

Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.

This publication is no longer current.

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition



Key Activities for July / August	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathfinder extends to Wigan from 1st of July. Oldham and Warrington will follow on 29th of July. 	
Meetings for July / August	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGA Meeting – 2 July London LA Led Pilot Steering Group – 10 July Rushcliffe 	
General Information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interim learning report will be published at the end of July Universal credit will expand to 6 new Jobcentres starting from October 2013. The following Jobcentres will be included: Hammersmith, Rugby, Inverness, Harrogate, Bath and Shotton. The LA led Pilot application for a three months extension has been agreed by Ministers. The pilots will continue until the of December 2013 	
<p>This update is to support both internal and external communications in relation to the LA led pilots. If you have any queries relating to the pilots and/or suggestions for improving this Update, please send them to: <u>LALED.PILOTS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</u></p>	
Bath & North East Somerset Council	
Update	<p>Four workshops around benefit changes have been held by various partner organisations e.g. Family Information Service, Community Learning Service (CLS), Curo (main social housing landlords) and Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT). Feedback has been excellent, both from clients and professionals who attended.</p> <p>The following actions where noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A volunteer to run a local arm of Bristol Credit Union has been identified JCP will look to offer outreach in the local area Curo in partnership with CLS to advertise their forthcoming literacy/IT courses <p>Following on from the workshops, strong links have been formed with outreach workers who deal with vulnerable people in B&NES. One particular workshop held jointly with IMLT proved very successful, and has led to interesting data being collected specifically from this vulnerable clientele.</p> <p>'Work Exchange Experiences' have started between the LA and the local JCP. This involves 2 staff at a time swapping offices for half a day and shadowing their counterpart. Lessons learned so far have confirmed that this has been a worthwhile exercise, with knowledge being gained in both areas, particularly Local Authority services and Employability.</p> <p>The aspiration is to concentrate more on building up the 'digital map'</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>in the next couple of months. This involves finding out exactly what pc availability there is within the B&NES area, and splitting it down to the following criteria;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public pcs that are literally that. Any member of the public can just turn up and use them i.e. libraries. • As above, but public pcs that can also offer face to face help, support and guidance during the time that the customer is on-line. • Pcs that are open for use, but only for a specific client base i.e. Women's Services, Children's Centres etc. <p>Bath expect to learn lessons from this area of work so that this can then help both the authority and external partners find out the nearest point of contact digitally for mutual customers, and what type of help can be given when they need to claim or manage their on-line account.</p>
Birmingham City Council	
Update	<p>Birmingham continues to roll-out the Digital Logbook to new tenants with the completion rate remaining around 90%. 10% were unable to complete digital logbook due to learning difficulties or rules imposed on people who are on probation not being able to have access to the internet.</p> <p>From the period of 16th July 2012 to 9th April 2013 the letting suites have seen 2240 new housing tenants. The digital log book did not come into operation until 21st January 2013 and since then 1063 people have signed up to the Digital Log Book, which equates to 88% of all new lettings. (This is due to the support and encouragement they have received from the floor walker and the language used).</p> <p>Those who cannot use the service online are being offered appropriate training and being monitored for when they then move their interaction with the council online.</p>
London Borough of Lewisham	
