

# Withdrawn

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# Department for Work & Pensions

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Local Authority Chief Executives

11<sup>th</sup> February 2013

I am delighted to publish today the Universal Credit Local Support Services Framework – the result of careful and intensive working between the Department for Work and Pensions and colleagues in the Local Authorities Associations.

The framework is available on DWP's Universal Credit web page (address below).

We will be rolling out Universal Credit later this year – starting with a pathfinder in April in the North West of England. I recognise that some people will need more help than others to make a claim for Universal Credit, to manage their payments and to engage more fully with the world of work. We will be addressing this in two ways: by ensuring that the Universal Credit package includes some flexibilities and that claimants are directed to support; and by ensuring that local support services are in place via this framework. There will be some exceptions to the payment policy, and draft guidance outlining who might be eligible for alternative arrangements is also being made available today.

The Local Support Services Framework covers who may need help; what services they may need; and how, through locally developed partnerships, these services will be provided. I hope that it will give you a platform for planning services and resources over the coming year.

Partnership working is essential and we are looking to local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, as key partners, to work with us to provide this targeted support.

The framework applies to phase 2 of the Universal Credit programme from October 2013 and will be refined and updated over the coming months to create a refreshed version for 2014/15. This will be informed by feedback from yourselves and other delivery partners; learning from 12 local authority led Universal Credit pilots and six demonstration projects and our experience of the pathfinder operating in the North West. The framework applies to Great Britain as a whole, but as it develops I expect it to start to reflect any varying needs and conditions, regionally and in Scotland and Wales. DWP is already in contact with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association about opportunities to work together to develop the framework in an appropriate way.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues from the local government sector for all your support, via Universal Credit task force and local authority reference group, in producing the framework. Our next steps will be to finalise the arrangements for distribution and management of funding during phase 2; taking steps towards implementing the partnership arrangements for phase 2 at national and local level; and starting work on the 2014/15 version. I look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

I would very much welcome your comments on the framework and how you will respond to it in your area. Please send your email to :  
localservices.framework@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

**Lord Freud**  
**Minister for Welfare Reform**

Weblink to the framework: [www.dwp.gov.uk/ucla](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/ucla)