



**ARTICLE NO: 1G**

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2014/15  
ISSUE: 1**

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**Article of: Transformation Manager**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

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**SUBJECT: WELFARE REFORM UPDATE**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE**

- 1.1 To provide an update of the Government's Welfare Reform programme with a particular focus on Universal Credit (UC). All the elements of Welfare Reform programme are now "live" with the exceptions of Universal Credit (UC) and the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS).

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## **2.0 KEY FEATURES OF WELFARE REFORM**

- 2.1 In this part of the paper reference is made to the key features of Welfare Reform excluding UC – UC is dealt with in some detail in Parts 3 to 6 of this paper. More details of these key features are provided at **Appendix 1**.

### **2.2 Council Tax Support (CTS)**

From 1st April 2013, the national scheme of Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced with a localised Council Tax Support scheme. The Government provides a cash limited grant to Local Authorities, at a rate of 10% less than the previous cost of the national scheme, and any increase in the cost of the scheme or demand for benefit therefore has to be funded by Local Authorities.

### **2.3 Social Sector Size Criteria**

Restrictions on Housing Benefit for claimants in Social Sector tenancies took effect from 1 April 2013. These affect working age customers living in accommodation that is deemed to be too large for their needs.

### **2.4 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's)**

DHPs provide Housing Benefit customers with further financial assistance, in addition to any welfare benefits, when a LA considers that help with housing costs is required. The regulations covering DHPs are The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001.

The legislation gives Local Authorities a very broad discretion but decisions must be made in accordance with ordinary principles about good decision making, i.e. administrative law. In particular, Local Authorities have a duty to act fairly, reasonably and consistently.

Central Government has significantly increased funding to Local Authorities in 2014/15 for Discretionary Housing Payments to provide temporary financial support for Benefit claimants affected by Welfare Reform changes, in particular the Social Sector Size Criteria restrictions.

## **2.5 Benefit Cap**

These arrangements were introduced by Central Government from 15 July 2013. The change implemented a cap on the maximum amount of Social Security Benefits a claimant could receive, with any excess being deducted directly from their Housing Benefit entitlement.

## **2.6 Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS)**

The Government announced in 2010 that they would create a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which would bring together investigators from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) and Local Authorities in preparation for Universal Credit. This initiative is currently being trialled and roll out is planned nationally over the period from October 2014 to March 2016. The current plan is for West Lancashire to move to the new working arrangements from Autumn 2015.

## **2.7 Personal Independence Payments (PIP)**

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) replaces DLA for adults age 16 – 64. This new scheme is administered by the DWP – as is the DLA scheme. With effect from June 2013 all new claims have been for PIP. The reassessment of DLA claimants for a limited group e.g. children turning 16 began in October 2013.

From October 2015 the remainder of DLA claims will be re-assessed on a rolling basis with this exercise timetabled to be completed by October 2017.

## **3.0 UNIVERSAL CREDIT – BACKGROUND AND IMPACT**

- 3.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduces a number of changes which fundamentally move towards the introduction of a single UC for working age claimants which replaces and subsumes a number of previous benefit streams into one. UC will replace Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit. The process of replacement will be on a rolling basis: it started in April 2013 and is due to be completed by April 2017 although these timescales are subject to on-going review.

3.2 UC is intended to be paid monthly in arrears directly to the recipient and Housing Benefit funds will ultimately transfer to UC, which will be overseen by the DWP. Until the transfer is complete Housing Benefit will remain with Local Authorities. Post UC go-live and for the medium term, the Council will still have a role to play in terms of the management and administration of Housing Benefits for pensioners and also Council Tax Support claims. Residents of 'exempt' supported housing will also continue to claim Housing Benefit. The long term prospect is that Housing Benefit will be phased out entirely. Current thinking is that this will be achieved by;

1. The integration of Housing Benefit for Pension Credit claimants within the Pension Credit Benefit itself. This will be enabled by the introduction of a Housing Credit element for new claims and the migration of existing HB claimants. The timeline for this has been delayed until after the introduction of the Single Tier Pensions in April 2016.
2. It is understood that funding for residents of exempt accommodation will be transferred to upper tier Local Authorities in the form of a grant. There is no date for this and very little detail. Arrangements for migration of existing claimants have not been agreed with Councils.

