



In
Partnership
with



(c) 2026 Visionary Network Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Revenues and Benefits Discussion Group

5 October 2026

[Meeting Link](#)



VISIONARY NETWORK

(c) 2026 Visionary Network ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



Meet the panel

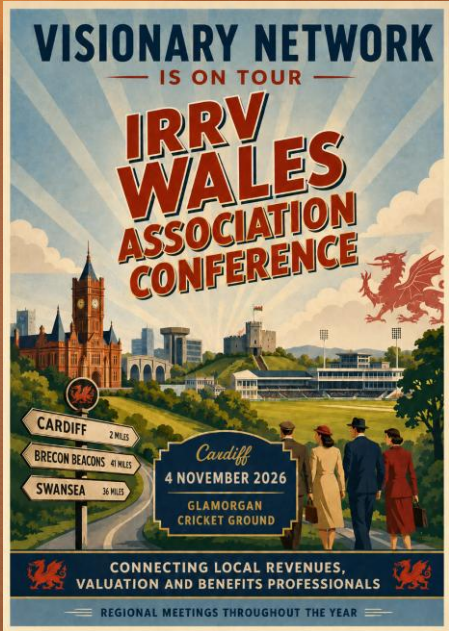
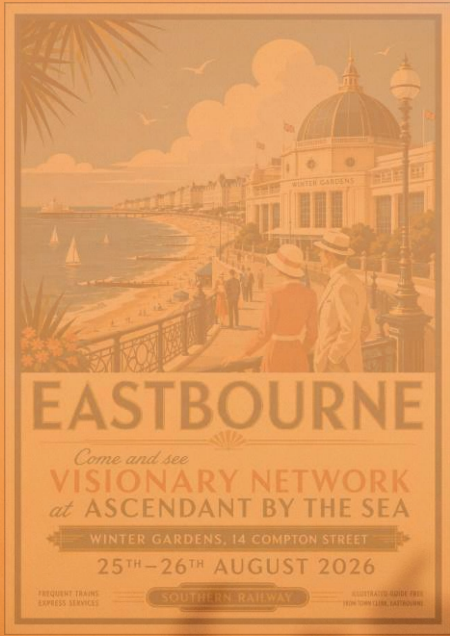
(not everyone is available every week)

Any comments made by panellists are their own personal views and do not necessarily reflect the positions of their organisations.



- Naomi Armstrong, Benefits Cambridge City Council
- Laura Bessell, Benefits Manager, Oxford City Council
- Kirsty Brooksmith, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- Tom Clark, Liverpool City Council
- Alex Clegg, Resolution Foundation
- Nicki Duckworth, EntitledTo, Marshalling
- Michael Fisher, St Helens Council
- Robert Fox, Swindon Council
- Malcolm Gardner, Visionary Network
- Paul Howarth, Visionary Network
- Gareth Morgan, Dangos Training & CEO Ferret Information Systems
- Sean O'Sullivan, Visionary Network
- Julie Smethurst, Tameside Council
- Ian Savigar, Reading Council
- Kevin Stewart, Visionary Network
- Rachael Walker, Visionary Network & Better Policy
- Bob Wagstaff, Visionary Network
- Liz Whitehead-Davis, Hexagon Housing

Visionary on tour 2020





Discussion Points

Top Three Things In Your In-tray

What are the top 3 things in my in-tray

The things most on your mind right now — share with the group.

1

2

3



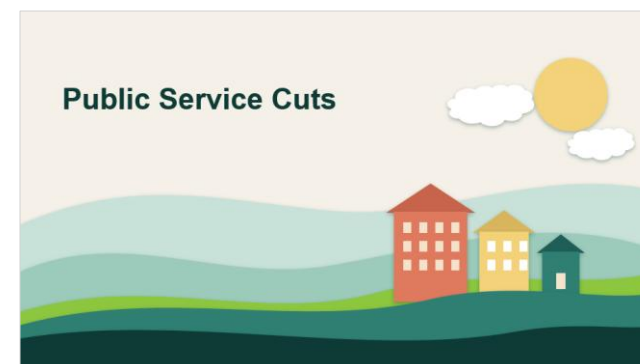
Young People & PIP

Young people and PIP



Public Service Cuts

Public Service Cuts





VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

In partnership with
inbest



Why councils choose CTR Redesign

CTR Redesign helps councils make informed choices with stronger evidence, clear options and practical delivery support.

Visionary Network uses **inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool** to provide robust modelling and insight you can rely on.

What the service helps you do

-  Identify practical redesign options
-  Use inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool to test savings, support levels and distributional effects
-  Assess equality and financial impacts
-  Build a stronger case for consultation and approval
-  Prepare for implementation and future structural change

Why Visionary Network

-  Trusted practical experience in Revenues & Benefits
-  Local government understanding, not generic consultancy
-  inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool supports strong modelling and evidence
-  A service designed to help councils make confident decisions



For Directors of Finance and Revenues & Benefits Managers, **CTR Redesign** offers clearer policy choices, stronger evidence and a more resilient scheme.



Talk to Visionary Network about CTR Redesign

 visionarynetwork.co.uk



In partnership with
inbest

Expert partners in local tax and revenues.



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

In partnership with
inbest.ai



CTR Redesign for Councils

Better evidence. Better decisions. Better outcomes.

Visionary Network helps councils review and redesign their Council Tax Reduction schemes using trusted sector expertise, robust analysis, and **inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool**.

Smarter analysis. Stronger decisions. Better results.



Review your current scheme and pressures



Use inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool to model realistic redesign options



Understand claimant, equality and collection fund impacts



Support consultation, member decisions and implementation



Trusted experience in Revenues & Benefits



**Trusted expertise.
Practical redesign.
Lower risk.**



Talk to Visionary Network about CTR Redesign



visionarynetwork.co.uk

In partnership with

inbest.ai





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](#)



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 Info@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.

inbest



Designing Defensible CTR Schemes

See how councils model change, understand impact, and make defensible decisions

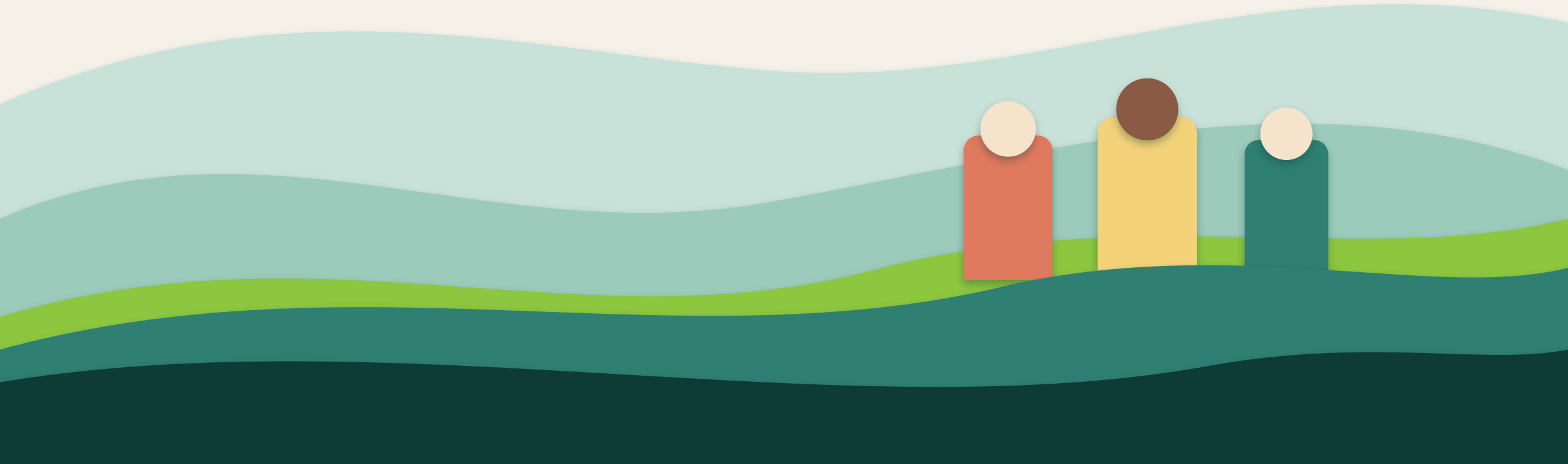
[Play Video](#)



• Valerie Jarrett

Main Discussion Points

Young people and PIP



Four reform routes are now on the table for under-25s

- Government: Jobs Guarantee widened to young disabled people from April 2027, on a voluntary basis.
- Government: UC health element for under-25s under review; it already halves for most new claims from April.
- Tony Blair Institute: end cash PIP and UC for under-25s whose conditions do not limit work.
- Conservatives: a Get to Work Allowance would replace UC for 18–24s with under six months' work.

Questions for the panel

- Which of these would reach our residents first?
- Which groups in our caseload would be affected?

TO AGREE

Which proposal the panel plans around first.

Sources: GOV.UK; The i; The Guardian, 1 Oct 2026; Tony Blair Institute; Conservative Party, Oct 2026

Could this be good for young people?

