

## **Department for Work and Pensions Press notice 20 July 2012: Lord Freud names local authority pilot long-list for Universal Credit**

The Department for Work and Pensions and the Local Government Association have today named fifteen local authorities in England recommended as potential pilot sites for Universal Credit.

The pilots will focus on delivering the face to face support some people may need to make claims for Universal Credit, including online support, help with budgeting and job searches, reducing fraud and error, and reducing homelessness. From these recommendations, DWP will now make a final selection of those that will go ahead in the Autumn.

The Minister for Welfare Reform Lord Freud said:

"Local authority led pilots will provide a unique opportunity for councils to shape the development of Universal Credit.

"All the recommended local authorities offer very exciting ideas on how they might help people with their claims for Universal Credit and progress into work. We are now working through the long-list with a view to announcing the final dozen or so successful authorities across Great Britain in the Summer."

Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman of the LGA, said:

"It is vital that local people are fully supported when these benefit and tax credit changes come into place.

"Councils have a central role to play in providing face-to-face assistance and advice in the new welfare system, as they have a strong understanding of local job markets and the needs of their residents.

"These councils have put forward some positive proposals for taking the pilots forward, and they will play an important role in working towards a smoother rollout later next year."

The announcement follows close discussion with Lord Freud and the LGA, which resulted in the LGA recommending the 15 local authorities out of 38 proposals. A separate selection process is underway for local authorities in Wales and Scotland.

The 15 authorities in England recommended are:

Barnet  
Bath and North East Somerset  
Birmingham  
Hammersmith and Fulham (in consortium with Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth and Westminster)  
Leeds  
Lewisham  
Melton

**Item 4**

**Appendix B**

Newcastle under Lyme  
North Dorset  
Oldham  
Oxford  
Rushcliffe  
A consortium of North Yorkshire authorities led by Scarborough  
West Lindsey; and  
Wigan

**Notes to Editors:**

1. Universal Credit will be rolled out from October 2013 with approximately 12 to 13 million tax credit and benefit claims transformed into eight million Universal Credit payments.
2. The local authority led pilots will complement work already underway as part of the preparation for Universal Credit, including Pathfinder and the direct payment demonstration project.
3. A Prospectus: 'Preparing for Universal Credit Prospectus for 2013 focus local authority led pilots' was published in April 2012 and is available here:  
[http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/local-government-finance/-/journal\\_content/56/10161/3618873/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/local-government-finance/-/journal_content/56/10161/3618873/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE)