



Universal Credit  
Expression of Interest Prospectus

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**Trusted Partner Pilot**

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## Introduction

1. This document is for you if:
  - You are a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), a stock-owning Local Authority (LA) or an Arm's Length Managed Organisation (ALMO) in an area where Universal Credit (UC) is currently live.
  - Your organisation can commit to supporting a pilot for 6-9 months without any DWP funding
  - Your organisation has a secure email facility such as email addresses ending in **GSI.GOV.UK**, **GCSX.GOV.UK**, **GSX.GOV.UK**, **CJX.GOV.UK**, **CJSM.NET**, **GSE.GOV.UK** or **PNN.GOV.UK**.
  - You are willing to sign up to a Service Level Agreement (SLA)

## Background

2. The UC Trusted Partner Pilot builds on our commitment to working with landlords to help those claimants who need support to manage their direct payment of rent as part of a Universal Credit claim. The pilot is a product of joint working between DWP and the Social Rented Sector to develop an approach that ensures those tenants who need support receive it.
3. In March 2015 the DWP carried out an eight week proof of concept test with six North West social landlords. The test set out to establish if the Trusted Partner concept created better opportunities for joined up working resulting in a better outcome for the claimant. As a result of the test the DWP has now received approval to progress to a larger pilot extending out of the North West to include other areas in England, Scotland and Wales.
4. This document sets out details of the pilot and how social landlords can express an interest in taking part.

## Aims and objectives

5. The aim of the UC Trusted Partner Pilot is to understand and assess the process whereby social landlords identify vulnerable tenants who may struggle to cope with paying rent direct to them, and make appropriate recommendations for a direct payment of housing costs known as an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). We will do this by testing if
  - the end to end APA process provides a good experience for claimants and staff, and is suitable for national implementation
  - there are any gaps, for example, in the provision of support services locally
  - support can be easily co-ordinated between Trusted Partners and DWP
  - Trusted Partners are able to undertake APA reviews
  - the process is affordable in both resource and time for landlords and DWP

- any learning and development material meets the needs of Trusted Partners

### **Eligibility and selection criteria for inclusion in the pilots**

6. Using a survey tool, DWP will select around 20 social landlords to produce a representative sample of housing associations, stock owning LAs and ALMOs across England, Scotland and Wales.
7. The survey questions at Annex A will take into consideration the geography (i.e. location, urban/rural) and demographics of the organisations' tenant population to maximise learning from the pilot.
8. Interested organisations should submit their completed EOI via the survey which can be accessed at <http://survey.dwp.gov.uk//index.php?sid=52899&lang=en> . EOIs must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Returns received by any other method will not be considered.
9. Decisions will be made on the final pilot sites based on the information provided in the survey. We expect to communicate the final decisions in week commencing Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 via email.
10. We expect this Expression of Interest (EOI) to be oversubscribed and in the event of applicants having equally fulfilled the criteria, to ensure impartiality, DWP will use a system generated random selector for final selection.
11. The organisations that have been selected will then begin their preparation activity alongside the pilot sponsors in DWP. Organisations must be able to commit to mobilising their pilot quickly – this is one of the assessment criteria of the EOI – by the end of January 2016 at the latest.

### **Content and focus of the trials**

12. We aim to demonstrate how working together to support vulnerable people gives them a better and more coherent experience, and can help improve their financial resilience and responsibility. We want to test the inputs that will help us achieve this covering:
  - the process design and the potential for national implementation
  - partnership, data sharing, support and reviews – including the processes of governance and decision making around these.
13. We envisage that participating organisations will use their local knowledge to identify their claimants who need an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) and refer the cases to the UC Service Centre. They would also be expected to identify any support needs and where they can, offer that support, or refer to Personal Budgeting Support through the DWP UC District Partnership Agreements (DPA).

14. Once an APA has been recommended, the expectation is that the pilot organisation would keep this under review and let DWP know when the APA is no longer needed. This would be an outcome of effective support where the claimant is able to pay their own rent – one of the key objectives of the exercise.

### **Service Level Agreement**

15. The successful organisations will be required to commit to a Service Level Agreement including, but not necessarily limited to the following:

- commit to co-operate fully with the evaluation as a condition of being accepted.
- agree to initial weekly checkpoints to inform/highlight early learning.
- provide as a minimum, monthly MI reports with light touch review points.
- undertake the appropriate learning and development to carry out the role of Trusted Partner effectively.

16. Pilot organisations will be supported by a Trusted Partner Relationship Manager.

### **Next steps**

If you have any questions about the Trusted Partner Pilot that have not been answered by this pack, please contact DWP Social Landlord Preparation [SOCIALLANDLORD.PREPARATION@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:SOCIALLANDLORD.PREPARATION@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK).

## Annex A – Selection Criteria - EOI Survey questions

Answers supplied to the questions below which can be accessed at <http://survey.dwp.gov.uk/index.php?sid=52899&lang=en> will be used to supply a representative sample based on geography (i.e. location, urban/rural) and demographics of the organisations' tenant population.

A system generated selector will be applied to ensure impartiality where there are several organisations fulfilling the criteria.

<b>Criteria</b>
<b>About your organisation</b>
Name of organisation
Address of the organisation
Named contact Their email address
Type of organisation RSL / Housing association <i>or</i> ALMO <i>or</i> Stock owning LA
How many general needs properties do you own or manage?
Is your organisation best described as "centralised" or "localised"? (one head office or local representation on the estates)
Do you have appropriate Director level and elected member support to take part in this pilot?
Does your organisation have secure email facilities such as a GSI, GSX or CJX account?
There will be no departmental funding available for this pilot. Will your organisation be able to take part in this pilot without external funding?
<b>Location of properties</b>
How many local authorities does your organisation own or manage properties in?
How many properties do you own or manage in the following areas of England, Scotland and Wales?
<b>England</b> North East Yorkshire & Humberside North West East Midlands West Midlands East of England London South East South West
<b>Scotland</b> East and South East Scotland West of Scotland Glasgow and Lanarkshire East Dunbartonshire and North of Scotland

**Wales**

North West  
North East  
Mid Wales  
South West  
South East

What percentages of your properties are located in the following settings:  
(For further guidance on these classifications, please visit  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-definition>)  
Rural (towns and villages with <10,000 residents) or Urban (cities and towns)  
or Minor and major conurbation. Please give percentages.

How many of your tenants receive Universal Credit at the moment, according  
to your information? (*absolute number*)  
Please tell us about the percentage of your working age tenants that receive  
UC  
(*Please give percentages*)

What percentage of your properties is in a current UC live area?  
What percentage of your tenants in these areas are of working age (18 to 64)?