- Nearly one million young people are outside education, employment or training; 45% of them report a disability.
- The proposals offer paid six-month jobs, training, placements and mental health support.
- Young disabled people on the Jobs Guarantee would not lose benefits at once if a placement does not work out.

Questions for the panel

- Which young people would gain most from a work-first offer?
- What would a good outcome look like after six months, and after two years?
- Does earlier support reduce long-term reliance on benefits?

Sources: Tony Blair Institute; The i; GOV.UK, 2026

What are the risks for young people?

- A six-month placement does not guarantee a job afterwards.
- Disability organisations warn that withdrawing cash support may increase poverty.
- Access to support already varies by area, because diagnosis is faster in some places than others.
- The UC health element already halves for most new claims from April.

Questions for the panel

- Who could lose income without gaining a job?
- How would we spot young people who fall between benefits and work?
- Which safeguards must be in place before any change starts?

Sources: The i; Tony Blair Institute; The Guardian, 1 Oct 2026

What would we do better?

- Draft PIP review recommendations keep cash payments and make support for equipment or services voluntary.
- The review's steering group includes disabled people and reports in late November.
- Mayors may lead a new local apprenticeship service aimed at young people.

Questions for the panel

- What should a fair work offer for under-25s include?
- What role should councils play alongside DWP and mayors?
- How should young disabled people shape the design?

Sources: Disability News Service, 1 Oct 2026; The Guardian, 28 Sep 2026

Labour relies on choice; the Conservatives on conditions

Labour government

- Jobs Guarantee places for young disabled people are voluntary.
- Benefits are not lost at once if a placement does not work out.
- The PIP review keeps cash payments, but ministers have not ruled out cuts.

Conservatives

- 18–24s with under six months' work would get a Get to Work Allowance instead of UC, for up to six months.
- Payment depends on taking part; people with health or caring exemptions are excluded.
- Enhanced PIP would exclude conditions such as ADHD, mild depression and anxiety.

For the panel: under which approach would our residents fare better, and why?

Sources: The i; Disability News Service, 1 Oct 2026; Conservative Party, Oct 2026

Which approach would put more pressure on our service?

- Voluntary placements: more advice contact on how work affects entitlement.
- Day-one conditions: possible sanctions, income gaps and hardship referrals.
- Tighter PIP rules under either party: changes to CTR, HB awards and vulnerability flags.
- Either route: young people moving in and out of work create frequent changes of circumstance.

Questions for the panel

- Would either approach change our caseload mix?
- Which teams would feel it first?

TO AGREE

Which scenario we model for 2027/28 planning.

Sources: The i; Disability News Service, 1 Oct 2026; Conservative Party announcements, Oct 2026

Could this trigger extra costs for the service?

- Advice and contact: more calls, appointments and case reviews.
- CTR and Discretionary Housing Payments: more claims if young people's income falls.
- Collection: more arrears and recovery work if household income drops.
- Systems and training: new benefit rules mean changes to scripts, forms and software.

Questions for the panel

- Which costs fall on us, and which on DWP?
- Should we seek new burdens funding?
- What data would show the cost early?

TO AGREE

Whether to build a cost estimate before the autumn reviews report.

No council cost has been published; these are prompts for discussion, not estimates.

What should we do before the reviews report?

- Identify under-25s on our CTR and HB caseload who receive PIP or the UC health element.
- Brief advice teams on the Jobs Guarantee and how placements affect entitlement.
- Agree hardship and DHP criteria for young people moving between benefits and work.
- Respond to the PIP review and autumn consultations with local evidence.

Questions for the panel

- Who owns each action?
- What do we report back, and when?

TO AGREE

Owners and dates for each action.

Sources: Disability News Service, 1 Oct 2026; The Guardian, 1 Oct 2026; GOV.UK, 2026

Public Service Cuts



Why are cuts to public services on the table?

- Government borrowing costs reached their highest level in nearly 30 years in September.
- Public spending is still above pre-pandemic levels as a share of GDP.
- The tax take is forecast to reach a historic high within five years.
- Social care reform and defence commitments will add to spending.

Questions for the panel

- Is the case for cuts about the deficit, or the size of the state?
- Do our residents see services as too big, or already too thin?

PANEL VIEW

Are cuts to public services needed: yes or no?

Sources: House of Lords Library, UK fiscal outlook, Sep 2026; press reports, Sep 2026

Three parties, three answers to the spending gap

Labour (Burnham government)

- No rise in income tax, NI or VAT; other tax rises not ruled out; no cuts named.

Conservatives

- £47bn of savings, about half from welfare, split between the deficit and tax cuts.

Reform UK

- Over £100bn a year: about £50bn welfare, £20–30bn departments, plus net zero, aid and civil service.

Questions for the panel

- Which plan is most credible?
- Which would hit councils and our residents hardest?

PANEL VIEW

Which approach is closest to your own view?

Sources: Chartered Institute of Taxation, Sep 2026; House of Lords Library, Sep 2026; Reform UK conference, Sep 2026

If services must be cut, which ones?

- Reform names net zero (£10bn), the civil service (£8bn) and foreign aid (£7.1bn).
- Conservatives and Reform both look first to welfare.
- Statutory duties such as social care, safeguarding and homelessness cannot simply stop.
- That leaves discretionary services most exposed: youth, libraries, leisure, advice and prevention.

Questions for the panel

- Name three services you would protect, and three you would cut.
- Should prevention be protected even when it is not statutory?

PANEL VIEW

The panel's top three services to protect.

Sources: BBC, 3 Sep 2026; Reform UK conference material, Sep 2026

Do cuts save money, or move the cost elsewhere?

- Welfare cuts can raise demand for CTR, DHP, homelessness and crisis support.
- Closing youth and advice services can push need into A&E, policing and social care.
- A saving in one department often lands as a cost in another, or on councils.
- Problems left untreated tend to cost more when they reach crisis.

Questions for the panel

- Name a past national cut that moved cost onto this service.
- Who should count the knock-on cost before a cut is made?

PANEL VIEW

Do cuts save money overall, or only on paper?

Discussion prompts; no net cost estimate has been published for the party proposals.

Raise taxes or cut spending?

The case for tax rises

- Labour raised £41.5bn in 2024 and £26bn in 2025; a third tax-raising Budget is expected.
- Labour warns Reform's cuts would put hospitals, schools and policing at risk.

The case for cuts

- Conservatives and Reform want savings first, with part returned as tax cuts.
- Both argue a record tax burden holds back growth and work.

Questions for the panel

- Where do you stand: more tax, less spending, or both?
- Which tax would you accept to protect a service you value?

PANEL VIEW

Show of hands: tax, cut, or both.

Sources: BDO Budget predictions, Oct 2026; BBC, 3 Sep 2026; Conservative Party; Reform UK conference, Sep 2026

DISCUSSION

What are the top 3 things in my in-tray

The things most on your mind right now — share with the group.

1

2

3



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

In partnership with
inbest

CTR Rewrite for Councils

**Clear wording. Lower risk.
Practical support.**

Visionary Network helps councils keep their Council Tax Reduction scheme wording accurate, lawful, clear and up to date – giving confidence to decision-makers and a better experience for residents.

-  Plain English drafting with technical accuracy
-  Annual uprating and scheme updates
-  A clean master document in your council's own style
-  Support for redesign, policy change and LGR
-  Trusted experience in Revenues & Benefits



**Talk to Visionary Network
about CTR Rewrite**

 visionarynetwork.co.uk



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

In partnership with
inbest

Why councils choose CTR Rewrite

Your Council Tax Reduction scheme underpins fairness, compliance and public trust. CTR Rewrite gives you clear, accurate wording that supports confident decisions today—and a scheme that is easier to manage tomorrow.

What the service helps you do

-  Keep scheme wording accurate, lawful and up to date
-  Reflect annual uprating and policy changes
-  Reduce ambiguity and implementation risk
-  Maintain a clean master document in your council's own style
-  Support redesign, consultation and future structural change

Why Visionary Network

-  Trusted practical experience in Revenues & Benefits
-  Plain English drafting with technical accuracy
-  Local government understanding, not generic consultancy
-  A service designed to support councils over time



For Directors of Finance and Revenues & Benefits Managers,
**CTR Rewrite offers clearer governance, lower drafting risk
and a more resilient scheme document.**



**Talk to Visionary Network
about CTR Rewrite**

 visionarynetwork.co.uk



In partnership with

inbest

Expert partners in local tax and revenues.
Working together for better outcomes.

Bristol City Council Case Study



Burnham links adjusted triple lock to National Care Service

- From April 2030, the proposed adjusted triple lock would uprate pensions by inflation or 2.5%.
- A new earnings link would aim to keep pensions in line with earnings over time rather than each year.
- Savings would be directed towards building a National Care Service after the next election.
- The service would include personal care, while bed and board costs would not be covered.
- ADASS welcomed ambition but pressed for action before 2029 and stable council finances.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: pension income, care charging, CTR, Pension Credit signposting and arrears work would all interact.
- Financial position: proposed savings support care reform, but local authority funding stability remains a live concern.

SO WHAT?

Pension policy and social care funding are now being presented as one fiscal trade-off.

Source: Local Government Lawyer and The Guardian, 29-30 September 2026

Triple lock splits party politics and fiscal realism

- The i Paper reports senior Conservatives privately arguing the triple lock may be unaffordable.
- Kemi Badenoch has recommitted to the policy, reflecting reliance on older voters and electoral risk.
- Burnham's plan would remove the annual wage-growth ratchet from 2030.
- The Health Foundation estimates a national at-home care service could cost £18.5bn by 2035.
- IFS estimates cited in the article suggest pension savings may be about £4bn in that year.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: pensioner income assumptions affect CTR forecasting, vulnerability scripts and arrears management.
- Financial position: long-term welfare, defence and care pressures are competing for fiscal space.

SO WHAT?

The triple lock debate is a budget, welfare and local affordability debate.

Source: The i Paper, 3 October 2026

Conservative Universal Credit restriction proposal

- The Conservatives propose linking full UC after six months to National Insurance history.
- Those without sufficient contributions could receive 70% of the standard amount on a restricted payment card.
- The party estimates around 350,000 people affected and £538m annual savings.
- People already working, with severe work-limiting conditions, and housing or child elements would be excluded or unaffected.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: If enacted, reduced disposable income could increase hardship referrals and council tax collection pressure.
- Financial position: £538m is the party's claimed national saving. Local collection effects are unquantified.

Benefit fraud identified through a social media post

- A Blackpool claimant falsely declared he was single while living with a partner.
- The claim generated £70,967.89 in Universal Credit between February 2020 and September 2025.
- A social media post exposed the false declaration.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Fraud enquiries can test declarations against proportionate, lawful evidence, with safeguards for accuracy.
- Financial position: The reported sum concerns DWP Universal Credit. No council recovery amount is stated.

Blackpool Council

Source verified

Havant reports unlawful accommodation procurement

- A joint statutory officer report found temporary accommodation payments made without evidenced procurement and contractual compliance.
- Records identified around £16.6m paid to providers from 2019/20 to July 2026.
- The council met its emergency housing duty, but statutory duties did not displace procurement or financial rules.
- Cabinet accepted a remedial action plan; the review found no staff dishonesty or misconduct.

Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Check supplier controls and payment evidence where Revenues and Benefits interfaces with housing placements.
- Financial position: £16.6m of historic payments lacked evidenced compliance; the article does not quantify avoidable cost.

Housing support falls behind private rents

- The average gap for a low-income two-bedroom private renter is reported as £158 a month, rising to £324 in parts of London.
- One Wirral claimant pays £550 rent and receives £425 in housing support.
- Trussell estimates 62% of supported private renters have gone without food or heating in the past six months.
- Restoring LHA to the cheapest 30% of rents is estimated to cost £2bn annually by the Resolution Foundation.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Rent shortfalls can drive DHP demand, arrears, hardship and complex debt conversations.
- Financial position: £2bn is a national policy estimate; the article gives no local council tax collection effect.

Thinktank calls for state pension replacement

- The Centre for a Better Britain proposes replacing the state pension with individual investment accounts.
- Its proposal retains a means-tested safety net for those on the lowest incomes.
- The broader package includes around £75bn of tax cuts and unspecified matching spending reductions.
- The thinktank has links to Reform UK, but the article says the party had not reviewed its report.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: A means-tested retirement system could change pension-age CTR and HB caseloads if legislated.
- Financial position: The £75bn is the thinktank's proposed national tax reduction, not a local finance forecast.



Source verified

A £1.5m surcharge could reach thousands of flats

- The announced High Value Council Tax Surcharge applies above £2m from 2028, with annual charges of £2,500 to £7,500.
- A lower £1.5m threshold is under consideration, not confirmed.
- The i cites an estimate of 271,000 affected homes at £1.5m, compared with 134,000 at £2m.
- Savills extrapolates that 30,000 to 40,000 affected homes could be flats, with a further 60,000 to 70,000 terraced houses.
- Experts highlight valuation workload, a sharp threshold and households with valuable property but limited income.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: A wider surcharge would require valuations, billing arrangements, appeals and careful customer communication.
- Financial position: The article estimates property counts but gives no additional tax yield or administration cost.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Source verified

Energy shock raises the mortgage outlook

- Duncan Weldon argues that disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has reduced energy supply and raised prices.
- Temporary diversions and use of reserves have cushioned the immediate shock, but cannot continue indefinitely.
- He cites a Bank of England forecast of inflation around 4% in early 2027.
- Expected interest rate rises have already led lenders to reprice mortgage deals, according to the article.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Higher energy and housing costs could increase welfare contact, arrears risk and requests for affordable repayment.
- Financial position: The piece is an economic outlook, with no quantified council cost or revenue collection forecast.

Source verified

Food insecurity and food bank use

- In 2024/25, 6.0m people, or 9% of the UK population, lived in food-insecure households.
- The equivalent figure among children was 14%; 2.5m people lived in a household that used a food bank.
- Trussell supplied 2.64m emergency food parcels in 2025, below its 2023 peak.
- The briefing distinguishes official household measures from charity parcel data.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Use local welfare and CTR access data to identify pressure without treating food bank use as the whole picture.
- Financial position: The briefing does not attribute a council-level spending or collection value.

High living costs continue to strain households

- UK inflation reached 11.1% in October 2022 and was 3.1% in August 2026.
- Cumulative price increases keep living costs far above 2021 levels.
- In August 2026, 55% of adults said their costs had risen in the previous month.
- Lowest-income households felt greater inflation in 2023 because food and energy take a larger share of budgets.
- Food insecurity fell from 11% in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to 9% in 2024/25.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Affordability assessments and debt recovery should reflect cumulative costs, not just the current inflation rate.
- Financial position: No direct council tax collection or cost estimate is provided.

£21.8m to build council housing capacity

- The Council Housebuilding Support Fund has £21.8m revenue funding available until March 2029.
- It supports skills, staffing and early project work for bids to the Social and Affordable Homes Programme.
- Around 75 councils are expected to benefit; the first application window closes on 2 November 2026.
- Decisions start from December, with further rounds planned for 2027 and 2028.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: More affordable supply could affect HB, homelessness and household affordability over time; no immediate change is evidenced.
- Financial position: £21.8m is national programme funding, not an award to every council.

Labour MPs dispute a £1.5m surcharge threshold

- The High Value Council Tax Surcharge announced for 2028 starts above £2m, with at least £2,500 a year due.
- The Chancellor is reported to be considering a £1.5m threshold for the 28 October Budget.
- The i says that could expand affected homes from 134,000 to 271,000, roughly half in London.
- Some Labour MPs warn that long-standing homeowners could be property rich but unable to meet the extra bill.
- Other MPs argue for replacing council tax and stamp duty with an annual proportional property tax.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: If the threshold changes, billing and collection teams would need clear valuation, appeal and hardship processes.
- Financial position: The article contains no confirmed additional yield; the £1.5m threshold remains a proposal.



Source verified

Court of Appeal addresses business rates avoidance

- The dispute concerned boxes placed in empty offices to trigger a fresh exemption from empty property rates.
- The Court of Appeal applied the rating anti-avoidance analysis to the claimed occupation.
- MHCLG circulated the judgment to English billing authorities on 3 September 2026.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Business rates teams should review similar claims against the judgment and record evidence of actual occupation.
- Financial position: Potentially protects non-domestic rates income; the sources provide no aggregate yield.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Source verified

Benefit cap reaches 160,000 households

- About 160,000 households were capped in May 2026, including only 150 capped on Housing Benefit.
- UC capped households rose by 53,000, or 48%, since February 2026.
- The average monthly UC cap reached £346, against £237 in February.
- The release says uprating, UC changes and removal of the two-child limit coincide with the rise but does not apportion causation.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Expect increased housing shortfall and hardship contact; check remaining HB capped cases carefully.
- Financial position: The statistics do not quantify local council tax arrears or DHP spending.

New HB earnings disregards start 5 October

- Working-age claimants in specified or temporary accommodation gain extra earnings disregards from 5 October 2026.
- The change applies automatically to new and existing eligible HB claims, including self-employment.
- Five weekly rates range from £61.41 to £119.70, according to age and household.
- These sit alongside existing disregards and have no minimum hours rule.
- Software suppliers are updating local authority systems.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Test system releases, identify affected claims and check awards and notices promptly.
- Financial position: Higher HB entitlement may follow for eligible residents; the circular gives no local cost estimate.

Employment among people aged 50 to 64

- The 50 to 64 employment rate was 72.2% in 2026, up 0.6 percentage points on the year without statistical significance.
- Inactivity was 25.7%, above the 25.5% pre-pandemic rate.
- Sickness, injury or disability was the main reason for inactivity for 43.8% of this age group.
- Wales recorded 65.9% employment and England 73%.
- The release cautions against reading much into short-term Labour Force Survey changes.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Consider health barriers and the limits of short-term employment indicators in local welfare planning.
- Financial position: No local collection or budget effect is measured.

