was making everything up. What is more, she thought she could get away with it, as so many ministers have done before her.

It turned out that on this occasion Morse was not having it.

Good for him.

Good for truth.

Good for democracy.

All are being deeply damaged by the deliberate actions of ministers who day after day think they can report any nonsense that they like to parliament. I hope that in future they might think twice before doing so.