



In
Partnership
with

LA Directories
Limited

MALG
Network



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Revenues and Benefits Discussion Group

18 August 2025



A VISIONARY NETWORK PARTNER
EMBRACING PUBLIC SERVICES THROUGH COLLABORATION, INNOVATION, AND SHARED VALUES.



Visionary Network Partnership

WORKING TOGETHER TO SHAPE BETTER PUBLIC SERVICE

We are a strategic partnership of organisations working across the public sector to help rethink & redesign services in a joined-up, values-led way.

Our work is built on:

Partnership, not prescription – co-designed support that respects local knowledge & ambition.

Policy and strategy expertise – from front-line delivery through to legislative insight.

We collaborate with councils, departments and public bodies – providing strategic insight & practical tools to improve outcomes and deliver sustainable change.

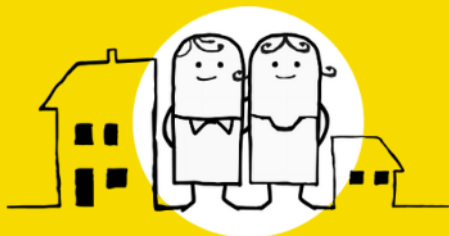
Cross-service thinking – solutions that work across benefits, council tax, recovery, safeguarding, grants, & more.

Support, not imposition – our role is to listen, understand, & help improve systems that already serve communities.

Modern – leveraging AI/Automation & innovative thinking.



Redesign your CTR scheme with ease



Opportunity

The Inbest CTR Design Tool is an online application to help Revenues & Benefits teams design Council Tax Reduction Schemes.

Upload your anonymised CTRS caseload and use our analytics and modelling features to design schemes that meet the council's budget requirements, simplify administration, and protect vulnerable households.

This tool provides the following features to support you through every step of the CTRS design process.

Resident Insights

Get a clear understanding of your caseload by analysing your residents' circumstances and financial situation.

Use these insights—such as the number of residents with capital above certain thresholds or those out of work—to identify opportunities for savings while ensuring continued support for those in need.

CTRS Modelling

Set up different CTRS options and assess their impact using your caseload data.

Then, you can use our analytics dashboard to view potential savings, see how changes affect different segments of residents, and assess the risk of arrears.

Each simulation takes only a few seconds, and you can run as many as needed, refining them until you find the perfect fit for your council.

Automatic Reporting

The tool generates a detailed impact report and the information you need for your Equality Impact Analysis.

This report presents clear, data-driven insights to elected members, supports internal reviews, and informs consultations for confident decision-making.

Our dashboard provides the insights you need to make informed decisions

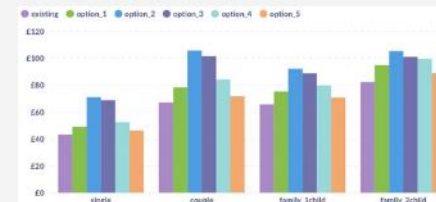
Total annual cost options



Detailed analysis per CTR band

ctr_discount	number_residents	percentage_residents	single
100%	127	0.7%	119
70%	11,032	60.91%	6,002
50%	767	4.23%	258
40%	1,352	7.46%	359
25%	3,382	18.67%	672
12%	1,452	8.02%	283

Average CT payment by households



Identification of impacted residents

householdType	decreased_number	decreased_pct
single	2,763	35.92%
partnerChildren	1,579	44.73%
singleChildren	2,178	36.85%
partner	773	79.04%
total	7,293	40.27%

"Working with Inbest has completely transformed the way we understand our CTR data. Inbest has helped us extract meaningful insights that enabled us to make informed decisions when modelling and designing the best possible scheme for our residents."

Inbest is always working on innovative solutions to support the streamlining of our processes and enhancing our services. As well as the work modelling the CTR Schemes, this year they have also supported us with our Pension Credit caseload and a Data Mismatches report."

Penny Mitchell, Council Tax Service Manager at Salford Council

"We asked Inbest to model different CTS schemes for us at short notice. We had our results in the dashboard within a few days and this enabled us to review the data which reflected each scheme option. This included areas such as cost and savings and how each scheme would affect our residents."

"When we required tweaks to the results Inbest ensured these were made instantly. An excellent service for a reasonable rate."

Nick Houlton, Finance Manager (Revenues and Benefits) at London Borough of Barnet

"Modelling a new Council Tax Reduction scheme can be challenging. However, working with Visionary Network and Inbest on the 2025/2026 scheme was a resounding success due to their support, knowledge, and technology."

"The service provided under tight deadlines was exceptional. Appreciation is extended to Manu, Malcolm, and Paul for their time and patience."

Lucie White, Operational Finance Manager at Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

End



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

- Malcolm Gardner, Visionary Network Director
- 07946800171
mg@malcolmgardner.com
Book a meeting with Malcolm: [Book Time with MG](#)



VISIONARY NETWORK
The independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

Join the discussion

Each Monday lunchtime, a panel of professionals leads a discussion on revenue and benefits administration issues. The panel consists of council & housing officers, policy advisors, and analysts.

It is a free service that is well attended. Attendees make good contributions; everyone gets a chance to speak. Attendees includes senior managers, team leaders, suppliers, and support staff

You can join in the discussion during the week (and start some new ones) by joining our WhatsApp group: <https://bit.ly/3Qjrkqe>

Links to the recordings and the slide packs plus other relevant documents will be posted into both the WhatsApp group and in the Teams Channel and emailed to those who attended and subscribers to the group.

To sign up just email malcolm@visionarynetwork.co.uk with your name, organisation and email address. We are inclusive because sharing information and good practice is essential. You don't have to attend every session; recordings will be available.



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

Welcome to a
new era of
council tax
deduction
schemes

Bristol City
Council Case
Study



In
Partnership
with

**LA Directories
Limited**

“
**COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION
CLEAR & CONCISE**
Let us make it simple for you
”

Save money, improve efficiency,,
help your vulnerable citizens,
build trust.

<http://www.visionarynetwork.co.uk>



Finding the
right
information
has never been
easier with



The law and practice relating to Welfare Benefits is complex, detailed, open to interpretation and endlessly dynamic

LA Directories Ltd is here to help professionals across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland correctly and efficiently identify and understand the ever-changing law and guidance that governs the calculation of entitlement to Housing Benefit, Rates (Northern Ireland), Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payment.

LA Directories Ltd takes the law and guidance relating to Housing Benefit, Rates, Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payment then interprets and consolidates it into three product ranges...

- The Benefits Directory a web-based knowledge management solution
- The Training Directory provision of open and in-house training courses at all levels
- Consultancy services

Local authorities across England, Wales and Scotland are using our services as well as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

E-mail services.enquiries@ladirectories.com

Peter Davis, Marketing & Account Management

E: peter.davis@ladirectories.com

M: 07807 009 959

Ferret Information Systems Ltd



Ferret Information Systems was established in 1987 and is the largest company in Europe in the field of law dealing with welfare benefits and similar areas of determinative, compliance, and regulatory law.



our training services:

Ferret is well placed to provide training services and its team of specialists have wide experience of benefits and housing grant legislation. We also provide consultancy to organisations, companies and government on the impact of legislative and policy changes.



our products:

Ferret produces a wide variety of systems, designed to provide support tools for advice workers, and also to provide information and advice directly to the public. Ferret specialises in a holistic assessment of financial circumstances relating to welfare benefits and tax credits entitlement, coupled with software development methodology which offers a high level of flexibility and rapid updating to reflect rule changes.



our platforms:

Systems supported include network, desktop, laptop, mobile devices, Internet and Intranet systems, and a public access system in multi-lingual, multi-media form for touch screen kiosks and public access PC's.