DWP complaints rise in annual ICE report

- The Independent Case Examiner received 10,965 complaints, accepted 3,215 and cleared 2,653 in 2025/26.
- Approaches were almost three times the 2019/20 level.
- Case studies show delay, unclear guidance, misdirected payment and failure to consider evidence.
- ICE made service improvement observations for recurring process faults.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Revenues and Benefits can review complaint themes, evidence capture and escalation before errors become entrenched.
- Financial position: Case studies include arrears and consolatory awards; no council-wide figure is given.

Contributory benefit customers report information gaps

- DWP interviewed 44 customers and held three work-coach focus groups in early 2026.
- Awareness of New Style ESA and JSA was low, with some people delaying claims.
- Claimants saw applications as relatively simple but described slower ESA communication and confusing UC interactions.
- Job support varied by location; the qualitative sample is not representative.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Provide clear referrals and benefit checks when local customers face illness, redundancy or gaps in income.
- Financial position: The study makes no quantified local saving or collection claim.

Thinktank claims £3.1bn London housing tax subsidy

- Public Finance reports a thinktank estimate that council tax and stamp duty arrangements amount to a £3.1bn subsidy to London households from elsewhere in England.
- The accessible preview does not show its methodology, distribution or remedy.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: The claim raises questions about council tax distribution, but no immediate administrative change is established.
- Financial position: £3.1bn is the thinktank's national estimate; it is not a verified local yield.

Preview available only

Support for Mortgage Interest remains small but important

- Around 14,000 households received Support for Mortgage Interest in the six months to May 2026.
- The caseload decreased by about 2% compared with the previous quarter.
- Universal Credit was the qualifying benefit for 87% of receiving households.
- The mean SMI loan was £73 per week and the median was £68 per week.
- SMI has operated as an interest-bearing loan since April 2018.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: GOV.UK, Support for Mortgage Interest statistics to May 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: mortgage stress should sit alongside CTR, debt advice and vulnerability triage for owner-occupiers.
- Financial position: no council cost is stated, but mortgage pressure can become council tax arrears and homelessness-prevention demand.

SO WHAT?

Owner-occupier hardship can be hidden until it becomes arrears or crisis support.

Child Maintenance Service caseload continues to expand

- The CMS covered about 1.1m children by June 2026, up by around 40,000 over the year.
- It managed around 820,000 arrangements across Direct Pay and Collect and Pay.
- There were 36,000 new applications in the quarter to June 2026.
- Among paying parents on Collect and Pay, 77% paid some maintenance.
- 53% of Collect and Pay parents paid more than 90% of the maintenance due.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: GOV.UK, Child Maintenance Service statistics to June 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: maintenance income, separated households and payment interruptions can affect CTR, HB and hardship assessments.
- Financial position: no direct council figure is given, but irregular maintenance may affect payment resilience.

SO WHAT?

Family income volatility needs to be reflected in local support and collection practice.

DWP complaints rise sharply across key services

- DWP received 9,005 complaints in the quarter to June 2026, up 22% year on year.
- Universal Credit received 4,240 complaints, up 18% year on year.
- DWP closed 8,270 complaints; “wrong decision” and “too long” were the top issues.
- 41% of closed complaints were upheld or partly upheld.
- Disability Services complaints rose to 1,865, up 80% year on year.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: GOV.UK, DWP complaints statistics to June 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: national benefit delays or errors can create local contact, crisis support and arrears escalation.
- Financial position: no council amount is given, but unresolved national benefit issues can shift demand locally.

SO WHAT?

DWP service pressures can quickly become local welfare and customer-contact pressures.

PDVR compliance becomes a Keeping Claims Right issue

- HBMS removes claimant or partner records where HB details do not match Searchlight.
- Local authorities are expected to check PDVR records and correct the LA system or Searchlight.
- Failure to correct records can affect ATLAS, VEP and HBMS matching.
- DWP warns that unresolved errors increase the risk that fraud and error go undetected.
- PDVR performance will be measured, reported and subject to compliance monitoring.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: DWP Personal Details Verification Report guidance, 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: teams need clear ownership, workflow monitoring, audit trails and evidence of correction activity.
- Financial position: unresolved data errors can affect subsidy, overpayment prevention and fraud/error control.

SO WHAT?

Data quality is now directly tied to compliance, assurance and fraud/error prevention.

DWP vulnerability project moves towards Alpha testing

- The Identifying Local Vulnerability project has passed DWP digital governance processes.
- DWP is onboarding a digital team to progress the project through to Alpha testing.
- Discovery activity is being finalised before solution design and a delivery road map are established.
- The plan is to build in phases towards a well-tested Minimal Viable Product in 2027.
- Further updates will follow as the work progresses.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: DWP LA Welfare Direct extract, 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: local teams should prepare for data-sharing, vulnerability triage and process-design opportunities.
- Financial position: no direct cost is given, but earlier identification may reduce crisis demand and improve targeting.

SO WHAT?

Vulnerability identification is moving from policy ambition towards digital delivery.

New benefits and rating instruments require operational review

- The Non-Domestic Rating (Definition of Domestic Property) (England) Order 2026 came into force on 24 July 2026.
- The UC, PIP, JSA and ESA Claims and Payments Amendment Regulations 2026 came into force on 22 September 2026.
- Local teams should check whether process notes, training and systems guidance require updates.
- Rating and benefits changes may have separate but overlapping customer-service implications.
- Copies of the statutory instruments are available from legislation.gov.uk.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: DWP LA Welfare Direct extract, 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: policy, training, decision-making and customer scripts should be reviewed against the new instruments.
- Financial position: no direct council amount is identified, but compliance failure can create correction and appeal costs.

SO WHAT?

Small legislative changes can still create operational and compliance risk.

£2,000 apprentice incentive targets smaller employers

- Small and medium non-levy businesses will receive £2,000 for every eligible young apprentice taken on.
- The measure supports an ambition for 50,000 more youth apprenticeships.
- Payments will be made through training providers, with no separate employer application.
- Eligibility focuses on young people aged 16-24, including those starting within a defined 90-day window.
- £100m is also planned to expand Apprenticeship Brokerage through strategic authorities.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: apprenticeship routes can support residents moving from benefits into earnings and reduce long-term hardship.
- Financial position: employment **growth** may improve household resilience, but income transitions can affect CTR and collection.

SO WHAT?

Work incentives need to connect with local welfare advice at the point income changes.

Source: GOV.UK, 2026

Insourcing debate returns to public service delivery

- Public Finance reports that government is setting up an Insourcing Unit as policy moves away from some outsourcing models.
- The shift raises questions about capacity, capability, transition risk and contract management.
- Services brought back in-house still require systems, governance and skilled operational management.
- The issue is relevant where benefits, fraud, customer contact or verification work has been outsourced.
- Insourcing can reduce contract dependency, but only if implementation is properly resourced.



Cabinet Office

Source: Public Finance, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: councils should assess outsourced functions, exit risk, knowledge transfer and business continuity.
- Financial position: potential savings must be tested against transition, staffing, systems and resilience costs.

SO WHAT?

Insourcing is not a slogan; it is an operating-model and risk-transfer decision.

ICO becomes the Information Commission

- The ICO formally became the Information Commission on 30 September 2026.
- The change creates a board-led regulator under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- The existing Information Commissioner's Office name remains in use operationally.
- The Board is responsible for strategy, performance, governance, risk and internal control.
- The regulator's new strategy focuses on AI, cyber resilience, children's privacy and public services.



Source: Local Government Lawyer, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: data protection, AI governance, cyber controls and public-service data use will remain high-scrutiny areas.
- Financial position: no direct council cost is stated, but weak governance can create investigation, remediation and trust costs.

SO WHAT?

The regulator has changed its structure, not the need for strong local information governance.

Planning reforms reduce committee discretion

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse approved constitutional changes ahead of national planning reforms.
- A national scheme of delegation is expected to move more decisions to officers.
- Only very large, complex or highly controversial applications are expected to reach committee routinely.
- Planning committee size will be capped and members will require mandatory training and certification.
- Councils warned about reduced local accountability and limited choice ahead of implementation.



Source: Local Government Lawyer, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: housing delivery and planning speed affect taxbase growth, empty homes, homelessness and benefit pressure.
- Financial position: faster delivery may support taxbase growth, but democratic concerns and transition costs remain.

SO WHAT?

Planning reform is also a future taxbase, housing and local welfare issue.

Councils to gain new referral powers for homeless households

- Government amendments would allow councils to refer homeless households to private registered providers.
- The aim is to improve collaboration with housing associations and reduce temporary accommodation reliance.
- A new disposals notification requirement would give councils a chance to purchase social homes before sale outside the sector.
- The notification period is expected to be eight weeks.
- A new Duty to Collaborate will require public services to help identify and prevent homelessness risk.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Source: Local Government Lawyer, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: referrals, HB, CTR, housing options and vulnerability pathways will need to align operationally.
- Financial **position**: better prevention may reduce temporary accommodation pressure, but delivery depends on provider capacity.