Update	<p>The draft evaluation of phase 1 has been completed. As part of this process Lewisham have pulled together some of the key learning from phase 1 and contacted customers to find out what impact the interaction has had and how they found the experience of working with the authority.</p> <p>One of the key things learnt from phase 1 was that some customers will need more intensive support to enable them to make the transition to Universal Credit and to prepare for the benefit cap. In phase 2 of the pilot Lewisham is developing an intensive support model to offer customers on-going support. Lewisham are currently designing this model.</p> <p>The design of phase 2 has been informed by workshops with the Behavioural Insights Team looking at how we can incorporate behavioural theory into their interaction with customers.</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshop 1: conducted a focus group with partners exploring the impact behavioural change techniques could have when working with benefit cap/UC claimants. As part of this Lewisham started to develop checklists of actions claimants can take to 'manage' in each UC quadrant. ○ Workshop 2: team focus group looking at how behaviour changes products (such as checklists, commitments forms, timely reminders, if...then statements) could be incorporated into the process for phase 2 of the pilots. <p>Lewisham expect to have completed the design of the phase 2 model by the end of July. From August Lewisham will be working intensively with 100 benefit cap claimants to support them with their digital, financial, employment and housing needs.</p>
Melton Borough Council	
Update	<p>The on line Council Tax Support Review service was launched on 3 May. A phased approach has been adopted and involves inviting a total of around 1500 working age claimants to access the service on line and test their willingness and ability to use a digital service. A variety of data is being gathered for analysis which will feed into the Pilot Steering Group meetings and Evaluation Reports to DWP.</p> <p>Close working with Jobcentre Plus continues to deliver a Lone Parent New Joiner Triage service from two Children's Centres. Although numbers are very small this is proving to be a successful trial with encouraging take up by residents. Detailed data is being gathered to enable robust evaluation of the approach.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus plan to co-locate into council premises at Parkside at the end of September, therefore detailed design and planning work is underway to enable the most effective use of the site. Jobcentre Plus will work closely with a number of partners already operating from the premises which will further enhance the service that can be provided to residents.</p> <p>During coming weeks there will be a focus on a number of key areas including exploring the possibility of establishing an employment and life skills centre to benefit all residents but particularly those with more complex needs. The Council will also continue to gather in depth feedback from customers regarding the Council Tax Support Review campaign and be inviting more claimants to access the service in line with the roll out schedule. Melton will also host the first LGA UC Pilot Open Day on 10 September.</p>
North Dorset District Council	
Update	<p>Two Focus Groups have been held with 12 Housing Association (Spectrum) residents. These highlighted basic lack of numeracy and literacy skills. As a result of these Focus Groups we will set up a Face Book page to gather further information on the effect of the welfare changes. Good feedback received from the Focus Groups about the work of the pilot.</p> <p>There is also limited IT knowledge; mostly individuals do not have computers, those that have broadband (2) do not feel confident about</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>putting confidential information on line. Those with internet access use their computers for social activity “Face Book”.</p> <p>We are also developing a page on the Dorset for You website, giving information on “welfare changes” and signposting to agencies that can help.</p> <p>All needed mediated support to complete on line forms and this involves travelling to one of the Council or the public access points. (expensive and sometimes impossible because of lack of public transport). The public access points need volunteer support and volunteers need to be trained and police checked. Victoria forms (benefit on line form provider) are changing the forms to make them easier to complete. As a result of the pilot they are assisting with data capture which will allow us to identify who in the pilot area is claiming on line.</p> <p>The focus Group stated that they could not get commercial bank accounts because of multiple debts. Five more accounts have been opened with the Credit Union.</p> <p>The Council have agreed to commit capital to the Broadband project as part of the National Superfast Broadband Project.</p> <p>The CAB welfare advisor has been carrying out home visits but is finding engagement difficult and that many claimants have drug and alcohol dependencies. Drop in sessions are now planned for the duration of the pilot and coincide with the job club. Two people attended the first one on 21 June.</p>