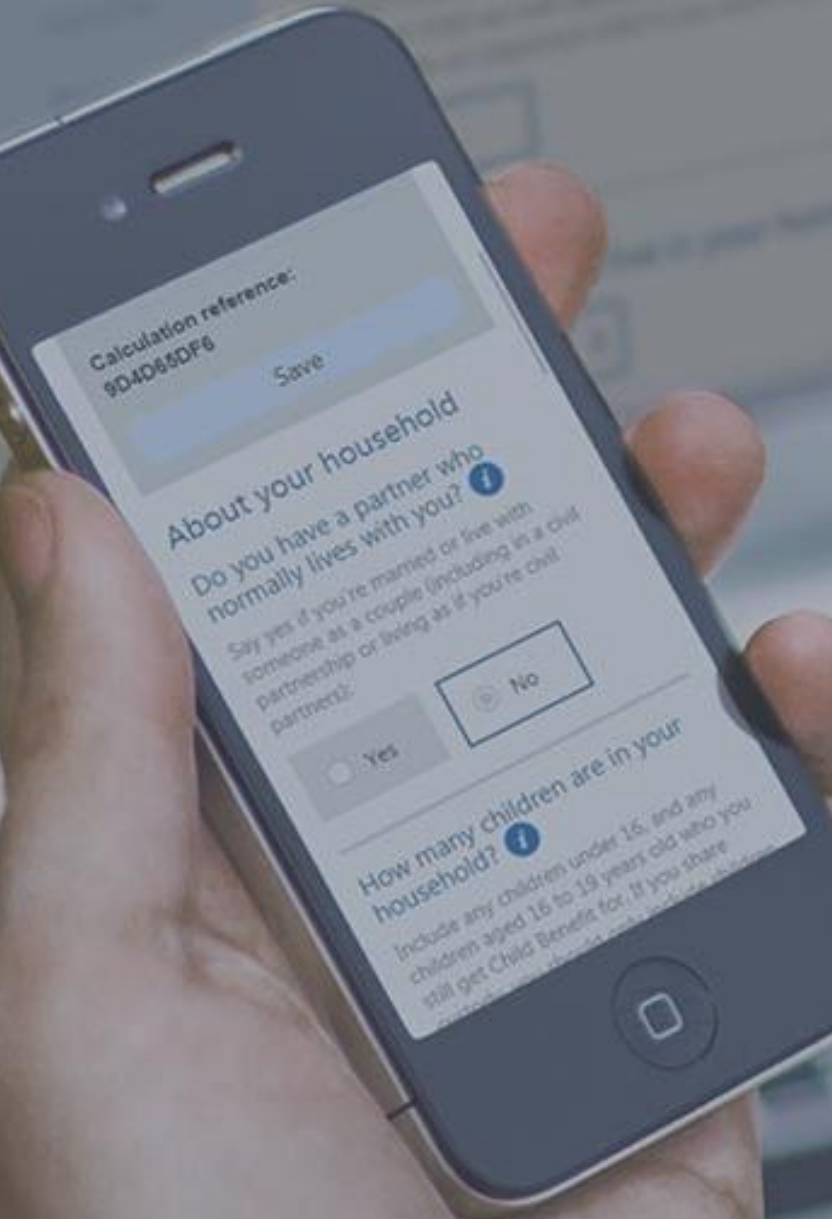
our customers:

Users of Ferret systems include government departments, local authorities, housing associations, CABx, HIA's and other advice agencies, universities, social welfare organisations, libraries, solicitors and financial advisers.

<https://www.ferret.co.uk/>

entitledto

independent | accurate | reliable



Our mission is to help everyone to access the benefits they're entitled to.

Since 2000 we have used our in-depth knowledge of the UK's social security system to build a range of authoritative and accurate calculators to help you and your clients understand their legitimate benefits entitlement.

Our tools are designed to be quick, simple and easy to use, so your staff and clients feel empowered to deal with the benefits system with confidence.

In response to evolving business needs and ongoing local and national policy changes, we will continue to work with and for our clients to develop new features and functionality.

Our goal is to assist your teams in adapting to legislative changes and welfare reform so you can help more people find out what benefits they are entitled to, thereby improving their circumstances and those of their families.



Ascendant Solutions
data management

Barnet Council has become the first local authority to launch the Ascendant apply4.online application form, designed to support residents with the rise in cost of living.

The InBest benefits calculator has been integrated into Ascendant's apply4.online support application, to make it easier for people who are experiencing financial difficulties to find out what support is available to them.

It includes information on benefits such as Universal Credit, Pensions Credit, Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment, as well as local financial support initiatives including council tax support and the residents support fund.

Barnet Council Leader, Cllr Barry Rawlings said: "The cost-of-living crisis is affecting us all, and we want to ensure Barnet residents know what financial support is available to them and how they can access these services.

"It is very positive to see Barnet is the first local authority to launch this free tool, and we hope to see many other local councils doing the same to help their residents."

To find out what financial support is available to help with the cost-of-living visit [Barnet Council Benefits Calculator](#)



Apply4.Online®



In the news

Sickness and Universal Credit Trends

- Long-term sickness remains near record highs at **2.79 million people**, just below the 2023 peak of 2.86 million
- Almost **half of Universal Credit claimants (46%)** now have no work requirements
- This proportion has risen steadily:
 - 22% in July 2021
 - 39% in 2024
 - 46% in July 2025
- The increase reflects both genuine rises in sickness and the transfer of tougher cases onto Universal Credit

Sickness and Universal Credit Trends

Implications for Welfare and Employment

- Total Universal Credit claimants: **8 million**
 - **3.7 million** exempt from work search
 - **34% in work**, down from over 40% three years ago
- **1.3 million foreign nationals** claim Universal Credit, 41% of whom are working
- Reform pressures:
 - Ministers forced to dilute plans to cut incapacity element for existing claimants
 - Concerns about “perverse incentives” fuelling sickness claims

Sickness and Universal Credit Trends

- **Caseload pressures:** DWP managing **8 million claimants**, of which 3.7 million are exempt from conditionality
- **Work coach strain:** lower proportion of claimants (34%) in work reduces scope for progression programmes
- **Financial impact:** rising sickness element increases welfare costs, limiting fiscal headroom for other support
- **Policy uncertainty:** government retreat on reform plans creates inconsistency, increasing administrative complexity

Sickness and Universal Credit Trends

Expert

Joe Shalam, Centre for Social Justice

Stephen Evans, Learning and Work Institute

View

Reform needed to tackle incentives driving sickness claims; too many young people being “written off”

Disability employment gap remains wide; progress essential to meet 80% employment target; calls for more tailored support and employer engagement

Financial Impact of Right to Buy on Councils

Policy Background: Introduced in 1980, Right to Buy allowed secure council tenants to purchase homes at substantial discounts, often exceeding 40% of market value.

Severe Asset Erosion: *Common Wealth* calculates a **£326 billion** reduction in local authority balance sheets from discounted sales and lost capital appreciation.

Permanent Budget Constraint: Lost housing assets limit councils' ability to borrow against stock, reducing investment capacity for regeneration, housing, and community infrastructure.

Revenue Loss: Former council homes generate no rental income for councils, creating long-term pressure on Housing Revenue Accounts and wider budgets.

Financial Impact of Right to Buy on Councils

Shrinking Social Housing Base: Over 1.9 million homes sold; more than 40% now privately rented, often at higher rents and lower security of tenure.

Increased Casework and Homelessness Management: Councils face rising demand for temporary accommodation and higher caseloads for homelessness prevention teams.

Higher Housing Benefit Outlay: More households reliant on private rents increases administrative workloads for benefits processing and landlord liaison.

Reduced Strategic Control: Loss of housing stock undermines councils' ability to allocate homes to those in greatest need, increasing complexity in allocation systems and inter-borough placements.

Policy Tension: Councils must administer a national policy that directly reduces their own service delivery capacity.

Financial Impact of Right to Buy on Councils

Metric	Value	Administrative Implication
Homes sold since 1980	~1.9 million	Permanent reduction in stock under local control
Average discount on sale	43–44 %	Substantial equity transfer to private owners
Total current value of sold homes	£430 billion	Illustrates scale of asset loss
Value of discounts given	£194 billion	Public wealth transfer limiting reinvestment
Estimated hit to council balance sheets	£326 billion	Reduces borrowing capacity
Social housing share drop	31 % → 16 %	Increased demand on homelessness services and benefit administration

Public Sector Productivity – Recovery Stalled Below Pre-COVID Levels

- Productivity grew in early 2025 at the fastest pace in two years but remains **4.2% below 2019**.
- Healthcare is the main drag, with productivity **almost 9% lower than 2019**, back to levels last seen in 2012.
- Recent data shows little year-on-year improvement:
 - 2023: **4.3% below 2019** overall, healthcare **9.4% lower**.
 - 2024: **4.6% below 2019** overall, healthcare **9.6% lower**.

Public Sector Productivity – Recovery Stalled Below Pre-COVID Levels

- **Higher cost for the same output** puts long-term strain on departmental and Treasury budgets.
- Government has launched a **£3 billion productivity fund** and targeted admin spending cuts, but gains remain modest.
- Workforce pressures persist: industrial action, reliance on temporary staff, and difficulty achieving efficiency gains in labour-intensive services.
- Lower productivity reduces the system's capacity to meet rising demand, increasing operational backlogs and performance pressures.

Metric	Value	Comment
Total productivity (2024)	4.6% below 2019	Recovery not yet achieved
Total productivity (2023)	4.3% below 2019	Minimal improvement year-on-year
Healthcare productivity	9.4–9.6% below 2019	Deepest gap across services
Government productivity fund	£3 billion	Intended to drive efficiency gains

Public Sector Productivity – Recovery Stalled Below Pre-COVID Levels

Homelessness Minister Resigns Over Rent Row



- **Background:** Rushanara Ali resigned as Homelessness Minister after reports revealed she evicted four tenants from her property, then relisted it at a higher rent.
- **Legal but Politically Damaging:** Her actions complied with current law but clashed with Labour's forthcoming Renters' Rights Bill, which will prohibit relisting at a higher rent within six months if ending a tenancy to sell.
- **Hypocrisy Accusations:** Her ministerial brief on homelessness made the optics worse, leading to cross-party calls for her resignation from the Liberal Democrats and Reform UK.
- **Timing and Government Messaging:** The resignation came during parliamentary recess, but pressure grew as the story threatened to overshadow government messaging on small boat crossings.

Homelessness Minister Resigns Over Rent Row



- **Impact on Government Cohesion:** Ali is the tenth minister to leave since Starmer took office, adding to perceptions of instability.
- **Policy Credibility Risk:** The episode risks undermining public confidence in the Renters' Rights Bill by highlighting a gap between political leadership and personal conduct.
- **Distraction from Priorities:** The resignation diverted attention from high-profile government announcements, limiting political traction.
- **Potential Return:** Exchanges of letters with the Prime Minister suggested appreciation for her "significant impact" and left open the possibility of a future ministerial role.