SO WHAT?

Homelessness prevention is moving further into shared public-service responsibility.

£16m legal support grant targets eviction and debt risk

- Government has announced a £16m Legal Support Grant for 48 organisations in England and Wales.
- The grant will support people facing eviction, problem debt, benefit disputes and family breakdown.
- It will run from October 2026 to March 2029 and is administered by the Access to Justice Foundation.
- The funding will support charities and advice providers, including Citizens Advice and Shelter Cymru.
- The objective is earlier help and reduced pressure on crisis services and courts.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Source: Local Government Lawyer, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: councils should connect collection, CTR hardship, homelessness and debt recovery pathways to funded advice routes.
- Financial position: early legal and debt advice may reduce escalation, enforcement costs and homelessness pressure.

SO WHAT?

Early advice can protect both vulnerable households and council collection outcomes.

Global bond sell-off raises UK fiscal pressure

- Global bonds sold off amid concerns about inflation and higher-for-longer interest rates.
- The UK 30-year gilt yield reportedly reached 6% for the first time since 1998.
- The sell-off came ahead of the UK Budget and increased pressure on borrowing costs.
- Equity markets also weakened, with the FTSE 100 down sharply on the day reported.
- Higher market rates affect government, councils, mortgages, rents and household debt servicing.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: higher debt and housing costs can increase arrears, CTR/DHP demand and vulnerability cases.
- Financial position: borrowing costs affect council treasury management and residents' capacity to pay.

SO WHAT?

Bond markets can feel remote, but they feed directly into council budgets and household arrears.

Source: The Guardian, 1 October 2026

DWP insources Universal Credit review work

- DWP is onboarding 2,700 outsourced workers from Universal Credit targeted case review work.
- The work was previously supported through a major Teleperformance contract.
- The targeted case review programme is intended to tackle fraud and error and stop incorrect payments.
- DWP says the transition will create an internal service for the next phase of the work.
- The department links the programme to substantial savings by March 2031.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Source: Civil Service World, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: UC correction activity can create changes in income, CTR reassessment, overpayment and customer contact.
- Financial position: fraud/error savings sit nationally, but local councils may see workload and arrears impacts from corrected awards.

SO WHAT?

National fraud and error activity can generate local operational work.

Social care consumes record share of council core spending

- Sixteen English councils spent more than 80% of core funding on adult and children's social care last year.
- Councils collectively spent £42.8bn on adult and children's services in 2025-26.
- This represented 71.9% of combined core spending, up from 62.4% in 2017-18.
- Adult social care alone consumed more than half of core spending power at 19 councils.
- Councils overspent adult social care budgets by £715m in 2025-26 and planned £909m savings.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: pressure on social care crowds into wider local welfare, crisis support and council tax decisions.
- Financial position: care demand squeezes other services and raises the importance of collection, taxbase and support targeting.

SO WHAT?

Social care pressure is now one of the main forces shaping local tax and welfare choices.

Source: The Guardian, 30 September 2026

EDMO reforms aim to bring empty homes back into use

- Government is reforming Empty Dwelling Management Orders to support councils acting on long-term empty homes.
- The qualifying period before an EDMO can be sought will fall from two years to six months.
- EDMOs allow councils to manage a long-term empty home for up to seven years while ownership remains unchanged.
- The application process will be streamlined by removing some evidential requirements.
- Further changes are being explored to strengthen the regime and support more effective use.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Source: GOV.UK, 27 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: empty-home policy should link inspections, premiums, exemptions, housing options and homelessness prevention.
- Financial position: bringing stock back into use can support taxbase, reduce void risk and ease temporary accommodation pressure.

SO WHAT?

Empty homes are a housing-supply, taxbase and local welfare opportunity.

Quote of the Week

If you deprive yourself of outsourcing and your competitors do not, you're putting yourself out of business.

— Lee Kuan Yew

Lee Kuan Yew (1923 to 2015) was Singapore's founding prime minister, serving from 1959 to 1990 and leading the country through independence in 1965. He is widely credited with transforming Singapore from a small, resource-poor trading port into one of the world's most prosperous and influential economies, though his leadership style also attracted criticism for limiting political opposition and civil liberties.





VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

In partnership with
inbest

Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) for Councils

Target support. Strengthen resilience. Better outcomes.

Visionary Network helps councils design, review and deliver Crisis Resilience Fund services that are fair, practical and focused on residents facing financial hardship.

Local government expertise. Practical delivery.
Stronger support where it matters most.



Review local need and policy priorities



Design eligibility, awards and governance



Improve targeting, take-up and resident outcomes



Support delivery, assurance and performance reporting



Trusted experience in Revenues & Benefits



**Trusted expertise.
Practical support.
Better outcomes.**

In partnership with
inbest



**Talk to Visionary Network
about CRF**



visionarynetwork.co.uk



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

In partnership with
inbest

Why councils choose CRF support

Crisis Resilience Fund support helps councils respond to financial hardship with clearer policy, stronger targeting and practical delivery support. Visionary Network helps councils create a fund that is fair, workable and focused on residents who need help most.

Our approach combines local government understanding, practical service design and strong governance so councils can deliver support with confidence.

What the service helps you do



Define the purpose and priorities of your CRF



Set clear eligibility, awards and decision rules



Target support to residents facing hardship



Strengthen governance, assurance and reporting



Build a practical model for delivery and review

Why Visionary Network



Trusted practical experience in Revenues & Benefits



Local government understanding, not generic consultancy



Resident-focused design, policy and delivery support



A service designed to help councils support vulnerable households with confidence



For Directors of Finance and Revenues & Benefits Managers, **CRF support** offers clearer governance, better targeting and stronger resident outcomes.



**Talk to Visionary Network
about CRF**



visionarynetwork.co.uk



In partnership with
inbest

Supporting better local outcomes through practical insight and partnership.



AI Watch

Adult social care AI guidance stresses human review

- Government guidance covers AI tools such as sensors, chatbots, facial recognition and data analytics.
- Generative AI may support care plans or assessments, but outputs must be reviewed by staff.
- Providers should have an AI policy, review checklist and data-quality controls.
- The guidance warns against putting personal information into free online tools without proper contracts.
- Bias, UK GDPR, transparency and continuous improvement are central governance themes.



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

Source: Local Government Lawyer, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: similar principles apply to AI use in CTR, HB, debt, fraud/error and vulnerability triage.
- Financial position: AI may improve productivity, but poor governance can create legal, trust and remediation costs.

SO WHAT?

AI can support decisions, but cannot replace accountable human judgement in high-risk services.



Why councils choose LGR & CTR support

Local Government Reorganisation creates pressure to review and harmonise Council Tax Reduction schemes. Visionary Network helps councils make confident choices with stronger evidence, clear options and practical delivery support.

We use **inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool** to provide robust modelling and insight you can rely on.

What the service helps you do

-  Compare legacy CTR schemes across merging councils
-  Test support levels, savings and distributional effects
-  Assess equality, affordability and financial impacts
-  Build a stronger case for consultation and approval
-  Prepare for implementation, governance and future structural change



For Directors of Finance and Revenues & Benefits Managers, **LGR & CTR support** offers clearer policy choices, stronger evidence and a more resilient scheme.



Why Visionary Network

-  Trusted practical experience in Revenues & Benefits
-  Local government understanding, not generic consultancy
-  inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool supports strong modelling and evidence
-  A service designed to help councils move from legacy schemes to a single workable future model



Talk to Visionary Network about LGR & CTR

 visionarynetwork.co.uk



In partnership with
inbest.ai
Expert partners in local tax and revenues.

Local Government Reorganisation & CTR

Harmonise with confidence. Stronger evidence. Better outcomes.

Visionary Network helps councils navigate Local Government Reorganisation and harmonise Council Tax Reduction schemes using trusted sector expertise, robust analysis and **inbest.ai's CTR Data Analytics Tool**.

From legacy schemes to a clear future model.



Review existing CTR schemes and pressures



Model realistic harmonisation options



Understand claimant, equality and collection fund impacts



Support consultation, member decisions and implementation



Trusted experience in Revenues & Benefits



Trusted expertise.
Practical harmonisation.
Lower risk.



Talk to Visionary Network about LGR & CTR



visionarynetwork.co.uk



LGR Watch

Kent reorganisation remains under legal scrutiny

- Ministers paused the four-unitary decision for Kent and Medway pending review alongside 13 other areas.
- Kent County Council's leader is considering a challenge to the July decision despite the pause.
- She warned that a judicial review deadline could fall in mid-October and that splitting services takes serious preparation.
- May 2027 elections will proceed on existing boundaries.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Keep service transfer, data and staffing plans adaptable while the decision is reviewed.
- Financial position: The article gives no quantified transition cost or revenue collection effect.