Note: Progress on both these issues will be monitored and Members will be advised when further clarity has been provided.

3.3 Recent DWP impact assessment indicates that 3.1 million households will gain from UC, 2.8 million will lose and 2.4 million will experience no change. Mapping from current benefit entitlement to UC is not straightforward, so it is difficult to anticipate the impact on different groups. It is anticipated that further detail will emerge in due course.

## 4.0 UC IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 DWP will work with Councils to agree the most effective approach to UC implementation. These partnerships will work through the implementation process from mobilisation to transition to delivery.

The "test and trial" activity carried out to date has involved a narrow claimant group so outcomes need to be treated with caution. The full list of conditions that apply to this claimant group are provided at **Appendix 2**.

The roll out to the North West will add to the overall numbers claiming UC but will still initially be restricted to the above cohort. Couples and families will be added to the cohort but not to any specific timeline. The big issue for DWP is safe and secure roll out - they will start progressively and move through the various locations of pathfinder, setting the pace on the basis of a safe and secure way to go forward. If things are going well DWP have indicated that they will speed the pace up. If they are hitting some issues they have indicated that the pace will slow down, i.e. a big bang approach is not intended.

- 4.2 Transition will be led by JCP District Managers and Local Government colleagues – together with partners. Effective delivery will be achieved by drawing on existing support services, engaging with locally based support services wherever appropriate and generally employing a holistic, joined-up approach to support services.

There will be a requirement on the Council to facilitate, in partnership with local JCP managers, the Local Support Services Framework (LSSF). It is envisioned that Local Government will play a key role in identifying, leading, facilitating and commissioning partnerships to deliver, and in particular identifying who needs help and in what form

More details relating to the approach to transition and delivery are provided at **Appendix 3**.

## **5.0 UC ACTIVITIES TO DATE AND TIMETABLE FOR NORTH WEST EXPANSION**

- 5.1 Activities relating to UC commenced in September 2012 and those activities have gradually "ramped-up" over a period of time. The following is a summary of activities to-date plus activities scheduled during 2014:

- September 2012 to December 2014 – Local Authority-led UC pilots involving 15 Councils including Wigan, Oldham, Tameside and Warrington from North West England.
- February 2013 – DWP publish the first iteration of the Local Support Services Framework (LSSF) document.
- From April 2013 – Pathfinder initiative commences at 4 x Councils – Tameside, Wigan, Warrington and Oldham.
- From October 2013 – introduction of 6 x additional Pathfinder sites
- 6th December 2013 – DWP publish a LSSF Update and Trialling plan – a document produced jointly by the Government and LGA.
- Spring 2014 – continuation of roll out to additional Pathfinders + the expansion of UC delivery across the North West of England
- Summer 2014 – roll out North West customer base to be extended to include couples (then families at a later date).
- Autumn 2014 – DWP will issue an updated iteration of the LSSF document.

## **5.2 Plans for further expansion in the North West:**

The DWP Project Team has announced plans for further expansion and roll-out of UC in the North West beyond the existing North West based Pathfinders/Pilots. The plan entails the roll-out in 2 x Tranches and West Lancashire were initially scheduled to be in Tranche 1.

These original plans have since been superseded and the numbers of Local Authorities included in Tranche 1 have been scaled down. UC related activity for those Councils in Tranche 1 is scheduled to happen in June to July 2014.