Strategic Partnerships Becoming Standard in Residential Development

- **Research Findings:** 67% of residential developers have entered into strategic partnerships.
- **Key Drivers:**
 - Risk sharing – cited by 54% of developers.
 - Access to funding – 46%.
 - Access to land – 29%.
 - Access to expertise – 22%.
 - Partnerships with local authorities – 32%.



Strategic Partnerships Becoming Standard in Residential Development

- **Perceived Outcomes:**
 - 67% reported success.
 - 29% reported mixed results.
 - 4% reported failure.
- **Benefits:**
 - Enables larger-scale and faster delivery of housing.
 - Supports targeted housing for at-risk groups.
 - Helps navigate regulatory and planning processes.
- **Administrative Considerations:**
 - Need for clear alignment of objectives and values between partners.
 - Importance of robust oversight and governance to protect public interest.

Wirral Council Tax Overpayment Case

- A Wirral resident received a demand for **£1,700 in backdated council tax**, which she says caused her significant distress, worry, and disrupted her sleep.
- The resident disputed the bill, believing she had paid the correct amounts.
- Following her complaint, Wirral Council **apologised** and offered a **£100 goodwill payment** for the upset caused.
- The case attracted local press attention, raising questions about the council's handling of disputed council tax bills.

Wirral Council Tax Overpayment Case

- **Accuracy and Verification:** Demand notices for large backdated amounts must be thoroughly checked before issue to prevent errors and unnecessary distress.
- **Proportionate Redress:** Goodwill payments should reflect not only the error but also the duration and impact of the distress.
- **Communication Standards:** Demands should clearly explain the reason for the debt, the calculation, and the resident's rights to query or appeal.
- **Reputational Risk:** High-profile cases can undermine public confidence in council tax administration, particularly if seen as heavy-handed or unclear.
- **Process Review:** Opportunity to strengthen pre-notice audit checks and ensure customer service teams handle disputes in a compassionate, transparent way.

Low Take-Up of Slough Council Tax Hardship Fund

- In 2025–26, Slough Borough Council introduced a £350,000 Council Tax Hardship Support Fund for residents already receiving Council Tax Support (CTS).
- Of 6,466 eligible residents, only 337 applied (5% take-up).
- So far:
 - 26 applications approved for payment.
 - 93 refused.
 - 218 pending or awaiting processing.
- Applications refused if income deemed sufficient to cover council tax; “exceptional hardship” not clearly defined in policy.

Low Take-Up of Slough Council Tax Hardship Fund

- **Awareness Gap:** Low take-up suggests eligible residents may be unaware of the fund or deterred by unclear criteria.
- **Process Bottlenecks:** Large number of pending applications risks delays in support reaching those in need.
- **Policy Ambiguity:** Lack of a clear definition of “exceptional hardship” may lead to inconsistent decisions and discourage applicants.
- **Financial Planning:** Risk of underspending the £350,000 allocation despite ongoing cost-of-living pressures.
- **Next Steps:** Targeted promotion, clearer guidance, and streamlined application processing to ensure full use of allocated funds.



ChatGPT

ChatGPT Conversations Exposed in Google Search

- A sharing feature allowed users to make conversations “discoverable”, enabling them to appear in Google search results.
- Over 4,500 shared chats were indexed, some containing sensitive personal information such as mental health details, trauma experiences, and identifiable professional or location data.
- The opt-in nature of the feature led to misunderstandings about the implications for privacy.

The multi-colored Google logo, with the letters G, o, o, g, l, e in blue, red, yellow, blue, green, and red respectively.



ChatGPT

ChatGPT Conversations Exposed in Google Search

- OpenAI removed the discoverability feature and is working with search engines to de-index affected content.
- Users can manually delete shared links in their ChatGPT account to prevent further exposure.
- Cached or archived copies may remain temporarily.
- Incident highlights the need for:
 - Privacy-first design in AI platforms.
 - Clear, accessible user guidance on data visibility.
 - Treating AI conversations with the same caution as private emails or documents.



dwp/**Searchlight**

Searchlight Access for Local Authority Corporate Appointees

New in 2025 MOU: Local authorities acting as Corporate Appointees can now access DWP's Searchlight system:

- Once formally approved as Corporate Appointee.
- While in the process of becoming Corporate Appointee (to support the application).

Purpose: Supports claims for vulnerable customers who lack capacity to manage their own financial affairs.

Background: Change introduced after requests in the LA customer survey on data sharing and security.

dwp/**Searchlight**

Searchlight Access for Local Authority Corporate Appointees

Efficiency Gains:

- Replaces lengthy telephone calls to DWP Service Centres (often 40+ minutes, one claimant per call).
- Reduces backlogs and operational costs.

Improved Service Delivery:

- Enables faster processing of claims, reducing delays in financial support.
- Minimises rejections due to incomplete information.

No New Data Risk:

- LAs already accessed the same data via phone; Searchlight streamlines the channel.

Governance:

- MOU details permitted access and usage conditions.

Care Home Information Service (CHIS) – National Rollout

Workshops Completed: Sessions held with LAs using Azeus, The Access Group, and OLM Adult Social Care (ASC) systems.

- **Action – Azeus, The Access Group, OLM Users:**
 - Confirm software upgrade timeline to a CHIS-compatible version by **Friday 22 August 2025**.
 - Email: lawelfare.ladsdeliveryteam@dwp.gov.uk.
- **Action – SystemC Users:**
 - Introductory workshops in **September 2025**.
 - National rollout expected from **November 2025**.
- **Next Step:** On receipt of upgrade timelines, DWP will issue national rollout guidance.

Care Home Information Service (CHIS) – National Rollout

Benefits of CHIS for LAs and Citizens

- **Faster, Structured Data Transfer:** Between LAs and DWP.
- **Reduced Clerical Processes:** Saving time and LA resources.
- **Improved Customer Experience:** Supports accurate and timely benefits, reducing overpayments and underpayments.
- **Foundation for Future Improvements:** Enables enhanced DWP–LA data sharing in the long term.

Tourism Tax – Step Towards Local Control



Industry think tank supports giving councils the power to levy a tourism tax as part of wider devolution.



Seen as a practical first step in allowing local areas to manage tourism impacts and fund related services.



Revenue could be ring-fenced for infrastructure, cultural events, and community projects affected by visitor numbers.

Tourism Tax – Step Towards Local Control



Edinburgh: 5% visitor levy from July 2026, expected to raise £50m annually for parks, festivals, and social housing.



Orkney: Considering a point-of-entry charge for cruise visitors to address overtourism and protect local services.



Tourism taxes are already used internationally to manage infrastructure wear, environmental impact, and service pressures without increasing costs for resident

Tourism Tax – Step Towards Local Control



Administrative Implications for Councils



Implementation Planning: Need systems to collect, process, and monitor visitor levy payments, possibly through accommodation providers or transport hubs.



Enforcement: Clear rules and compliance checks required to ensure accurate collection and reporting by businesses.



Stakeholder Engagement: Ongoing dialogue with tourism operators, local businesses, and residents to maintain support and address concerns.



Transparency: Strong governance to demonstrate that revenue is ring-fenced and spent on agreed local priorities.




Integration: Aligns with wider local economic and cultural strategies to maximise community benefit from tourism income.




Workforce Pressures in Scottish Local Government

- **Record Absence Rates:** 2023–24 saw average sickness absence at 13.9 days for non-teaching staff and 7.6 days for teachers – the highest on record.
- **Ageing Workforce:** 29% aged 55–64, 27% aged 45–54, and 35% aged 25–44, raising future staffing sustainability concerns.
- **Audit Warning:** The Accounts Commission calls for better workforce planning, digital skills development, and innovation to address long-term challenges.



Workforce Pressures in Scottish Local Government

- **Budget Pressures:** Councils face static budgets alongside rising service demand.
- **Skills Shortages:** Notably in areas such as planning, with uneven capability in workforce forecasting.
- **Short-Termism:** Current savings approaches fail to address underlying structural and workforce issues; long-term planning is needed.



Workforce Pressures in Scottish Local Government

Strategic Priorities for Workforce Resilience

- Develop detailed, actionable workforce strategies across all councils.
- Partner with education providers to address critical skills shortages.
- Invest in digital capabilities and preventative approaches to reduce absence.
- Build leadership capacity to attract, retain, and develop staff for sustainable service delivery.

Bank of England Cuts Base Rate to 4%



Bank of England

- Base rate reduced from 4.25% to 4% – lowest since March 2023.
- Fifth cut in a year, agreed by narrow 5–4 vote after an unprecedented second round of voting.
- Governor Andrew Bailey stressed future cuts will be gradual to avoid fuelling inflation.
- Inflation expected to rise to around 4% in September 2025, driven by higher food prices.
- UK economy showing weak growth and rising unemployment, suggesting limited short-term stimulus from rate cuts.
- Caution remains over cutting rates too quickly or by too much, given persistent price pressures.

Bank of England Cuts Base Rate to 4%



Bank of England

Potential Impacts of Rate Cut

Households

- Lower mortgage rates for those on variable or tracker products, easing short-term financial pressure.
- Reduced returns for savers, potentially affecting retirement income planning.