Wandsworth funding dispute may face legal challenge

- Kemi Badenoch said lawyers were examining a challenge to proposed local funding changes.
- Wandsworth signalled a possible 94% council tax rise amid the funding dispute.
- Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster estimate £292m combined loss from proposed reforms.
- The legal challenge and council tax change were proposals at the article date.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: A large bill rise would require CTR modelling, collection forecasts and clear resident communications.
- Financial position: The £292m is three councils' forecast funding loss, not a verified collection loss.

Scotland consults on replacing 32 councils

- The proposal would create six to ten regional authorities and around 120 to 160 community authorities.
- Regional bodies would lead strategic functions, including housing and employability.
- Ward councillors would sit at community and regional levels; island arrangements may differ.
- The proposal remains subject to consultation.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Any implementation would need a clear owner for local tax and welfare decisions, data and customer routes.
- Financial position: The source provides no costed savings or collection estimate.

Scotland local government restructuring raises delivery questions

- The BBC link concerns council leaders' caution about a radical plan to redraw Scotland's local government map.
- The core issue is whether restructuring would save money, improve services or create transition risk.
- Boundary and governance reform can disrupt systems, staffing, data, debt and customer journeys.
- Benefits, council tax and local welfare services need long lead times for safe transition.
- Any reform should test both savings claims and service-delivery realism.



Source: BBC News, 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: structural change affects billing, benefits, debt, data migration, staffing models and resident communications.
- Financial position: claimed savings must be balanced against transition cost, stranded systems and collection risk.

SO WHAT?

Reorganisation only works if the service transition is designed before the boundary line is drawn.

Surrey reorganisation continues towards April 2027

- West Surrey's shadow leader requested the legal advice behind wider ministerial reorganisation decisions.
- He said Surrey's legislation and elections mean the East and West Surrey transition is proceeding.
- The other areas under review do not include Surrey; both new unitaries remain due to start on 1 April 2027.

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Maintain combined Revenues and Benefits mobilisation, including billing, CTR, HB, recovery and resident contact.
- Financial position: No new transition cost or tax yield is given.



Source verified

LGA warns of council funding failure

- The LGA estimates a £7bn local government funding gap by 2028/29.
- One in five councils with social care responsibilities needed Exceptional Financial Support to balance 2026/27 budgets.
- Its Budget submission seeks greater local revenue powers, funding reform and full funding for new duties.
- It also asks for a clear reorganisation timetable and protection from the associated costs.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Funding pressure raises capacity risks across local taxation, welfare and customer support.
- Financial position: The £7bn is the LGA's sector forecast, not a council-level collection figure.

Wales group proposes a sustainable council model

- An independent working group says rising costs and statutory demand make the current model unsustainable.
- Its report calls for prevention, stronger resident participation and collaboration between public services.
- Finance, governance, workforce and innovation capacity all need reform.
- It asks Welsh Government to support a phased transition and accountability framework.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Integrated local tax and welfare data can inform prevention, access and resident outcomes.
- Financial position: The report advocates funding reform but the article gives no costed saving.

Warrington approves £51m of service cuts

- Warrington Borough Council approved £51m of savings after building debts of more than £1.8bn through commercial investments.
- The programme includes £34m in adult social care savings, partly through reviewing care packages.
- More than 200 jobs are to be cut, alongside reductions to other services.
- Government-appointed envoys found that investments, apart from housing association loans, had failed to generate surplus income.
- The council says the cuts are part of a transformation plan; opposition councillors warn of low morale and asset sales.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: The article does not specify Revenues and Benefits cuts, but fewer staff and wider financial pressure could affect service capacity and demand for local welfare.
- Financial position: £51m is the approved savings programme. The £1.8bn is debt, not a stated annual deficit or lost council tax income.

Durham faces a four-year funding gap

- The i reports an £83m four-year funding gap at Durham County Council, up from a previous £53m forecast.
- Officers indicated that a council tax rise of at least 5% would be needed to avoid severe financial distress.
- Proposals include higher parking and other charges, fewer road gritters, less grass cutting and job reductions.
- The administration says no final decisions have been taken on savings or council tax, and disputes the scale of the remaining gap after planned savings.
- The article says a 1.99% rise rather than an assumed 5% contributed to the larger forecast gap.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: A tax rise would require CTR and collection modelling. Proposed staffing and AI changes need testing for accuracy, access and service capacity.
- Financial position: The £83m is a multi-year forecast gap, not an annual deficit. No quantified local collection loss is given.

Hammersmith & Fulham warns of 150% council tax pressure

- Hammersmith & Fulham says the funding settlement could remove more than half its grant over four years.
- The council warned that a 150% rise could be needed to maintain services and broadly balance the budget.
- A Band D bill would rise by about £29.11 a week in 2027-28 under that scenario.
- A 100% rise would still leave a £46.1m shortfall; 125% would leave a £20.6m gap.
- The issue has become a wider test of council tax caps, local affordability and national funding reform.



Source: The Guardian, 3 October 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: CTR modelling, hardship design, customer communications and collection profiling become critical if large increases are pursued.
- Financial position: the council links the rise directly to a large grant reduction and budget shortfall.

SO WHAT?

Large council tax rises are no longer just a finance issue; they are a local welfare and collection-risk issue.

Devolution must be felt in deprived places

- Public Finance reports a warning that devolution must deliver for deprived areas to retain public support.
- The core issue is whether new powers produce visible improvements for communities facing the greatest need.
- Devolution without delivery risks being seen as a governance change rather than a social or economic improvement.
- Local leaders will need evidence on who benefits, where investment lands and what outcomes change.
- Revenues and Benefits data can help show vulnerability, poverty, arrears and local welfare demand.



Source: Public Finance, 30 September 2026

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Revenues and Benefits impact: services should contribute evidence on financial resilience, benefit dependency, arrears and household vulnerability.
- Financial position: targeting deprived areas may influence local investment choices, collection risk and support demand.

SO WHAT?

Devolution will be judged by household outcomes, not structures.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

Legal Issues of Note

English and Welsh law require separate checks

- The Law Society issued a practice note on devolution and differences in English and Welsh law.
- It covers housing and property as well as education, health, planning and other devolved fields.
- A practical checklist is included; the note expresses good practice rather than legal advice.



The Law Society
of England and Wales

Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Test the relevant jurisdiction before adapting welfare guidance, housing decisions or shared service processes.
- Financial position: No specific financial effect is stated.

NI disability rates relief: CD26 appeal

- The Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal dismissed an appeal for Disabled Persons' Allowance.
- The claimant's disability was accepted, but adapting an existing bathroom into a wet room did not meet the statutory facility test.
- The tribunal stressed that medical evidence was unnecessary once qualifying disability had been conceded.
- The decision applies Northern Ireland rates law, with discussion of comparable English cases.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Keep the disability test distinct from the property facility test and give applicants clear evidence requests.
- Financial position: The ruling concerns eligibility for relief but gives no fiscal total.

NI disability rates relief: EF26 appeal

- The tribunal rejected relief for adaptations to an existing bathroom, finding no qualifying additional facility.
- It criticised unclear communications during the review.
- It asked the department to improve training and explain when a fresh application is required.
- A further application should receive priority if the appellant makes one.



Source verified

Implications for Revenues and Benefits

- Service: Clear decisions and rapid handling of fresh applications reduce avoidable appeals and customer harm.
- Financial position: The decision gives no quantified collection or relief cost.



Other Workshops

VISIONARY NETWORK

— IS ON TOUR —

IRRV WALES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE



CONNECTING LOCAL REVENUES, VALUATION AND BENEFITS PROFESSIONALS



— REGIONAL MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR —

THE IRRV EAST MIDLANDS ASSOCIATION **PRESENTS** A VISIONARY NETWORK PRODUCTION

STARRING

MALCOLM GARDNER



The Scheme

Every council has one. Not every council can explain it.

12 OCTOBER 2026

ONE AFTERNOON ONLY · LONG EATON

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY MALCOLM GARDNER. PRODUCED BY VISIONARY NETWORK LTD. HOSTED BY THE IRRV EAST MIDLANDS ASSOCIATION

FEATURING COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION · LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE · WELFARE REFORM · REORGANISATION
NO SLIDES WERE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS SESSION · QUESTIONS TAKEN AT THE END

VISIONARY NETWORK

SUITABLE FOR ALL REVENUES AND BENEFITS PROFESSIONALS





Department
for Work &
Pensions

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023: LA workshops expressions of interest by 16 September 2026

DWP is developing its approach to linking higher-rate HB entitlement for specified accommodation in England, as set out in the [government's consultation response](#) linked to the [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023](#).

We are seeking expressions of interest from LAs to take part in a small design working group. The working group workshops will help test how the proposed link between licensing and HB could work in practice, before wider communications and guidance are finalised. This will include testing operational issues such as licensing-to-HB information flows, evidence requirements, resident safeguards, contingency planning and guidance needs.

The workshops are expected to take place virtually in October 2026 and are expected to last approximately 2 hours. Provisional dates are Thursday 15 October, Monday 19 October and Wednesday 21 October 2026.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023: LA workshops expressions of interest by 16 September 2026

Please note, we need LAs that can take part in the full workshop series, so that learning and context can be carried through consistently.