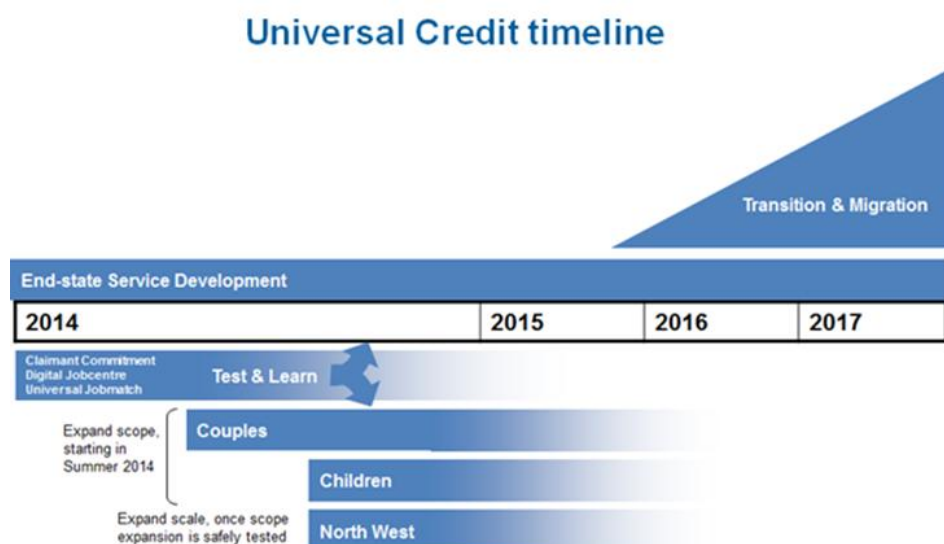
West Lancashire is not now included in this initial Tranche – only 2 Lancashire Councils are in this Tranche namely Preston City Council and South Ribble District Council. The full list of Councils included in Tranche 1 is provided at **Appendix 4**.

Timescales have not yet been confirmed for go live activity in West Lancashire.

A UC Task Group has been mobilised involving the Council – Transformation, Finance and Housing, the local JCP Team and representation from BTLS. Current activity is focussed on key stakeholder engagement – including the identification and engagement of key delivery partners – and digital access and support.

## 6.0 UC – THE ROLE OF WLBC

6.1 Planning, preparation and mobilisation of UC in West Lancashire is, as stated above being managed by the West Lancashire UC Task Group. This activity is aligned to the DWP's overall timeline for the roll-out of UC which is provided at a high level in the following diagram.



**Table 1 – Universal Credit Timeline**

- 6.2 Implementing the partnership approach will be based on a three point plan:
- DWP and West Lancashire Task Group will identify local delivery partnerships already in place within the local area.
  - DWP and West Lancashire Task Group in collaboration with others, will ensure that these partnerships and forums can fulfil the requirements of UC delivery groups.
  - This partnership will agree who will deliver which specific support services to claimants and include these in a delivery partnership agreement.
- 6.3 Implementation Check List – the Task Group will employ a "check list" approach to implementation with a particular focus on partnerships, personal budgeting advice, on-line support, housing and work and communications. This high level checklist is provided at **Appendix 5**.

- 6.4 The actual timings of UC activity relevant to West Lancashire have yet to be determined. A meeting with the DWP Project Team is scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> June and it is anticipated that after that meeting, a roll-out schedule including mobilisation, transition and go-live for West Lancashire will be agreed.

The anticipated impact on Council services is expected to be very limited initially although as the cohort extends beyond the group as described in Appendix 2, then the impact will increase.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The article has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Welfare Reform has the potential to have a significant impact on the Council's financial position. The replacement of Council Tax Benefit with a localised Council Tax Support Scheme in particular had a large scale budget impact and was the subject of a number of reports to Council.