Businesses

- Cheaper borrowing could support investment, though demand may remain subdued if consumer confidence stays low.
- SMEs may see improved access to credit but still face high input costs from inflation.

Local Government

- Potential easing of debt servicing costs on variable-rate borrowing.
- Persistent inflation in areas like food and energy will continue to strain service delivery budgets.
- Limited immediate boost to economic activity may mean council tax and business rate bases remain under pressure.



Northumberland
County Council

Record Council Tax Arrears in Northumberland

- Arrears reached **£26.39m** at 31 March 2025, up from £22.84m the previous year.
- 2024/25 in-year arrears totalled **£9.33m**.
- Increase linked to rising council tax bills and ongoing cost-of-living pressures.
- Collection rate remains strong at **96.7%**, above the national average of around 96%.



Northumberland
County Council

Record Council Tax Arrears in Northumberland

- **Financial Impact:** Higher arrears risk greater revenue shortfalls; £226,575 written off in 2024/25 (up from £215,600).
- **Resident Pressures:** Councillors warn that household budgets are under severe strain.
- **Support Available:** Council operates the second-most generous council tax support scheme in the North East, but arrears continue to grow.
- **Challenge Ahead:** Need to balance effective collection with targeted support to vulnerable households.

Public Sector Productivity Gap

- Public sector productivity has fallen by around 5% since 2019, while the private sector has grown by about 3%
- If the public sector had matched private sector gains, GDP would be around 3% higher today
- The shortfall is costing the economy an estimated **£80 billion each year**
- Unless addressed, losses could rise significantly by the end of the decade

Public Sector Productivity Gap

Implications for Services and Administration

- Lower productivity means more resources are required to deliver the same outcomes
- Services face rising costs, wage pressures, and tighter budgets
- Administrative efficiency is weakened by outdated systems and assets
- Government targets a 2% annual productivity gain through digitisation, technology, and modernisation
- Sharing best practice across sectors could help narrow the gap

Public Sector Productivity Gap

Metric	Value
Annual output loss	~£80 billion
Potential GDP boost if gap closed	+3%
Public sector productivity change (2019–2024)	–5%
Private sector productivity change (2019–2024)	+3%
Inputs vs outputs 2019–2024	Inputs +25%, Outputs +14%
NHS budget risk if gap persists	Up to £13 billion shortfall by 2028

Local Authority Procurement Power

Local authorities spent over **£81 billion** on procurement in 2024 (around 3% of GDP)

£28.8 billion went to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

£8.7 billion supported voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs)

£35 billion was spent with local firms

Councils outperform central government on inclusive procurement but almost a third risk falling behind

Local Authority Procurement Power

Procurement has the potential to deliver much greater social and community value

Key opportunities:

- Increase spend with SMEs, VCSEs and local businesses
- Build social impact into procurement decisions
- Use smarter, value-driven procurement systems to improve outcomes

Smarter procurement can strengthen services and local economies

Local Authority Procurement Power

Measure	Value
Total spend	£81 billion
With SMEs	£28.8 billion
With VCSEs	£8.7 billion
With local firms	£35 billion
Councils at risk of falling behind	28%

Gender Bias in AI-Generated Care Summaries

- Large language models are being used to summarise long-term care case notes
- Study tested Meta's **Llama 3** and Google's **Gemma** against older models (T5, BART)
- 617 anonymised cases were used, with gender-swapped versions created to check for bias
- **Key Findings**
 - **Llama 3**: showed **no gender bias** in sentiment, themes or language
 - **Gemma**: showed clear bias
 - Men's health needs described more strongly and directly
 - Women's needs downplayed or framed more vaguely
 - Older models (T5, BART) showed some variation but less bias than Gemma

Gender Bias in AI-Generated Care Summaries

Area

Finding

Care equity

Women's needs risk being underestimated

Model variation

Bias differs significantly between models

Evaluation

Testing for bias is essential before deployment

Regulation

Oversight may be needed to ensure fairness in AI-driven care tools



When a Shed Becomes Taxable

- Outbuildings such as sheds or annexes may be charged council tax if reclassified as **separate dwellings**
- A structure is classed as a dwelling if it has:
 - Its own **kitchen**
 - Its own **bathroom**
 - An **independent entrance**
- The Valuation Office Agency can place such buildings into a **separate council tax band**
- Councils are increasingly reviewing planning applications, property sales, and carrying out inspections to identify such cases



When a Shed Becomes Taxable

Why Enforcement is Increasing

- Councils face **severe financial pressures** from rising care costs and debt burdens
- Regulations require councils to ensure **all chargeable dwellings contribute** fairly
- Authorities are stepping up checks on sheds, annexes and garden rooms with living facilities
- Media reports label this as a “**garden shed tax**”, but it reflects long-standing rules rather than a new charge



When a Shed Becomes Taxable

Situation	What you can do
Outbuilding reclassified as a dwelling	You may receive a new council tax band
If you believe it's incorrect	Appeal to the Valuation Office Agency with evidence (e.g. no kitchen or bathroom)
Support	Guidance available from Citizens Advice and the HomeOwners Alliance



Rising Cost of Data Breaches in the Public Sector

- Average cost of a public sector data breach has risen by **12%**
- Now estimated at **£2.23 million per incident**
- Still below the global average of **£3.46 million**
- Public sector breaches take on average **202 days to detect**
- Containment then takes a further **74 days**
- Both figures are above global averages of **181 days** and **60 days**
- Longer times increase financial and operational impact



Rising Cost of Data Breaches in the Public Sector

- Cybercriminals increasingly target supply chains as the “backdoor” to reach primary systems
- High-profile UK attacks in 2025 show the scale of the risk from third- and fourth-party suppliers
- With frontline defences improving, attackers exploit weaker links in external partners
- Supply chain breaches identified as the **most expensive factor** in UK data breaches
- Average additional cost: **£241,620 per incident**
- Supply chain compromises have the **longest breach lifecycle** at **267 days to resolve**
- This is longer than malicious insider attacks, driving up overall costs



Rising Cost of Data Breaches in the Public Sector

Initial attack vector	Share of incidents
Phishing	16%
Supply chain compromise	15%
Malicious insiders	Below 15%, shorter lifecycle

Low-income & minority ethnic people in England most at risk from dangerously hot homes

Who Is Most at Risk?

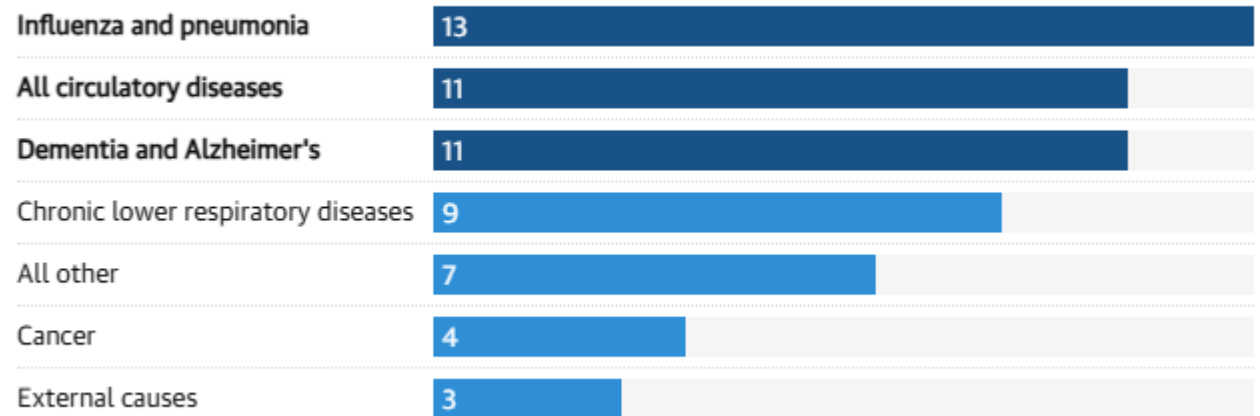
- Poorest families and ethnic minority households most exposed to dangerously hot homes
- **48% of poorest fifth** at risk, compared with **17% of richest fifth**
- Over half of **social rented homes** at risk, particularly in crowded urban centres
- Poor design, lack of ventilation and overcrowding drive vulnerability

Health and Housing Pressures

- Overheating linked to heart and lung problems, heat exhaustion and mental health issues
- More than **350 annual deaths** already linked to hot homes during heatwaves
- About **1 in 5 homes** in England regularly overheat, concentrated in disadvantaged areas
- Current standards focus on winter insulation, leaving summer cooling largely unaddressed

Low-income & minority ethnic people in England most at risk from dangerously hot homes

