

Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.

This publication is no longer current.

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

Key Activities for January / February	
First evaluation report – 11 January	
Meetings for January / February	
<p>HB INFO Conference – 28 January Lessons learned workshop for pilot leads – 30 January / 1 February Senior Steering Group – 27 February Birmingham</p> <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 please send them to: LALED.PILOTS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</p>	
Bath & North East Somerset Council	
Aims	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.
Update	The pilot is gathering data to identify customer profiles to inform project planning. There is also a review of customer journeys being undertaken to map a range of customer journeys to define and document the 'as is' process. This pilot will begin to impact on claimants during January and it is anticipated that approximately 1500 will be affected.
Birmingham City Council	
Aims	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.
Update	All of Birmingham's letting suites are now open for business. Early findings from the triage being undertaken when claimants first come into the suites, indicates that they have found £5m in under claimed benefits for their claimants. User testing continues with both staff and customers on the development of their Digital logbook and Birmingham online ONE account which will become compulsory for new tenants from January 2013.
London Borough of Lewisham	
Aims	The pilot will develop a model that assesses vulnerability and provides a face to face mechanism for providing 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. This pilot will begin to impact on claimants during January and it is anticipated that over 1000 will be affected.

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

Update	The pilot team is now fully established with representation from housing benefits, housing needs and Jobcentre Plus. Welfare reform training has been delivered across partners by the CAB during December
Melton Borough Council	
Aims	<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>
Update	<p>An online access survey went live in Council Offices on 26 November and started in Jobcentre Plus locally on 3 December. Over 50% of JSA claimants took part. The results will feed into detailed insight work to understand as much as we can about working age benefit claimants by January 2013. The pilot is expected to impact on claimants from March 2013.</p> <p>A decision has been made to develop a digital Council Tax Support process as part of a review of entitlement for all existing benefit claimants - to run in April/May 2013. This will test the cohort in terms of their ability to use digital services. It will also be used as a prototype digital service to test ICT integration issues.</p> <p>Consultations with groups of benefit claimants are being fed in to a new design for website (look and feel, simplicity, etc). This is preparatory work that will maximise the chances of digital service take up once those services have been developed.</p> <p>The Council has made transformation of their services to achieve digital by default, one of their top 3 priorities.</p>
North Dorset District Council	
Aims	<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 remote village.</p>
Update	<p>All staff have been trained on use of 'Victoria forms' the electronic HB claim and are now able to support customers to help them complete applications. The pilot officially went live on 3 December and there has been an increase in footfall to council offices.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to set up laptops which will include the HB form and a link to Housing Association's required information. This will enable</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

	partners to support claimants with digital application completion in more rural areas.
Oxford City Council	
Aims	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
Update	<p>A Steering Group meeting was held on 21 November. The pilot has secured the services of an experienced Housing Benefit Manager to manage the pilot. They have also recruited an experienced customer centre adviser for the outreach role.</p> <p>Early work has centred on making links with relevant partners. Work has been done on the evaluation framework taking account of input from the DWP evaluation team.</p> <p>This pilot began to impact on claimants in December and it is anticipated that 1000 will be affected.</p>
Rushcliffe Borough Council	
Aims	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 staff 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.
Update	<p>The pilot has started to capture data from customers using self service terminals in West Bridgford centre. Early analysis shows that terminals were most frequently used for queries relating to benefits and housing. More partners are becoming engaged and starting to operate from the centre. South Notts College now offer a service from the centre, every Tuesday. Rushcliffe aim to finalise arrangements with Jobcentre Plus early in the New Year.</p> <p>A steering Group meeting was held on 26 November and Terms of Reference agreed with minor amendments</p> <p>A definition of vulnerable customers for the purposes of pilot has been developed and housing benefit data and customer insight is being used to better understand locations of vulnerable customers.</p> <p>Monthly performance indicators have been established and base-lined including channel shift for new benefit claims, services accessed through self service and self serve satisfaction. Data is also being collected on the reasons for not self-serving to aid future learning.</p>
West Lindsey District Council	
Aims	The pilot is aimed at ensuring benefits are: easily accessible; provided in an efficient way and allows 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.