- 8.2 Future changes around the transfer of responsibility for Housing Benefit and the development of the SFIS will also potentially have a significant impact. Further reports will be produced for Cabinet and / or Council as appropriate to ensure that the financial implications of these initiatives can be considered and addressed.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 Welfare Reform is included as a Key Risk on the Council's Strategic Risk Register. This report provides an update on how this risk is being managed to provide assurance to Members that appropriate action is being done to address the issues involved.
- 9.2 The development of the proposed partnership set out in this report will be reviewed using the Council's Protocol for Partnership Arrangements to ensure that it complies with best practice requirements

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/ or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Key Features of Welfare Reform

Appendix 2: Initial UC claimant group defined

Appendix 3: Approach to Transition and Delivery

Appendix 4: NW Expansion Tranche 1

Appendix 5: "Getting Ready" check list





## **Appendix 1 - Key Features of Welfare Reform**

### **Council Tax Support (CTS)**

Local scheme establishment and implementation:

From 1st April 2013, the national scheme of Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced with a localised Council Tax Support scheme. The Government provides a cash limited grant to Local Authorities, at a rate of 10% less than the previous cost of the national scheme, and any increase in the cost of the scheme or demand for benefit therefore has to be funded by Local Authorities.

Authorities are permitted to reduce Council Tax support for working age customers, but pension age customers are protected. There are around 59,000 working age customers affected in Lancashire, with 5,000 of these being in West Lancashire based on 2013-14 out-turns.

The scheme changed the amount of Council Tax that claimants of working age have to pay. The maximum CTS entitlement in relation to the previous CTB Scheme depends on the nature of the Local Scheme which in turn dictates the amount of Council Tax to be collected.

### **Social Sector Size Criteria**

Restrictions on Housing Benefit for claimants in social sector tenancies took effect from 1 April 2013. These affect working age customers living in accommodation that is deemed to be too large for their needs. During 2013-14, in the region of 1,060 individuals have been affected in West Lancashire.

The following size criteria reductions in Housing Benefit apply:

- 14% where there is one bedroom more than required
- 25% where there are two or more bedrooms more than required.

In applying the restrictions, Councils determine the number of bedrooms required by the claimant and their family. This is done using a fixed national formula known as 'size criteria'. The size criteria calculation allows one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household with the following exceptions:

- Children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share a bedroom;
- Children under 10 are expected to share a bedroom regardless of gender;
- A disabled tenant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer is allowed an extra room.

There are some exemptions including:

- 'Exempt' supported accommodation; this includes accommodation where a significant degree of care, support and supervision is provided by the landlord on a non-profit making basis
- Shared ownership properties and sheltered housing;
- Mooring charges and mobile home or caravan site rents ;
- Temporary accommodation including Council homelessness hostels.

In March 2013 the government introduced additional exemptions. These relate to:

- Customers who require a room for a child to be fostered.
- An adult child who is member of armed forces personnel serving elsewhere.

Following a number of challenges to the changes to the legalisation the Department for Work and pension issued a clarification that a number of customers that have occupied the same property and have been in continuous receipt of Housing Benefits since 1 January 1996 were exempted from these changes. This "loophole" has now been closed.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments**

Central Government has significantly increased funding to Local Authorities in 2014/15 for Discretionary Housing Payments to provide temporary financial support for Benefit claimants affected by Welfare Reform changes, in particular the social sector size criteria restrictions.

As a consequence, Benefits Services have seen a surge in the increase of Discretionary Housing Payment - the majority of applications have been from Social Sector Tenants affected by the social sector size criteria restrictions. The Council has made over 600 payments under this scheme since April 2013.

In the case of many Councils, take up activity has being targeted toward those worst affected by these changes and to ensure that expenditure of this additional funding, is maximised where appropriate

### **Benefit Cap**

These arrangements were introduced by Central Government from 15 July 2013. The change implemented a cap on the maximum amount of Social Security Benefits a claimant could receive, with any excess being deducted directly from their Housing Benefit entitlement. Since its introduction in July 2013, the Benefit Cap has affected around 40 individuals in West Lancashire.

For 2013/2014 the Benefit Cap has been set at:

- £500 per week for couples (with or without children) and lone parents.
- £350 per week for single adults.