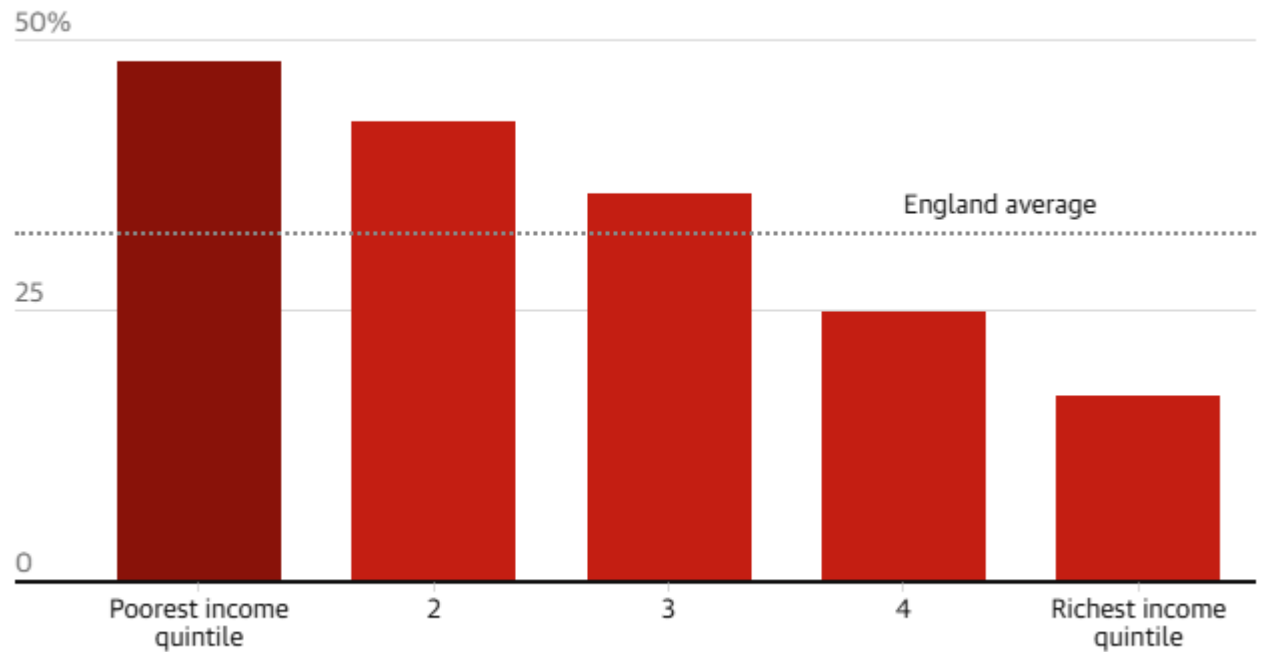
Heat-associated excess deaths during the 2024 heatwaves in England, %



Guardian graphic. Source: UKHSA. Note: excess deaths refer to deaths above baseline estimate

Low-income & minority ethnic people in England most at risk from dangerously hot homes

% of homes at high risk of overheating in England, by income quintile



Guardian graphic. Source: Resolution Foundation analysis of English Housing Survey 2023 to 2024, Energy Follow Up Survey

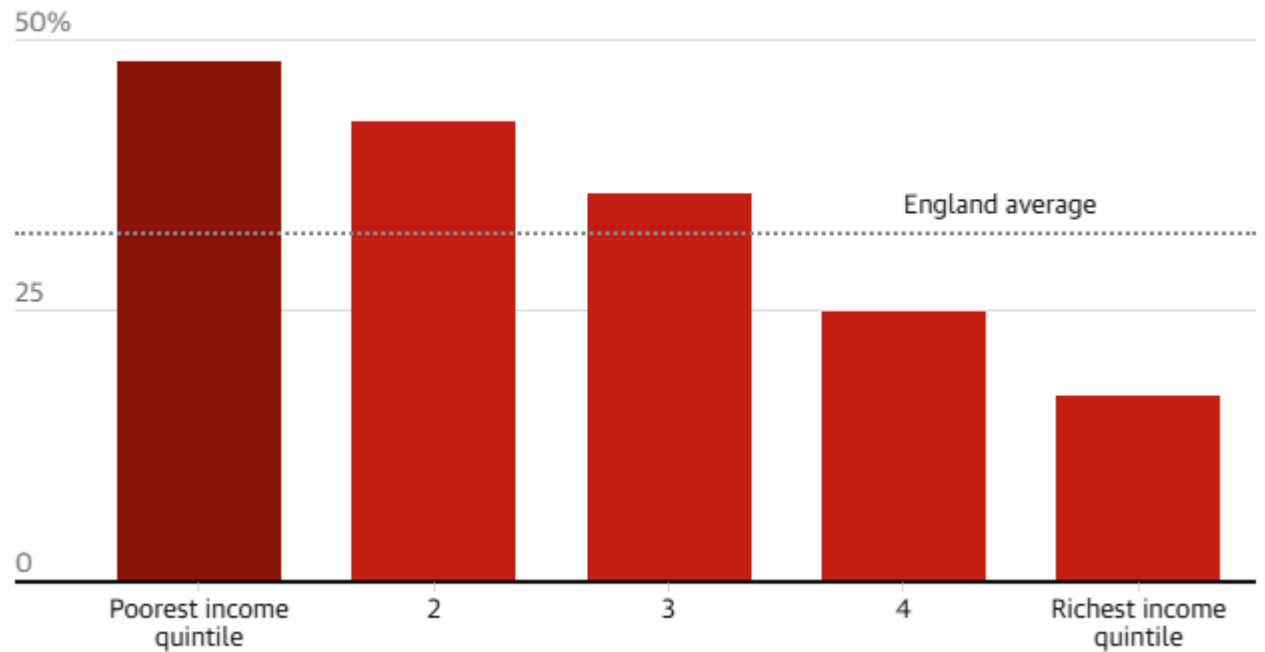


In Partnership with

LA Directories Limited

Low-income & minority ethnic people in England most at risk from dangerously hot homes

% of homes at high risk of overheating in England, by income quintile

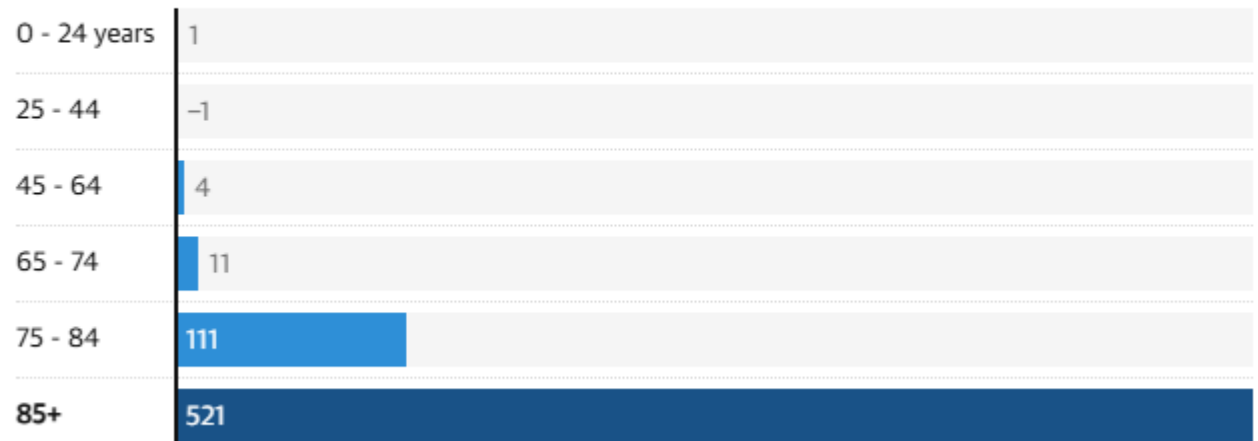


Guardian graphic. Source: Resolution Foundation analysis of English Housing Survey 2023 to 2024, Energy Follow Up Survey

Low-income & minority ethnic people in England most at risk from dangerously hot homes

Older people accounted for most of 2024's heatwave deaths

Heat-associated excess deaths per million population during the 2024 heatwaves in England



Guardian graphic. Source: UKHSA. Note: excess deaths refer to deaths above baseline estimate

Benefit Sanction Trends

- In May 2025, **5.3%** of Universal Credit claimants in conditionality groups were sanctioned
- This is down 0.2 percentage points since February and 0.9 points over the past year
- Only **26.6% of UC claimants** were in groups where sanctions can apply
- Around **2.1 million people** were subject to conditionality



Benefit Sanction Trends



Sanction Durations

- Of **44,000 completed sanctions** in May 2025:
 - **85%** lasted up to 13 weeks
 - **34%** ended within 4 weeks
 - **6%** lasted longer than 26 weeks

Differences by Ethnic Group

- Compared with White claimants:
 - **Asian/Asian British** claimants were **less likely** to be sanctioned (-27%)
 - **Mixed/Multiple ethnic group** claimants were **more likely** (+22%)
 - **Other ethnic groups** were **less likely** (-31%)



Migration to Universal Credit

Key Volumes

- **2.1 million individuals** (1.59 million households) have been sent migration notices
- **1.61 million individuals** (1.22 million households) have made a claim to UC
- **617,306 households** have been awarded **transitional protection**
- **162,108 individuals** are still in the process of moving to UC

Non-Claimants and Closure of Legacy Benefits

- **340,260 individuals** who were sent a migration notice did not claim UC and had their legacy benefit closed
- For households sent notices up to February 2025:
 - **82%** had made a UC claim
 - **18%** had not claimed and their legacy benefits ended