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

Update	<p>There was some delay in the online Housing Benefit form but the pilot went live on 17 December with joint working and on line access support provided through JSA online. There will be a huge cultural change for customers in this area as the LA have preciously encouraged their customers to allow the LA to complete forms on their behalf ensuring correct completion and faster assessment and payment.</p> <p>The first steering group meeting was held on 5 December and partnership working is moving forward well in the areas where most claimants are living.</p>
Dumfries & Galloway Council	
Aims	<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 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>
Update	<p>The HB form is now available on line and the council is now looking to review its back office processes. There has been an initial 10% shift with 63% of customers now submitting the form digitally although the majority are assisted by LA staff/DWP/RSLs.</p> <p>The LA has met with RSLs are keen that they promote the online application.</p> <p>The LA are now starting to analyse new HB claims for accuracy of completion, evidence verification and processing times.</p>
North Lanarkshire Council	
Aims	<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 (eg, 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). Historically Housing Benefit services have sat alone but this pilot will provide links to other services.</p>
Update	<p>North Lanarkshire are contacting 1,300 council tenants affected by the 25% reduction in housing benefit as a result of bedroom tax. At the same time, they are contacting 300 tenants from 2 RSL's and 180</p>

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

	<p>people affected by the benefit cap across North Lanarkshire. It has been agreed to have a staged geographical rollout of the pilot affecting remaining 4,400 council tenants affected by 14% reduction and 700 RSL tenants</p> <p>The pilot is assessing the number of tenants with access to IT and transactional bank accounts as part of transition to Universal Credit. An additional pan-Lanarkshire Council- DWP group has been established to share best practice.</p>
West Dunbartonshire Council	
Aims	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
Update	<p>Entry/exit questionnaires are being completed by claimants and an employability and skills survey is being undertaken.</p> <p>Main challenges include IT access for the claimants and within IT services of the council itself (there are three separate systems). The plan to identify people affected by Benefit Cap is continuing and financial inclusion work will feed into pilot.</p> <p>A vacancy has been advertised for someone to focus on evaluation, with an expectation of this being filled in January.</p>
Caerphilly County Borough Council	
Aims	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 will also explore the viability and efficacy of enhancing support available to help citizens make claims within their communities (eg, in local libraries) and from agencies other than the Council, such as Registered Social Landlords
Update	Some digital champions are already in place and more are being recruited; 'Digital Fridays' have been set up to provide digital access and support in libraries with posters advertising this. CAB is offering 1 to 1 sessions to support and promote financial and digital inclusion.
Newport City Council	
Aims	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 eg, 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.
Update	All project staff have now been recruited and will start in early January. The smartphone app has gone live and whilst take up hasn't been great, Newport has yet to publicise it. Greater take up is expected in the new year. The advertising campaign for online services has been

2013 Focus LA Led Pilots Monthly Update December 2012

	agreed and will also be launched in January.
Pathfinder area	
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	
Aims	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.
Update	Oldham Council is both a UC Pathfinder and a Face to Face pilot. The work commenced in late November when the Project Manager was appointed and the Project steering group has been formed and has met. Most of December and early January is being taken up by a significant number of staff briefings, and a sub group to deal with the specific tasks of the face to face pilot is being formed.
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	
Aims	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.
Update	Wigan has set an initial Programme Delivery Board with Key stakeholders for Welfare Reform. A Project group has been established specific to Universal Credit. Wigan has already begun to see an increase of unsupported claims for the target group. The specification of the 'Digital Training Course for Beginners' has been drafted and will be delivered by Digital Inclusion Champions in the new year. Work has begun with our Ebenefits form provider to track and monitor progress of trainees that undertake the course. This will be interactive and encourage customers to take the online training away and continue to interact online. The specification for the 'Made of Money' course has been drafted and commissioned to two local stakeholders. Partnerships with credit unions have been established and an option of accessing bank accounts and low cost loans is in place.