Participation will be by selection to ensure a mix of LA types and delivery contexts. LAs that are not selected will still be able to share questions, risks and suggested areas for discussion through the expression of interest form.

LAs interested in taking part should complete the [expression of interest form](#) by close of business on Wednesday 16 September 2026.

If you have any questions, contact housing.policyenquiries@dwp.gov.uk.



Job Adverts From Business Smart Solutions



BUSINESS SMART

SOLUTIONS LTD

Your Revenues and Benefits Recruitment Partner



Recruiter
Partner





Meet The Team



**Ben
Moreton**

CEO
Co-Founder



**Mark
Thomas**

Operations
Co-Founder



**Chris
Sharratt**

Talent Partner



**Leanne
Carey**

Contracts Manager



"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



Benefits Officer (Civica Open Revenues)



3 months initially | £24 per hour (umbrella) | Remote

- Thorough understanding of legislation governing Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and Discretionary Financial Support schemes, including Homeless Prevention Grants
- Previous experience in assessing claims for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction
- Strong communication skills across diverse demographics and communication channels
- Experience with Civica OpenRevenues is essential

What we're looking for:

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

- A minimum of 3 years experience assessing applications for Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction
- Experience with Civica OpenRevenues is essential
- Basic DBS required

To find out more or to apply
[>> Click here to view the full advert <<](#)

Revenues Billing Officer (NEC)



Until October 31st 2026 | £24 per hour (umbrella) | Remote

- To determine Council Tax liability in accordance with relevant primary legislation and case law
- To have and maintain a working knowledge of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and case law
- Determine and award discounts and exemptions in accordance with primary legislation and case law
- Gather information, explain decisions, and provide advice to the public and their representatives by email, letter, and telephone regarding council tax liability

What we're looking for:

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

- A minimum of 3 years Revenues experience
- Remote working
- NEC / Revenues

To find out more or to apply
[>> Click here to view the full advert <<](#)

NEC Revs & Bens System Manager (NEC)



6 Months initially | £475 per day (umbrella) | Remote

Description of duties and responsibilities:

To manage the Revenues & Benefits ICT systems and Business Support team, providing systems support to the Revenues & Benefits teams and ensuring that systems are managed proactively to ensure the smooth running of the department.

Key areas:

- To lead the Technical team, responsible for systems administration and user access, ensuring that systems (NEC/BACS etc) are proactively managed and fully exploited to ensure maximum efficiency
- Work proactively with software suppliers to ensure the Council receives a high level of service and value for money from software contracts
- To work proactively with the Revenues and Benefits Service management team to assist in the effective delivery and continuous improvement of Revenues Service

What we're looking for:

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

- 5 years NEC (Northgate) system management experience

To find out more or to apply
[>> Click here to view the full advert <<](#)



Business Rates Manager

Permanent | £32,000 – £39,000pa | Manchester

This role will involve, but not be limited to:

- Daily operational management of one large complex client portfolio or multiple smaller portfolios.
- Verification of rates bills issued by billing authorities in respect of properties throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Resolving queries where rates bills are not approved.
- Liaising with clients and with billing authorities to correct matters relating to occupational changes, changes to the rating list and exemptions and reliefs.
- Obtaining information from clients and responding to queries.
- Ensuring all portfolio movement is actioned appropriately.
- The creation and delivery of quality and accurate reports to clients and senior management.
- The development and maintenance of client relationships, including attendance at client meetings when appropriate.
- Meeting all KPIs as set out in Client Contracts and Service Level Agreements to agreed deadlines and to standards agreed with the Client Director and Line Manager.
- Assisting in carrying out one-off audits of historic rate payments.
- Explaining the functions of the Client Monies service to clients and colleagues and undertaking Client Monies tasks when appropriate.

What we're looking for:

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

- A good understanding of the complexities of calculating rate liabilities together with rating appeal and rate relief application processes in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire and the Channel Islands.
- Working knowledge of business rate legislation and case law and able to explain this clearly to clients and junior colleagues.
- A complete understanding of the functions of the Client Monies Service and the requirements of RICS Rule 8 Protecting Client Money.

To find out more or to apply

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

Revenues Officer (NEC OR Academy trained)



Permanent | £31,000pa | Remote

We are seeking multiple Revenues Officers to join our expanding resilience team on a permanent, full-time basis. Roles are offered on a remote basis.

Duties include:

- To determine Council Tax/Business Rates liability in accordance with relevant primary legislation and case law
- To have and maintain a working knowledge of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and case law
- Determine and award discounts and exemptions in accordance with primary legislation and case law
- Gather information, explain decisions, and provide advice to the public and their representatives by email, letter, and telephone regarding Council Tax liability
- Deal with all aspects of the collection and enforcement of Council Tax/Business Rates

What we're looking for:

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

- A minimum of 3 years Revenues experience
- IRRV qualified or equivalent
- Be a skilled NEC or MRI user

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.



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



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:

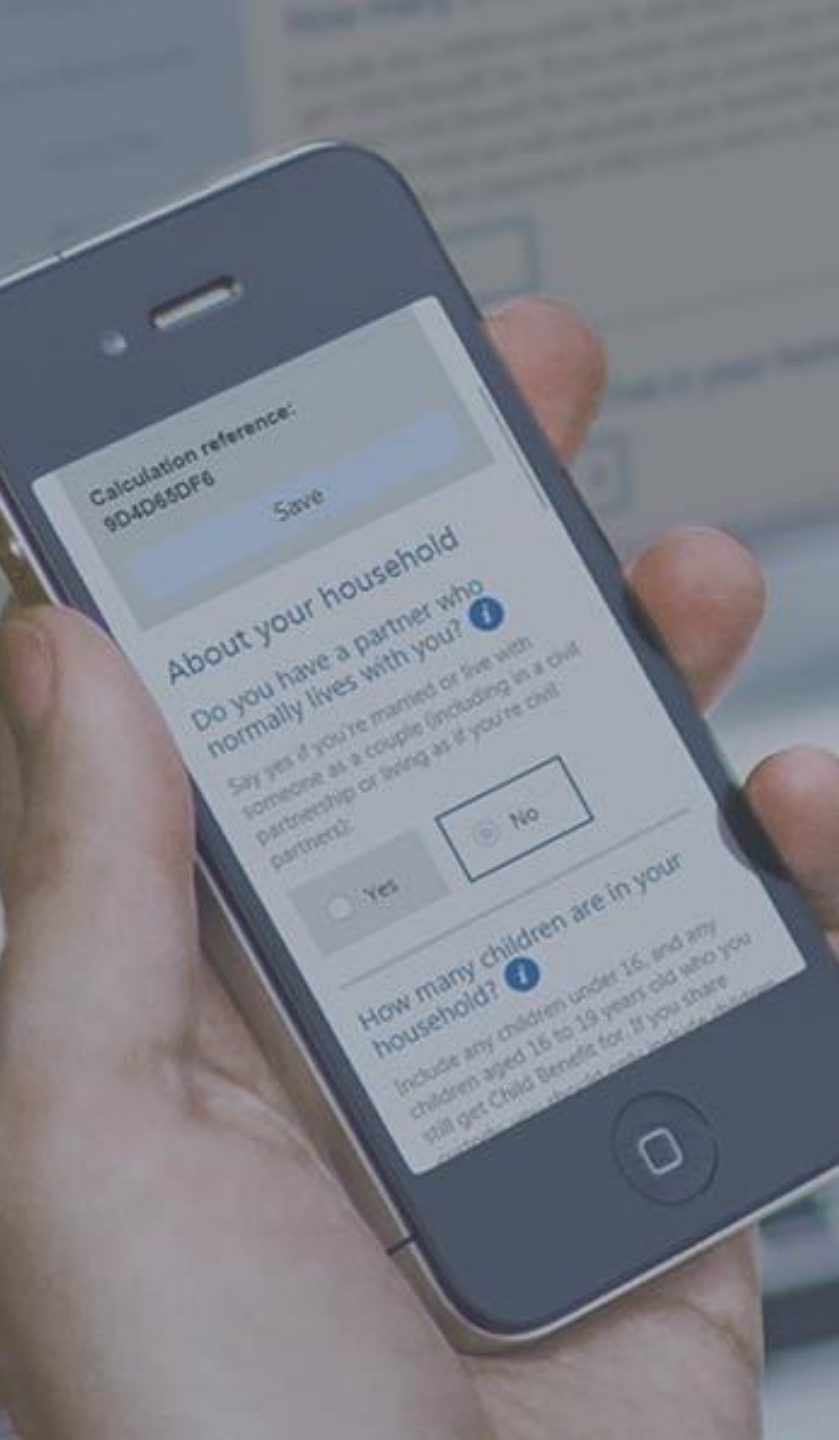
Systems supported include network, desktop, laptop, mobile devices, Internet and Intranet systems, and a public access system in multi-lingual, multi-media form for touch screen kiosks and public access PC's.