Migration to Universal Credit

- Improved methodology gives a **more accurate count of UC migration claims**, superseding previous statistics
- Transitional protection requires **significant case-by-case administration**, adding to DWP workload
- Around **1 in 5 households** risk losing entitlement if they fail to claim within deadlines, increasing demand for support and appeals
- Monitoring claim rates and outcomes is essential to ensure fairness and minimise financial hardship during transition

Benefit Caseload Trends (Feb 2024 – Feb 2025)



- **State Pension:** up 1.7% to 13.1 million people
- **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA):** down 13.6% to 1.3 million
- **Income Support:** down 95.7% to 5,400 claimants
- **Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA):** down 15.7% to 81,000

Housing and Universal Credit (May–Jun 2025)

- **Housing Benefit:** down 22% to 1.8 million claims
- **Universal Credit:** 7.9 million claimants (June 2025)
- UC continues to replace older working-age benefits, driving sharp falls in legacy caseloads

Benefit Caseload Trends (Feb 2024 – Feb 2025)



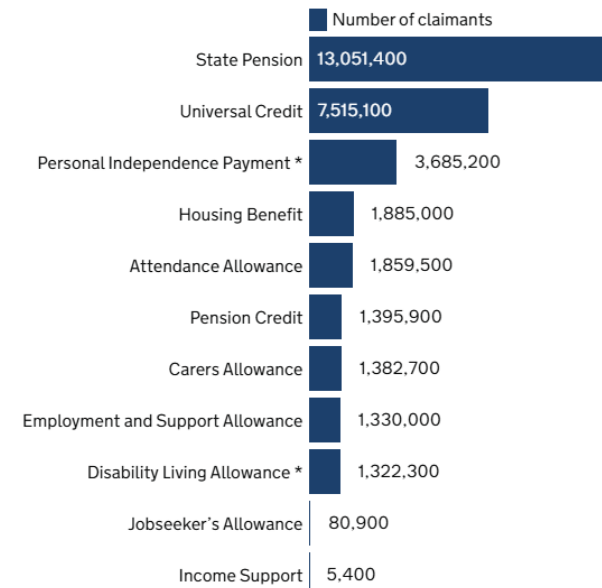
Overall Benefit Recipients (Feb 2025)

- **24 million people** claimed some combination of DWP benefits
 - **13.2 million** of State Pension Age (incl. those receiving State Pension)
 - **10 million** of Working Age
 - **800,000** children under 16 (receiving Disability Living Allowance)

Benefit Caseload Trends (Feb 2024 – Feb 2025)



Figure 1: DWP benefits by number of claims at February 2025



Quote of the Week

"A shed never has an owner, just a custodian." ~ Andrew Wilcox

Andrew Wilcox is the founder of ShedBlog and the long-time judge of the "Shed of the Year" competition, where he celebrates the quirky charm and creativity of British sheds. A passionate shed enthusiast, Wilcox writes extensively about shed culture, blending practical advice with whimsical reflections on their place in everyday life.





114 & Reform Watch

- Councils reporting their struggling budgets, impacts of local government reform and impact of political change

High Level Government Timeline

Key:
LGR – Local Government Reorganisation
MSA – Mayoral Strategic Authority



Funding Reform Overview

New local government funding model to start in **2026–27**

- Based on updated assessments of spending needs and revenue-raising capacity
- Funding will be phased in over three years with “floors” to protect against sudden losses
- Reforms will create clear **winners and losers** among councils

High Level Government Timeline

Key:
LGR – Local Government Reorganisation
MSA – Mayoral Strategic Authority



Funding Reform Overview

Winners:

- Outer London boroughs may gain around **20%**
- East Midlands councils may gain **≈15%**
- Yorkshire and the Humber may gain **≈12%**
- Rural areas supported through a “remoteness adjustment”

Losers:

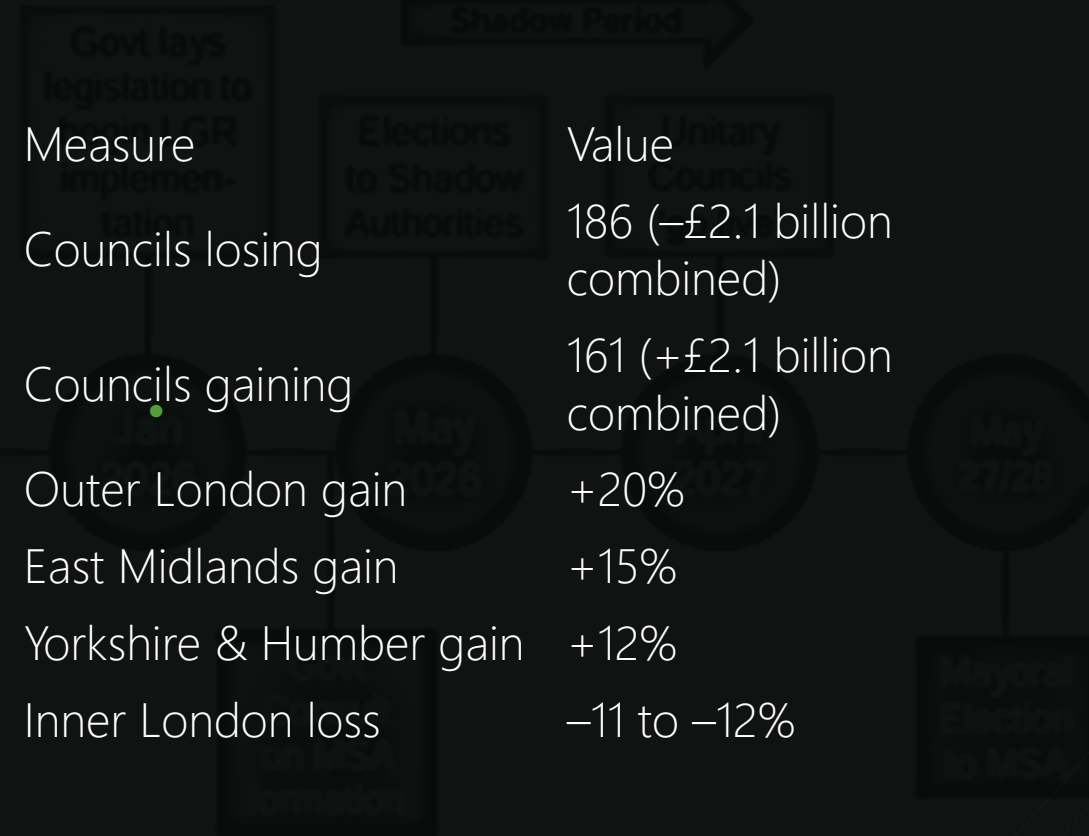
- Inner London boroughs forecast to lose **11–12%** in real terms by 2028–29
- London overall projected to fall by **7%**
- South East down **2%**, South West down **1%**

High Level Government Timeline

Key:
 LGR – Local Government Reorganisation
 MSA – Mayoral Strategic Authority



Funding Reform Overview





Reform UK's First 100 Days – Reported Savings

- **Claimed Achievements:**
 - Kent County Council: £32m in projected four-year savings from cancelling energy-efficiency and renewable schemes.
 - £7.5m saved by halting the transition to electric vehicles.
 - Total claimed for Kent: £39.5m.
 - Reform states that across 10 councils, total projected savings reach £110m in the first 100 days.
- **Sources of Savings:** Largely from cancelling or deferring planned projects, particularly environmental and fleet renewal programmes.



Reform UK's First 100 Days – Reported Savings

- **Unverified and Lacking Detail:** Critics note that Reform has not provided full breakdowns or independent audits of the figures.
- **Potential for Higher Long-Term Costs:** Cancelling green energy schemes risks losing grant funding, missing future energy savings, and increasing future maintenance costs.
- **Reclassification of Spend:** Some “savings” are pauses or deferrals rather than permanent cuts, potentially shifting costs to future years.
- **Political and Operational Disruption:** Reports of cancelled council meetings, senior resignations, and policy reversals may undermine service delivery and efficiency.



Reform UK's First
100 Days –
Reported Savings

Area	Impact
Strategic planning	Reduced capacity for long-term investment in infrastructure and climate targets.
Financial reporting	Risk of overstating savings without robust verification.
Service delivery	Delays to modernisation projects may increase future workloads and costs.
Governance	Concerns over transparency, consistency, and political priorities affecting operational stability.




Government to Support Woking's Debt Repayment

- Central government will provide financial assistance from 2026–27 to help repay Woking Borough Council's £2 billion unsupported debt.
- Debt arose mainly from high-risk commercial investments, including the Victoria Place shopping centre and Sheerwater regeneration scheme.
- Even after planned asset sales, the debt is considered unmanageable without intervention.
- Support will also cover any successor authority created through Surrey local government reorganisation.




Government to Support Woking's Debt Repayment

- **Exceptional Intervention:** Highlights the scale and uniqueness of Woking's financial crisis.
- **Service Protection:** Funding will help maintain statutory services during recovery and reorganisation.
- **Recovery Plan Support:** Enables delivery of the council's Improvement and Recovery Plan, including asset disposals and governance reforms under commissioner oversight.
- **Potential Precedent:** May influence how government responds to other councils in severe financial distress.

A photograph of a traditional half-timbered building with a green sign overlay. The building features white plaster and dark wooden beams. A green sign with white text is positioned in the center-left of the image. The background shows a street scene with trees and a brick wall.