Oxford City	Council
Update	<p>The Pilot continues to experience similar themes as before with the barriers to work still coming up. Since the focus shifted to households affected by the Benefit Cap Oxford have started to identify new barriers which are mainly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare costs • Lack of belief that customers will be better off in work <p>Oxford have also experienced a low level of awareness from customers who are due to be affected by the Benefit Cap, this seems particularly noticeable in households who are due to lose large amounts of income.</p> <p>As a result of this learning Oxford have engaged with the Family Information Service to gain a better understanding of the support available for customers with childcare issues. Oxford have also worked with Policy in Practice to purchase some software that should help engage with customers about how much better off they would be in work once the Benefit Cap takes effect.</p> <p>Oxford is also continuing to work with partners and have established links with both Aspire and the local College who are offering free courses to the unemployed.</p> <p>Oxford’s schedule of phoning customers continues and plans are in place to write to everyone who cannot be contacted by phone and</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	then visit the households who are deemed to be worse off the Benefit Cap.
Rushcliffe Borough Council	
Update	<p>Integration with partners continues to ensure an enhanced service is provided to claimants. As part of this activity, integrated service interviews are being carried out with benefit cap customers. Revenues and Benefits and Strategic Housing Officers have been conducting interviews at the Community Contact Centre with other partners such as Jobcentre Plus, Central College Nottingham and Citizens Advice all present in the Centre to offer additional support if required. This approach has received very positive feedback to date.</p> <p>A recent Partnership Event was held at council premises. This aimed to provide all partners with a better understanding of each other's services, identify how best to work together and identify similar objectives and approaches. It was very well attended by approximately 25 partners with all attendees feeling it was a useful and interesting event with many expressing interest in follow up events of a similar nature.</p> <p>Close working with Central College Nottingham and other partners has identified a need for IT training and resulted in agreement to pilot a basic IT training course for claimants. This will be a ten hour course for eight learners and will be held over four sessions in July.</p> <p>During coming weeks Rushcliffe will be focusing on a number of activities including hosting the National LA led Pilot Steering Group on 10 July and an LA led Pilot Open Day at the request of the LGA on 14 October. They will also be investigating possible solutions for claimants who do not have bank accounts, as well as potential alternatives for those likely to take payday loans.</p>
West Lindsey District Council	
Update	<p>June saw the establishment of the online Housing Benefit form. This was made available on the council website from 3rd May, with a soft launch with minimal publicity. The form has been promoted by a banner on the WLDC website, promotion visa the WLDC social media links (Twitter and Facebook) and by Housing Benefit Assessors directing new claimants to make their claims online, if possible. Uptake is very slow. UC Pilot staffs are keen to see this made compulsory for all able claimants, but HB assessors are reluctant to let go of what they see as good customer service, with face to face delivery and completion of paper application on claimant's behalf.</p> <p>We are now beginning to extend public access provision and mediated support beyond the Guildhall. Staff covering all 8 West Lindsey libraries has been trained in the use of JSA and HB online claims. JCP will be covering Universal Jobmatch with them week commencing the 8th of July.</p> <p>The Lincolnshire Credit Union is now operating from the Guildhall every Tuesday. The official launch was on 11th June and many new</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>members have opened accounts. These include customers referred by NACRO and West Lindsey Domestic Abuse Service. This is the first Credit Union service in the West Lindsey area and we hope to follow it up by a second venue in the north of the district.