Other benefits will not be reduced if, after reducing Housing Benefit, there remains some Benefit Cap excess. The Benefit Cap includes a combined income from the following benefits:

- Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance (except where the Support Component is in payment)
- Housing Benefit (HB).
- Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit (from October 2013).
- Other benefits such as Carer's Allowance and Maternity Allowance

### **Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS)**

The Government announced in 2010 that they would create a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which would bring together investigators from the

Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) and Local Authorities in preparation for Universal Credit

Under this proposed change, responsibility and resources for the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud would transfer from Local Authorities to the DWP. It is likely that an adjustment in respect of this transfer would be made to the Housing Benefit Administration Grant – the funding provided to Local Authorities by DWP to support the cost of Benefits Administration, including Benefit Fraud investigation.

The issue of transfer of Local Authority Benefit Fraud investigation staff to SFIS is currently being considered – in particular whether TUPE should be applied as part of the process.

As SFIS will not deal with CTS fraud investigations going forward, Councils will need to consider how to resource on-going Council Tax Support fraud investigation.

*Current position on the SFIS model and national roll out:*

SFIS pilots have been operating since November 2012 as follows:

- Corby, Glasgow, London Borough of Hillingdon and Wrexham – November 2012
- Oldham – April 2013;
- Southampton – October 2013
- Cardiff – December 2013;
- Cornwall – March 2014;
- Full roll out of the service is starting with the Pilots along with Blaenau Gwent and East Ayrshire in Phase 1 (June/July 2014) with full roll out starting October 2014.

*SFIS Project - Key Activities for the next 3 months*

- The SFIS Roadshows are being run from March to early May
- The SFIS Project Implementation Roll out schedule will be finalised with DWP FES and then shared with LAs and HMRC by the end of April / early May
- Finalisation of the proposals for LA Service Provision is planned for the end of April
- Finalisation of the proposals for the migration of cases is planned for the end of April
- Preparing for the Operational Readiness Gate which is in May

## **Personal Independence Payments (PIP)**

The abolition of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age claimants was set out in the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The rationale for abolition was that the benefit had become "outdated" since being introduced in 1992, decision making was subjective and inconsistent, and there were too many indefinite awards and automatic entitlements. The rise in numbers of DLA claimants was also cited as a driver for change, the DWP suggests that the growth in DLA claims has been 30% since 1992. This figure is disputed and disability charities put it at 13%.

*Citizens affected:*

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) replaces DLA for adults age 16 – 64 (currently DLA remains for children and qualifying people who have reached pensionable age).

Potential impact – a 20% reduction in levels of payments expected with 30% of claimants expected to lose all DLA and not be eligible for PIP either. The reduction will mainly be managed by the re-assessment of all existing DLA claimants between April 2014 and April 2016.

Since the national abolition of DLA for working age claimants in June 2013, all new claims have been for PIP. Original plans for roll out of PIP were for re-assessment of DLA to begin in October 2013 for limited groups, eg children turning 16, people reporting a change of circumstances.

From October 2015 the remainder of DLA claims will be re-assessed on a rolling basis with this exercise completed by April 2016. Re-assessment will be on a randomised basis with details still to be announced.

## Appendix 2 – Initial UC Claimant Group Defined

### Specification of the "Initial Claimant Group" claimant

- Single and in receipt of JSA
- Has earnings below £270 pm if under 25 years of age
- Has earnings below £330 pm if over 25 years of age
- Is not in receipt of JSA (IR/C)
- Has not left JSA within the previous 2 weeks
- Is not entitled to ESA/IB/IS, i.e.:
  - Is not sick (is fit for work)
  - Is not a carer
- Has no children
- Is not a home owner
- Does not reside outside of a UC designated area
- Is not in receipt of HB
- Has no outstanding appeals/reconsiderations relating to a legacy benefit
- Is not already awaiting a decision on a legacy benefit claim
- Is not under 18 years old (16-17)
- Is not within a year of pension age
- Is a resident Great Britain national
- Is not in temporary accommodation or hospital
- Does not have capital greater than £6,000 (and less than £16,000)
- Is not self-employed
- Is not in education (including training)
- Is not pregnant
- Is able to represent themselves (PAB/CAB)
- Is not in receipt of DLA/PIP, Bereavement Allowance, Carer's Allowance)
- Does not meet special conditions (i.e. In Prison, Long Term hospital, in voluntary work, Jury service)
- Has a NINO (adult registration)
- Has a bank account