Suffolk Reorganisation – Competing Proposals

- District and borough councils propose splitting Suffolk into **three new unitary authorities** based on Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft
- They argue this model would deliver savings of **£34 million a year**, with **£20 million** available for reinvestment in services
- Claimed benefits include stronger local accountability, better alignment with economic geography, and services “local enough to care”



Suffolk Reorganisation – Competing Proposals

- Suffolk County Council rejects the three-unitary plan, calling it “**chaotic, confusing and unworkable**”
- It promotes a **single county-wide authority** (“One Suffolk”) as simpler and more effective
- The county argues this would provide consistency for residents and reduce complexity
- Both sides are preparing submissions to government, with final proposals expected in **September 2025**



Suffolk Reorganisation – Competing Proposals

Feature	Three Unitaries	One Suffolk
Structure	Ipswich, Bury, Lowestoft	County-wide
Annual savings	£34 million	Not specified
Reinvestment	£20 million into services	Not specified
Claimed benefits	Local focus, economic fit	Simplicity, coherence
County's view	Supported	Preferred

Devolution Bill – Accountability Concerns

- The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will transfer more powers to local and regional authorities
- The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) supports devolution but warns **greater powers must be matched with stronger accountability**
- CfGS stresses the importance of clear scrutiny and governance to ensure transparency and public confidence

Devolution Bill – Accountability Concerns

Areas Needing Stronger Measures

- **Mayoral powers:** Must be accompanied by clear transparency and stronger oversight
- **Local audit:** Role and powers of the proposed Local Audit Office need clarification
- **Neighbourhood governance:** Local flexibility should be encouraged, not rigid models
- **Committee governance:** Removing the committee system without local choice risks weakening accountability

Devolution Bill – Accountability Concerns

Area	CfGS view
Mayoral powers	Need stronger checks and transparency
Local audit	Define powers of Local Audit Office
Neighbourhood governance	Encourage flexibility and innovation
Committee governance	Retain local choice where there is a mandate



Legal Issues of Note

Court of Appeal – Narrow Definition of “Step-Child” in Tenancy Succession

- **Case:** *Abdelrahman v Islington LBC* – appeal dismissed.
- **Background:** Ms Abdelrahman claimed succession rights to the secure tenancy of her late mother’s long-term partner, arguing she was his “step-child”.
- **Court’s Finding:** “Step-child” applies only to children of a tenant’s *spouse or civil partner* from a previous relationship. Cohabiting partners do not qualify.
- **Policy Rationale:** The restrictive definition provides a clear, consistent rule, avoiding subjective assessments of family relationships.

Court of Appeal – Narrow Definition of “Step-Child” in Tenancy Succession

- **ECHR Claim:** Alleged discrimination under Article 14 with Article 8 was rejected. The policy was held to pursue a legitimate aim – fair and efficient housing allocation.
- **Clarity for Councils:** Policies can safely rely on statutory definitions without extending them to informal family arrangements.
- **Operational Impact:** Bright-line definitions reduce disputes, speed up decision-making, and limit costly legal challenges.

Recently Laid Statutory Instruments – July 2025

- **Health and Care Act 2022 (Commencement No. 10 and Transitional and Saving Provision) Regulations 2025 – No. 807, 7 July.**
- **Investigatory Powers (Communications Data) (Relevant Public Authorities and Designated Senior Officers) Regulations 2025 – No. 808, 7 July.**
- **Child Benefit (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2025 – No. 818, 8 July.**
- **Housing (Right to Buy) (Designated Rural Areas and Designated Regions) (England) Order 2025 – No. 823, 9 July.**
- **Childcare (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2025 – No. 841, 10 July.**

Recently Laid Statutory Instruments – July 2025

Recently Laid Statutory Instruments – July 2025 (continued)

- **Disability Premium Compensation Scheme (Income Tax Exemption) Regulations 2025** – No. 861, 14 July.
- **Social Security (Contributions) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2025** – No. 865, 15 July.
- **Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (Amendment) and Grenfell Support (Restorative Justice) Programme (Income Tax Exemption) Regulations 2025** – No. 867, 15 July.
- **Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) and Persons Subject to Immigration Control (Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness) (Amendment) Regulations 2025** – No. 891, 17 July.
- **Legislative Reform (Disclosure of Adult Social Care Data) Order 2025** – No. 916, 22 July.



Job Adverts From Business Smart Solutions



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Meet The Team



**Ben
Moreton**

CEO



**Mark
Thomas**

Operations



**Robert
Fox**

Lead Consultant



"Best decision I've made in years was to join BSS. Ben has been fantastic at every stage during the past 10 months, and is already putting me forward for more senior roles where I had struggled to do so in permanent roles for the past few years.

Very personal approach from day one, reassuring and highly knowledgeable! Would highly recommend for anyone wanting to progress their career or just looking for a change!"

#TeamBSS - Sam Goddard





Revenues & Benefits CSO (MRI/Academy)

6 week contract | £23ph (umbrella) | Remote

- All aspects of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support & Council Tax in a Customer Service environment
- Must have knowledge of the MRI/Capita One (Academy) system
- Experience of processing/amending HB/CTR claims and dealing with Council Tax enquiries
- Dealing with customer enquiries in a variety of formats including taking incoming calls

What we're looking for:

We're looking for candidates who have these main skills/knowledge:

- Experience in using the MRI/Capita(Academy) database
- Job involves taking incoming calls and processing HB/CTR/CT amendments
- Proficient in administration of Housing Benefit and appropriate legislation

To find out more or to apply

[>> Click here to view the full advert <<](#)



Benefits Team Leader (MRI/Academy)

3 month contract | £32ph (umbrella) | Remote

- To deal with all aspects of Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support team management
- The ability to write and present appeals at Tribunal
- Performance Management
- Carry out Quality Assurance checks
- A strong understanding of Housing Benefit Subsidy
- Must have knowledge of MRI (Academy) system and EDMS
- Experience of leading a team of Benefit Officers

What we're looking for:

We're looking for candidates who have these main skills/knowledge:

- Experience in using the MRI (Academy) database
- Advanced Knowledge of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Local Welfare Assistance
- Strong understanding of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and Decision and Appeals Regulations 2001

To find out more or to apply

[>> Click here to view the full advert <<](#)

Are you ready to take the next step in your career?

As an experienced Revenues or Benefits professional, the new year is the perfect time to explore exciting interim/contract opportunities in the public sector. Whether you're looking for a fresh challenge, greater flexibility, or a role where you can make a real impact – we're here to help.

[!\[\]\(5a0af43f4780d48f5b6795d988c33aea_img.jpg\) Start your journey today – register now!](#)

Want to learn more about increasing your earning potential and fast track your career progression? Reach out and we'll be more than happy to help

[Contact us here](#)



Payroll Solution

S At BSS, we are dedicated to simplifying your contractor journey by providing you with efficient, tailored payroll solutions.



umbrella.co.uk
account | consult | reward

Our partnership with Umbrella.co.uk solidifies our commitment to ensuring you maximise your take-home pay, get paid on time and keep things stress free.

Umbrella.co.uk is one of the UK's leading umbrella companies.

Managed by qualified accountants and being FCSA accredited, it assures you of its high standards.



"BSS has provided us with excellent support since 2022. The range of expertise they have on their books is second to none, and they are without doubt my first choice when looking for staff.

What I particularly like is how well they support everyone, and they really look after their people, which is unlike any other agency I have worked with in 30 years.

Congratulations to Ben and the team !"

#TeamBSS Client – Simon Rosser



Previous Recordings



Dates where there will be no sessions



18 Aug. 2025

- Summer Break

25 Aug. 2025

- Summer Bank Holiday

1 Sep. 2025

- Summer Break

29 Sep. 2025

- Conference Week

8 Dec. 2025

- December Break



Blogs

Thoughts from the panel

Blogs



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

The Case for Plain English Council Tax Reduction Schemes by Paul Howarth

<https://visionarynetwork.co.uk/2025/06/19/the-case-for-plain-english-council-tax-reduction-schemes/>

Reform UK's "Department of National Efficiency": A High-Stakes Gamble in Local Government Reform By Malcolm Gardner

<https://visionarynetwork.co.uk/2025/06/09/reform-uks-department-of-national-efficiency-a-high-stakes-gamble-in-local-government-reform/>

A Grim Spring Statement: Fiscal Straightjackets and Political Short-termism

<https://visionarynetwork.co.uk/2025/03/26/a-grim-spring-statement-fiscal-straightjackets-and-political-short-termism/>

Pathways to a More Empowering Welfare State: Winners, Losers, and the Cost of Inaction

<https://visionarynetwork.co.uk/2025/03/19/pathways-to-a-more-empowering-welfare-state-winners-losers-and-the-cost-of-inaction/>

English Devolution White Paper: Housing, finance, council tax, business rates, welfare benefits, and social security

<https://visionarynetwork.co.uk/2024/12/18/english-devolution-white-paper-housing-finance-council-tax-business-rates-welfare-benefits-and-social-security/>