</p> <p>We have organised and hosted an Apprentice Recruitment Day with 12 employers / training providers in attendance all with current or forthcoming apprentice vacancies. This was attended by almost 100 members of the public and we will follow up on success and intake on recruitment or Apprenticeship next month.</p> <p>Working in partnership with our largest RSL, Acis, we are organising financial capability support sessions. These will commence on Friday 5th July and run on the 1st and 3rd Friday of every month until December. The sessions will be for individual confidential consultations with representatives in attendance from Credit Union, CAB, Housing Options team, Personal budgeting support adviser, solicitors, housing floating support and UC team to support online claims. Those identified as being in danger of falling into arrears will be referred directly by their landlords to obtain early support. An increasing amount of time is being spent on sharing our learning with partner organisations, other local authorities and meetings of interested professionals e.g. Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy Group.</p>
Dumfries & Galloway Council	
Update	<p>Over the past 2 months the emphasis has been on identifying barriers that could discourage or block online access for customers. Initial findings indicate that where access is available customer uptake has increased. However partner organisations and other internal Council departments use of online channel remains stagnant. Staff time and availability coupled with technical limitations are given as factors.</p> <p>More encouraging is that the number of HB applicants self serving through digital continues to increase and 19% of claims are now in this category.</p> <p>A self service area is being introduced in the main customer service point and messages about self sufficiency and IT development skills are planned.</p> <p>Moving forward, a customer engagement programme has been drawn up with questionnaires for digital and non-digital customers to gauge opinion about usage and options.</p> <p>RSLs have also been engaged to consider Public Access Computers in their areas and attempting to reduce the number of assisted applications with a view to saving resource. Although agreed in principle this could take some time to actually implement. There is a requirement to re-educate partner organisations in benefits of channel shift.</p> <p>The focus moving forward will be to identify means of communicating lessons learned, resource mapping across and joining up partner information strategies.</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>Financial awareness sessions remain difficult to fill due to lack of interest. More extensive promotion is planned.</p> <p>Completion of 2 small computer courses gave feedback that the event was not long enough to gain a full grasp of necessary skills so this is under review. However, staff capacity to deliver is a major issue.</p> <p>Moving forward there is a will to look at all emerging issues and work to find effective solutions.</p>
North Lanarkshire Council	
Update	<p>Over 1700 visits have been carried out by Tenancy Sustainment Teams to residents affected by under occupancy charge. The visits explore how confident people are in making up any shortfall, longer term plans to deal with the issue and the offer of more intensive financial advice.</p> <p>Engagement rate has risen to almost 80% on a letter and appointment system and 35% of tenants in the scope have been interviewed. Tenants are aware of their income and the effect of the charge.</p> <p>However the take up of prevention [essentially self help] budgeting and financial capability advice is poor at 12%. There is an impetus to improve this preventative take up to alleviate longer term pressure on crisis intervention and debt advice services whilst educating residents on the options available.</p> <p>This group makes up 35% of all interviewed residents that are in the category “confident / able to cope” but further exploration is needed to discover barriers and steps residents are considering.</p> <p>Over the next 2 months a survey/questionnaire will be issued to 3 tenant groups;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1] Those who state they will cope. 2] Those who are concerned but do not want to access financial capability advice. 3] Those who intend accessing advice services. <p>Findings will be analysed to determine content and level of financial capability advice and barriers faced by the target groups.</p> <p>CAB have also been contacted to considering offering financial health checks to non repliers to see if there is an issue with services being offered by a local authority.</p> <p>Also, a tracking exercise will be undertaken on those residents who have accessed financial capability training during the past 6 months to learn more about repeat customers.</p>
West Dunbartonshire Council	