## **Appendix 3 – Approach to Transition and Delivery – Partners and Types of Support**

**Transition** – will be led by JCP District Managers and Local Government colleagues – together with partners. Because of the complexity and dynamic nature of claimant need and the wider radical changes within the social security system as a whole, support is best decided at a local level in co-operation with the claimant. Before UC is implemented, it is difficult to predict how claimant needs will manifest themselves and how their needs can be provided for. Nonetheless, a number of key principles have been identified regarding the types of support that will be important to enable claimants to manage UC during the transition period.

A major concern is the challenge for households in adapting to a single monthly payment of UC. When reflecting on the Department's guidance on personal budgeting support any support should not just focus on teaching households how to budget, but how to budget in a different way. As DWP research on the Direct Payment Demonstration Projects indicated, people on low wages generally have good budgeting skills suggesting that many will not require basic support on how to budget. Rather, budgeting support should focus primarily on informing people about the changes to their benefits under UC and the implications these have for the way in which households will need to budget, whilst also raising awareness of specific tools that can support them as well as the potential opportunities in adapting to a changed regime.

Support may be needed to prevent households from getting into arrears with their rent - support should focus on helping claimants manage the temptation to use the housing element in UC to cover either shortfalls in income or emergencies although it may be difficult to identify this risk. Any support available, such as that provided by Credit Unions, should be clearly sign-posted and claimants made aware of the financial support available to them should they suffer an income crisis. There should be an onus on social landlords to provide support to claimants to ensure rent is paid on time and that arrears do not accrue.

**Delivery** - So how should such support be delivered and what are the opportunities and barriers to achieving this.

### *Drawing on existing support services*

- Commission new services to cover anticipated support needs against an increase in the capacity of existing provision and expertise.
- Charities and support services are already spending additional time dealing with benefit claims due to the extensive Welfare Reform changes currently taking place and indicated that they anticipate a need for this support to be expanded much further as UC is rolled out.
- Some support services do not necessarily provide welfare advice and guidance as an official or funded part of their role – they do nevertheless provide these informally.
- Whether existing or new support providers - staff need to be appropriately skilled to provide advice. Providers believe that the Local Support Services Framework (LSSF) potentially offers the opportunity to fund and formalise this role, improving the service they offer to their clients and thereby extending the coverage of UC advice and guidance.

### *Locally based support*

- While recognising that personalised support for people with complex needs may be best delivered at a local level, not all basic guidance and advice services need to be delivered locally.
- Independent welfare advice to help claimants understand the new benefit system could potentially be delivered more efficiently and uniformly via a national service – thereby providing a consistency of service and ensuring that high quality support is offered to claimants as well as preventing a large number of similar local systems being set up which may be more costly and less amenable to quality control.

### *Holistic, joined-up support services*

- The LSSF aims to support the transition to UC through working with local support providers, many of whom deliver a range of services beyond UC and who will therefore be accountable to a number of funders. There is a view that a holistic approach to service delivery is only achievable if a service provider's other funders are also involved.
- Providers are concerned that currently this presents a risk of duplicating effort and also of confusing the clarity about which agency has primary responsibility to ensure the claimant's compliance with the new requirements.
- A support services framework could present a timely opportunity to clarify these responsibilities, but it would need to be broadened to involve other government departments and funding agencies

**Delivery Partners** – It is the intention of DWP to work with Local Authority partners to decide who is best placed to deliver specific services and whether services should be delivered through other organisations, where this provides the best outcome for the claimant.