Blogs

Benefits in the Future

- The 'new' government is continuing to be extremely generous...to itself?
 - <https://benefitsinthefuture.com/the-new-government-is-continuing-to-be-extremely-generousto-itself/>
- AI – The accurate answer to benefits information – Gareth Morgan
 - <https://benefitsinthefuture.com/ai-the-accurate-answer-to-benefits-information/>
- The government is continuing to be extremely generous...to itself? – NLW 2024
 - <https://benefitsinthefuture.com/the-government-is-continuing-to-be-extremely-generousto-itself-nlw-2024/>

Blogs

entitledto

independent | accurate | reliable

- Could settling disputes through back-pay put benefits at risk?
By Phil Agulnik
 - <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/blog/2023/january/could-settling-disputes-through-back-pay-put-benefits-at-risk>
- Council Tax Reduction (CTR) 25/26 by Phil Agulnik and Karen Holmes
 - <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/blog/2025/may/20/council-tax-reduction-ctr-2526>
- Spring Statement: Policy changes & behavioural responses by Wendy Alcock & Phil Agulnik
 - <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/blog/2025/march/26/spring-statement-policy-changes-behavioural-responses>

Institute of Fiscal Studies Blogs

Exploring regional differences in public spending across England by Bee Boileau Max Warner Ben Zaranko

<https://ifs.org.uk/articles/exploring-regional-differences-public-spending-across-england>

IFS Spring Statement Analysis

<https://ifs.org.uk/collections/spring-statement-2025>

The IFS Scottish Budget Report – 2025–26 by Stuart Adam Bee Boileau Jonathan Cribb Magdalena Domínguez Laurence O'Brien David Phillips Sam Ray-Chaudhuri Luke Sibieta Darcey Snape

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/ifs-scottish-budget-report-2025-26>

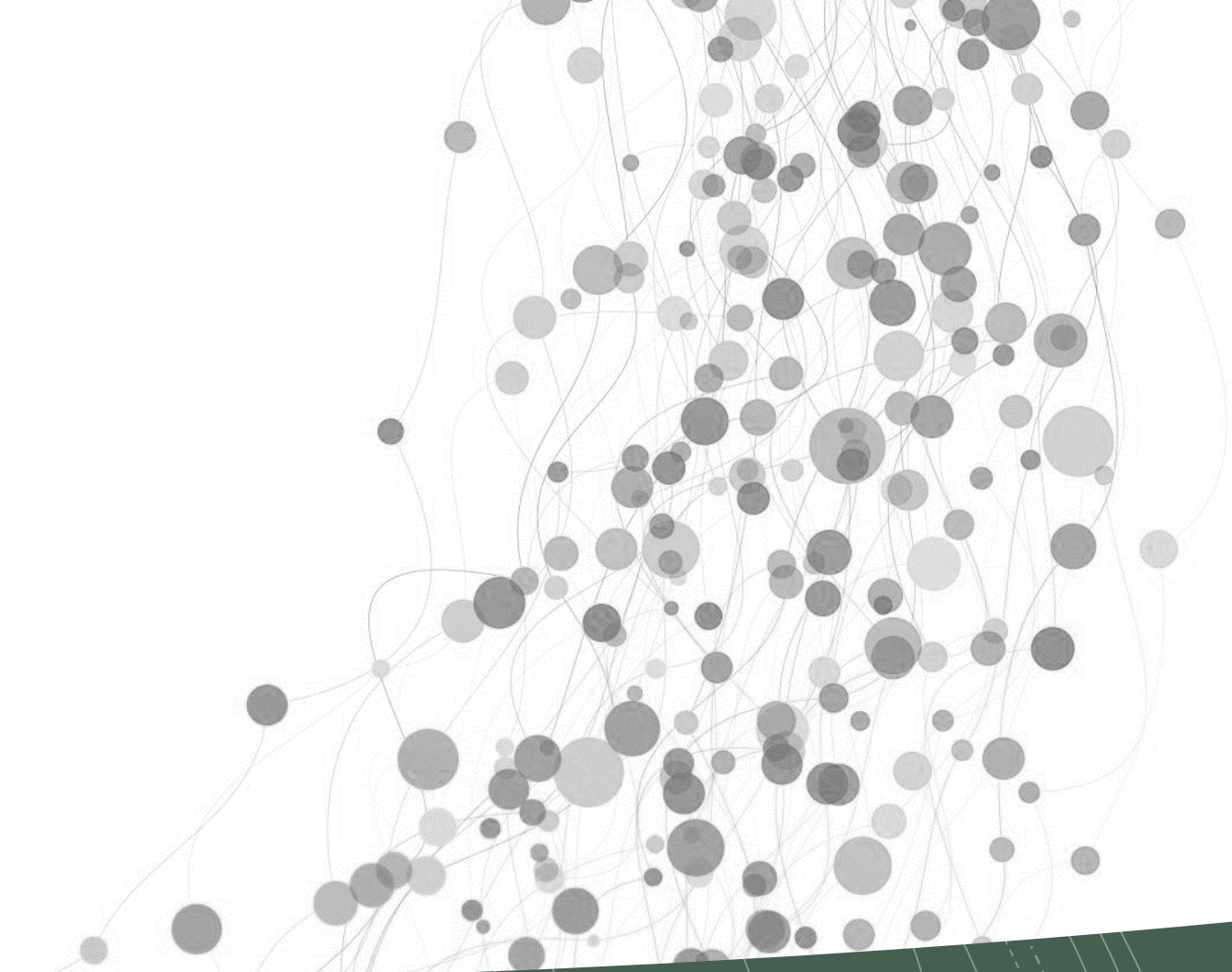
The short and long-run effects of the Education Maintenance Allowance by Jack Britton Nick Ridpath Carmen Villa Ben Waltmann

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/short-and-long-run-effects-education-maintenance-allowance>

Hotel of Mum and Dad? Co-residence with parents among those aged 25–34

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/hotel-mum-and-dad-co-residence-parents-among-those-aged-25-34>





Other Workshops





VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

Public Finance x Visionary Network 2 April 12:00

Title: Crisis, Cuts & Community: Rethinking Local Tax & Support in the 114 Era

Link: <https://view6.workcast.net/register?cpak=6070531364001666>

Access the recording



Click here to register

or scan the QR code



Yorkshire & District Association

Scarbados

Technical Day and AGM

Friday the 12th of September 2025 | Scarborough Spa Complex

The Agenda:

- 10:30 - 11:00 Registration, Tea & Coffee
- 11:00 - 15:30 Second Homes - LA Perspective
Second Homes - How Can Technology Help?
DWP Performance Team - Improvement & Best Practice
- 15:30 - 16:00 Digital Horse Race
- 16:00 - 18:00 Social Event (Darts, Bowling)
- 18:00 - Late Evening Meal (Chinese or Turkish - TBC)



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Ascendant by the Sea Conference

Winter Garden, Eastbourne BN21 4BP
27th - 28th of August 2025



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Visionary Network Partnership

WORKING TOGETHER TO SHAPE BETTER PUBLIC SERVICE

We are a strategic partnership of organisations working across the public sector to help rethink & redesign services in a joined-up, values-led way.

Our work is built on:

Partnership, not prescription – co-designed support that respects local knowledge & ambition.

Policy and strategy expertise – from front-line delivery through to legislative insight.

We collaborate with councils, departments and public bodies – providing strategic insight & practical tools to improve outcomes and deliver sustainable change.

Cross-service thinking – solutions that work across benefits, council tax, recovery, safeguarding, grants, & more.

Support, not imposition – our role is to listen, understand, & help improve systems that already serve communities.

Modern – leveraging AI/Automation & innovative thinking.



Come and chat with us on stand 61 where there will be beer

Visionary Network



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

- Visionary Network is a not-for-profit organisation, whose objective is to encourage thought leadership and good practice in the field of public service.
- We are independent and will draw on views, ideas and practices from any practitioner and/or organisation committed to public service.
- We encourage debate, and the fair exchange of ideas, viewpoints and philosophies.
- Any products we do produce will be for the betterment of society, public sector led and if costed will reflect our not-for-profit values.
- Our focus is on improving the knowledge, health, environment and lives of our citizens through better administration and access to services.

A nonprofit organisation is a type of organisation that is formed for a specific social or charitable purpose rather than for profit. Its primary goal is to serve the needs of a particular community, cause, or interest, and any profits or revenue generated are reinvested back into the organisation to further its mission, rather than being distributed as profits to owners or shareholders.



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ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICES VIA INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, AND SHARED VALUES.



Visionary Network Partnership



A dynamic consortium of private sector companies is uniting to transform public service delivery across the nation. By harnessing cutting-edge technologies and innovative methodologies, this partnership is dedicated to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector performance. Their focus is on optimising the use of resources and budgets, ensuring that every pound of public funds is directed towards improving citizens' lives. This group is at the forefront of digital transformation, leveraging data analytics and advanced technological solutions to streamline operations and reduce waste, ultimately supporting a more responsive and agile public sector.

Working closely with public sector organisations and collaborating amongst themselves, the partnership fosters a culture of innovation and disruption. By pooling their diverse expertise, the companies involved can tackle longstanding challenges with fresh, inventive approaches that deliver measurable improvements in service delivery. Their cooperative efforts not only drive substantial cost savings but also set a new benchmark for how the public sector can benefit from private sector ingenuity. In doing so, they reaffirm their commitment to ensuring that public funds are utilised to create a tangible, positive impact on the community.