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

Update	<p>The pilot has recently been focussed on assessing triage and gaining qualitative information around work and learning. A new shared initial assessment form, asking a series of questions around work/learning and money was compiled and issued in May 2013. 80 forms were completed and the early findings include;</p> <p>1] Time taken to complete the form varied across the 3 services of triage, employment and budgeting from 30 to 60 minutes. 2] Front line staff responded positively to gathering information but had concerns over time taken. 3] An increased number of referrals were appropriate cross service highlighting the need for a “gateway” type assessment.</p> <p>A focus group consisting of Employability service users took place late June and findings are being analysed.</p> <p>Looking forward the focus will be on;</p> <p>A] Review triage process and introduce shorter shared initial assessment form. B] Roll out specific UC knowledge questionnaire. C] Arranging Money Focus Group. D] W4U improvement plan to be progressed. E] Identification of IT issues in joining up services.</p>
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Caerphilly County Borough Council

Update	<p>Digital Inclusion Digital Friday sessions have started in a local housing association complex, a CCBC residential housing complex and in an additional library. Numbers continue to be maintained with a total of 253 individuals being supported between January and the end of April.</p> <p>Additional sessions are also being held in two libraries on Tuesdays where the Friday sessions are particularly busy. Two new sessions are also planned to commence on 19th June at two additional venues with a focus on money saving on-line.</p> <p>The new CRM scripts have been tested and went live at the end of May. When residents make contact by phone for a new claim or change of circumstance they are encouraged to visit the on-line forms and if they do not have the skills or equipment are signposted to Digital Fridays or public access PC's available in libraries. The data from these calls are being monitored</p> <p>The on-line housing benefit and change of circumstance forms completed continue to rise with numbers now exceeding 50%.</p> <p>Welfare Reform Financial Implication Training The feedback from the staff who has attended the training has been very positive and information on how support has been provided to local residents is being recorded.</p> <p>Employment Support The fast track referral process with the JCP continues to be further refined, some tracking information on the cases is being received from</p>
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2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>the JCP. By the end of May 55 residents had been referred to JCP with a significant increase in interest during May.</p> <p>General It has been noticed at the Digital Friday sessions that requests are being received for support in accessing pay day loans. Staffs highlight the high interest rates associated with these types of loans and signpost the customer to CAB for further advice.</p> <p>Follow up questionnaires for residents who have been supported by the activities of the pilot will commence in June.</p>
Newport City Council	
Update	<p>Newport has started to move some of its services online, with previously available face-to-face services removed as a result i.e. renewing library books and booking fitness classes. Customers have been very receptive to the change in the service. Moving more of its services online, as a result of their Channel Shift strategy, Newport has reduced their Contact Call Centre hours.</p> <p>Staff training has been provided by local Credit Union staff to promote the services that can be offered to customers.</p>
Pathfinder area	
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	
Update	
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	
Update	

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

Appendix A

Aims of the Local Authority Pilots

Bath & North East Somerset Council	The Bath and North East Somerset pilot is city focussed and aims to reduce complexity and provide mediated support. It will provide face to face contact, identifying those customers most in need. This activity will complement the Customer Access Programme which is about delivering standard operating models using the web as the key delivery mechanism.
Birmingham City Council	This pilot will deliver channel shift by increasing self service and reducing digital exclusion. The pilot will identify, through triage, the level of intervention required to help customers sustain and manage their finances and improve digital literacy and financial capability. It will also introduce an online Digital Logbook which will be a personal account for individuals containing references to support services.
London Borough of Lewisham	The pilot will develop a model that assesses vulnerability and provides a face to face mechanism for providing