Implementing the partnership approach will be based on a three point plan:

- DWP and LAs should identify local delivery partnerships already in place within their respective local areas.
- DWP and LAs, in collaboration with others, should ensure that these partnerships and forums can fulfil the requirements of UC delivery groups, by making sure that they have the requisite skills (for example specialist knowledge to be able to deal with claimants affected by drug addiction or homelessness); that they have the delivery capability to meet anticipated requirements; and that they are able to plan and arrange delivery of local support services for UC claimants.
- Local delivery partnerships for UC will agree who will deliver which specific support services to claimants and include these in a delivery partnership agreement.

**Types of Support** - As well as developing existing services, UC also creates new opportunities at local level for new services including:

- Triage and re-orientation - To address initial contact by claimants, and any subsequent movement to appropriate services to meet their needs
- Online assistance - Most people claiming UC will be able to navigate the internet. A survey of existing claimants found 78% already use the Internet, although only a small proportion are yet use it to make benefit transactions



- Money Advice/Personal Budget Support - Under Universal Credit claimants will need to manage their own budgets in order to prepare them for moving back to work. However, some claimants will require extra help and support to enable them cope with the financial changes that UC will bring.
- Alternative payment arrangements - Exceptions to the normal payment rules will be managed and administered centrally by DWP,
- Work related support - Improved work incentives, and work focus, are at the core of the Government's welfare reforms and the availability of work focussed support at the local level will be key to helping claimants to get closer to the labour market and, ultimately, into work.



## Appendix 4: NW Expansion Tranche 1

Provisional Tranche 1 June – July 2014	
Salford City Council	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Wirral Borough Council	Trafford Borough Council
Preston City Council	Bolton Borough Council
Tameside*	Bury Borough Council
Warrington*	Oldham*
St Helens Borough Council	South Ribble Borough Council
Halton Borough Council	Sefton Borough Council
Cheshire East Council	Knowsley Borough Council
Wigan*	
* Locations already live and adding further post codes in Tranche 1. <i>Please note schedule is provisional and will be confirmed in due course.</i>	



## Appendix 5: "Getting Ready" check list

	Top learning points from the pilots	"Getting ready" check list
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive partnerships</li> <li>• Co-locating agencies.</li> <li>• Data-sharing and sharing IT facilities,</li> <li>• Cultural change for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who to work with to deliver local support ?</li> <li>• Existing partnership - for the UC roll-out?</li> <li>• Regular contact with your district JCP?</li> <li>• Link - Community Budgets or Troubled Families?</li> <li>• How to identify vulnerable claimants?</li> </ul>
Personal Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management - monthly direct payments.</li> <li>• Online tools to help</li> <li>• One-to-one budgeting support better</li> <li>• Lack of ID when opening a bank account.</li> <li>• Personally introduction vs signposting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapped organisations already providing support?</li> <li>• Engaging your local credit union?</li> <li>• Talked to your local banks – how they can help?</li> </ul>
Online Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of awareness - UC digital by default.</li> <li>• Support to get online takes time - barriers</li> <li>• Many do not have personal email accounts.</li> <li>• Aware that access via a mobile not sufficient to complete the UC form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How comprehensive is broadband coverage?</li> <li>• How many do not have access to a PC have skills?</li> <li>• Mapped public internet access points in area?</li> <li>• Existing digital champions who can help with IT skills?</li> </ul>
Housing and Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenancy sign-up - opportunity to identify needs.</li> <li>• Can help to provide joined-up support to claimants.</li> <li>• Direct referrals to support vs signposting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapped organisations providing housing /employment support?</li> <li>• How engaging social housing and employment advice providers?</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't underestimate the volume of enquiries</li> <li>• A personalised approach makes a big difference when contacting about the impact of changes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting claimants know - digital by default?</li> <li>• Briefing your staff and partners' staff about UC?</li> <li>• Plans in place to deal with a possible increase in enquiries about UC?</li> </ul>