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>intensive support where needed. It comprises 3 stages, design, delivery and evaluation and will develop a holistic approach bringing together advice on employment, housing, financial and digital inclusion. The aim is to complete assessment of individuals in the first three months of the delivery phase.</p> <p>This pilot will begin to impact on claimants during January and it is anticipated that over 1000 will be affected.</p>
<p>Melton Borough Council</p>	<p>This pilot has two key aims. The first looks at improving access to, and take up of online services for working age claimants. This includes understanding and documenting the barriers faced by those who feel unable to self-serve or those who need to be supported to do so. A combination of customer insight, local authority and partner data will enable the pilot to capture customer journeys and behaviours in order to target and tailor plans to meet the needs of customers in specific groups.</p> <p>The second deals with the council's most vulnerable customers in the community. The pilot aims to identify who these people are and how best to support them towards becoming more financially independent and ready for work. This will be achieved by working closely with a small group, on an in-depth personal basis, to try to meet their specific individual needs. Partnership working is key to helping Melton achieve their aims, and they will integrate partner services wherever possible.</p>
<p>North Dorset District Council</p>	<p>Their proposal is to work in specified rural areas to provide services from CAB, Spectrum (the local housing provider), Jobcentre Plus, and Credit Union, to deliver money advice, budgeting and employability support in a rural environment and to learn lessons about the most effective approaches to deliver positive outcomes for remote customers. This will deliver lessons around engagement with online access in remote areas. The key focus of the proposals is a deprived ward in Blandford and a</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	remote village.
Oxford City Council	The aim of the pilot is to identify customers who may be adversely impacted by the benefit reforms and is primarily intended to assist claimants into work.
Rushcliffe Borough Council	Rushcliffe aim to deliver an improved service to working age claimants by offering an integrated service through multi-skilled front line advisers at their Community Services Centre in West Bridgford and a number of outreach locations throughout the borough. Local authority staffs are already experts in council, housing and police matters and will work with partners, including Jobcentre Plus, to gain the skills and knowledge required to provide job broking services and advice, to support claimants in accessing online services. They will also offer advice on financial management. Partnership working will enable more enquiries to be resolved at the first point of contact and provision of self service terminals with mediated support where necessary, will move claimants towards independence.
West Lindsey District Council	The pilot is aimed at ensuring benefits are: easily accessible; provided in an efficient way and allows the for the discovery or prevention of fraud. The pilot will also ensure links with other service providers by providing a seamless process through the joint working of services provided by WLDC, Jobcentre Plus, Lincolnshire County Council, third sector partners and CAB.
Dumfries & Galloway Council	<p>The authority recognises that there is presently very little in terms of services for Housing Benefit and Council tax online. A survey conducted by the authority 18 months ago concluded that only 2% of users wanted on-line access to services.</p> <p>The LA will look to change tenant behaviour and develop evaluation to monitor the impact. Broadband access is around 42% for the area, RSL's, CAB and other partners such as Women's Aid will encourage access. They</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	<p>recognise they are at an early stage for setting up digital by default but will pursue a system of self service. This is a channel shift rather than more resource.</p>
<p>North Lanarkshire Council</p>	<p>The intention is to target around 6,000-7,000 council tenants who will be affected by the new “under occupancy” rules and to look at those that have the worst financial impact.</p> <p>There is a clear recognition that the people being targeted have the highest levels of poverty and poor levels of tenancy sustainment. Many live in workless households where there is generational worklessness. The advice they intend to offer will be based on individual needs, not just welfare changes, and will include information and advice around returning to work.</p> <p>The intention is to set up a new system which will compare council rents to information on under occupancy and use data such as birthdays (e.g., someone about to reach 18) to enable early intervention to be initiated especially with the vulnerable. Housing and social work will provide a conduit to direct customers to a range of services based on their individual needs (including employment and advice services).</p> <p>Historically Housing Benefit services have sat alone but this pilot will provide links to other services.</p>
<p>West Dunbartonshire Council</p>	<p>The key focus of the pilot is to evaluate the delivery of a new service called Working 4U. The proposal is to fund additional evaluation, specifically to focus on the ‘customer experience’. This evaluation will look at how customers are benefiting from the pilot in terms of the cultural change and getting them ready for the introduction of Universal Credit.</p>
<p>Caerphilly County Borough Council</p>	<p>The overall aim of the pilot is to reduce the need for mediated support for claimants. This will be achieved by increasing their awareness of the move to Universal Credit and its capacity for self-service via greater access to digital services and access to work. The pilot</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Update 6th Edition

	will also explore the viability and efficacy of enhancing support available to help citizens make claims within their communities (e.g. in local libraries) and from agencies other than the Council, such as Registered Social Landlords.
Newport City Council	The key focus is to greatly increase the number of customers accessing services via non-mediated channels, and will support their activity with an aggressive marketing/publicity campaign. Newport recently introduced an Information Station where they have co-located their face to face services, including partner organisations e.g. Jobcentre Plus, CAB, and RSL's. These partners are keen to be involved in the pilot and extend their service to further support work service activities and financial inclusion. Newport will mobilise Customer Service Officers into their Information Stations to encourage customers away from face to face support and onto self-serve machines.
Pathfinder Area	
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	The pilot aims to reduce the demand for face-to-face support by encouraging the use of on line services. It will also improve community resilience and self-help by equipping a broad range of community leaders at a local level with a tailored training programme who would offer peer-to-peer support initially focusing on specific BME groups within the borough.
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	The pilot aims to increase on line services and build confidence in self service when using them. It also aims to give individuals the ability to achieve financial independence through increased earnings and the ability to earn and manage their money well, providing claimants with the skills and knowledge to achieve budgetary competence.