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®



Story Links

References and links

01 Jobs Guarantee to target disabled young people

<https://liveapp.inews.co.uk/category/4789737/content.html>

02 Benefit fraud identified through a social media post

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/26584099.benefit-fraudster-caught-social-media-post/>

03 Kent reorganisation remains under legal scrutiny

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101754-kent-county-council-still-mulling-legal-action-over-government-decision-on-reorganisation-despite-pause>

References and links

04 Havant reports unlawful accommodation procurement

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/procurement-and-contracts/402-procurement-news/101773-borough-to-tighten-governance-around-temporary-accommodation-procurement-after-monitoring-officer-and-s-151-officer-issue-joint-report>

05 English and Welsh law require separate checks

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101746-law-society-issues-practice-note-on-differences-between-english-and-welsh-law>

06 Wandsworth funding dispute may face legal challenge

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101720-conservative-leader-kemi-badenoch-instructs-lawyers-to-challenge-government-over-local-funding-cuts>

References and links

07 Scotland consults on replacing 32 councils

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101735-scottish-government-consults-on-local-government-shake-up-that-would-see-32-councils-replaced-by-6-10-regional-authorities>

08 Surrey reorganisation continues towards April 2027

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101731-shadow-leader-of-incoming-west-surrey-council-asks-for-legal-advice-behind-local-government-reorganisation-decisions>

09 LGA warns of council funding failure

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101776-councils-need-increase-in-overall-funding-to-stem-emerging-risk-of-system-wide-financial-failure-lga>

References and links

10 Wales group proposes a sustainable council model

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/101724-working-group-publishes-report-setting-out-sustainable-operating-model-for-local-government-in-wales>

11 Conservative Universal Credit restriction proposal

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/sep/23/tories-target-universal-credit-claimants-plan-condemned-fast-track-to-poverty>

12 Thinktank proposes changes to young claimants' benefits

<https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/neet-crisis-pip-universal-credit-tony-blair-b3054815.html>

References and links

13 Housing support falls behind private rents

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/sep/23/pay-rent-eat-or-keep-warm-growing-numbers-face-hard-choices-as-housing-benefit-gap-grows>

14 Thinktank calls for state pension replacement

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/sep/23/thinktank-reform-uk-abolition-state-pension>

15 PIP reform concerns in Ilford North

<https://liveapp.inews.co.uk/category/4780741/content.html>

References and links

16 A £1.5m surcharge could reach thousands of flats

<https://liveapp.inews.co.uk/category/4783595/content.html>

17 Energy shock raises the mortgage outlook

<https://liveapp.inews.co.uk/category/4780709/content.html>

18 Food insecurity and food bank use

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9209/CBP-9209.pdf>

References and links

19 High living costs continue to strain households

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10100/CBP-10100.pdf>

20 £21.8m to build council housing capacity

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/218m-funding-boost-to-help-councils-build-more-affordable-homes>

21 Warrington approves £51m of service cuts

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckge4pw9q9qzo?app-referrer=deep-link>

References and links

22 Labour MPs dispute a £1.5m surcharge threshold

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/labour-split-mansion-tax-ordinary-families-4779959>

23 Diesel costs rise sharply

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2026/sep/21/diesel-global-supply-shortage-record-prices-iran-war-energy-crisis-brent-crude>

24 Young PIP claims for ADHD and autism

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/sep/22/england-affluent-areas-young-people-adhd-autism-pip-claims>

References and links

25 Court of Appeal addresses business rates avoidance

<https://www.judiciary.uk/judgments/the-mayor-and-commonality-and-citizens-of-the-city-of-london-v-48th-street-holdings-ltd-and-another/>

Related MHCLG letter: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/72026-court-of-appeal-decision-on-box-shifting/72026-court-of-appeal-decision-on-box-shifting>

26 NI disability rates relief: CD26 appeal

<https://www.judiciaryni.uk/files/judiciaryni/2026-07/CD26%20DECISION.pdf>

27 NI disability rates relief: EF26 appeal

<https://www.judiciaryni.uk/files/judiciaryni/2026-07/EF%20Decision.pdf>

References and links

28 Durham faces a four-year funding gap

<https://liveapp.inews.co.uk/category/4776119/content.html>

29 Benefit cap reaches 160,000 households

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-may-2026/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-may-2026>

30 New HB earnings disregards start 5 October

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-adjudication-circulars-2026/hb-a92026-new-earned-income-disregards-in-housing-benefit-for-working-age-residents>

References and links

31 Employment among people aged 50 to 64

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/economic-labour-market-status-of-individuals-aged-50-and-over-trends-over-time-september-2026/economic-labour-market-status-of-individuals-aged-50-and-over-trends-over-time-september-2026>

32 DWP complaints rise in annual ICE report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-complaints-annual-report-by-the-independent-case-examiner-2025-to-2026/independent-case-examiner-for-the-department-for-work-and-pensions-annual-report-1-april-2025-to-31-march-2026>

33 Contributory benefit customers report information gaps

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-qualitative-study-with-contributory-benefit-customers-and-staff/a-qualitative-study-with-contributory-benefit-customers-and-staff>

References and links

34 MPs defend fiscal watchdog independence

<https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2026/09/mps-warn-against-weakening-obr-independence-amid-fiscal-pressures>

35 Thinktank claims £3.1bn London housing tax subsidy

<https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2026/09/housing-taxes-see-londoners-subsidised-ps31bn-think-tank-claims>

36 Councils seek funding for devolution

<https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2026/09/boost-funding-support-devolution-councils-urge-government>

References and links 1

1

The Guardian: London Labour council tax and Hammersmith & Fulham

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/oct/03/london-labour-council-tax-hammersmith-fulham>

2

The Guardian: John Healey, fiscal rules and welfare reform

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/sep/28/john-healey-fiscal-rules-budget-hope>

3

Disability News Service: Timms refuses to rule out PIP cuts

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/timms-refuses-four-times-to-rule-out-cuts-to-pip-but-makes-firm-promise-on-cash-payments/>

4

The Guardian: welfare changes and young disabled people

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/oct/01/welfare-changes-under-debate-disability-benefit-young-people-uk>

5

GOV.UK: young disabled people to be offered guaranteed jobs

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-young-disabled-people-to-be-offered-guaranteed-jobs>

6

Local Government Lawyer: adjusted triple lock and National Care Service

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/adult-social-care/391-adult-care-news/101804-savings-under-adjusted-triple-lock-will-be-used-for-new-national-care-service-burnham-announces>

References and links 2

- 7** **The Guardian: Burnham, triple lock and pensioner income**
<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2026/sep/29/will-pensioners-be-poorer-burnham-scrapping-triple-lock>
- 8** **The i Paper: Badenoch wants to save the triple lock**
<https://liveapp.inews.co.uk/?article=page-5180391&edition=home>
- 9** **GOV.UK: Support for Mortgage Interest statistics to May 2026**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/support-for-mortgage-interest-statistics-to-may-2026/support-for-mortgage-interest-statistics-may-2018-to-may-2026>
- 10** **GOV.UK: Child Maintenance Service statistics to June 2026**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-june-2026/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-june-2026>
- 11** **GOV.UK: DWP complaints statistics to June 2026**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-complaints-statistics-to-june-2026/dwp-complaints-statistics-to-june-2026>
- 12** **DWP: Personal Details Verification Report extract supplied**
User-supplied DWP LA Welfare Direct extract

References and links 3

- 13** **DWP: Identifying Local Vulnerability extract supplied**
User-supplied DWP LA Welfare Direct extract
- 14** **DWP: new legislation extract supplied**
User-supplied DWP LA Welfare Direct extract
- 15** **GOV.UK: £2,000 boost for small businesses taking young apprentices**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2000-boost-for-small-businesses-who-take-on-young-apprentices>
- 16** **Public Finance: insourcing unit and outsourcing about-turn**
<https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2026/09/insourcing-unit-be-set-government-steps-outsourcing-about-turn>
- 17** **Public Finance: devolution must deliver for deprived areas**
<https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2026/09/devolution-must-deliver-deprived-areas-retain-public-support-report-warns>
- 18** **Local Government Lawyer: ICO becomes the Information Commission**
<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/information-law/398-information-law-news/101814-ico-formally-becomes-the-information-commission-as-new-board-takes-charge>

References and links 4

19

Local Government Lawyer: planning decision-making reforms

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/planning/401-planning-news/101795-councils-decry-hobson-s-choice-after-approving-changes-to-constitutions-ahead-of-planning-decision-making-reforms>

20

Local Government Lawyer: homelessness referrals to providers

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/housing-law/397-housing-news/101810-councils-to-be-given-new-powers-to-refer-homeless-households-to-private-registered-providers>

21

Local Government Lawyer: AI guidance for adult social care

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/adult-social-care/391-adult-care-news/101818-government-issues-ai-guidance-for-adult-social-care-providers>

22

Local Government Lawyer: £16m legal support grant

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/litigation-and-enforcement/400-litigation-news/101808-government-unveils-16m-legal-support-grant-for-people-facing-eviction-debt-issues>

23

The Guardian: global bond sell-off and borrowing costs

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/oct/01/global-bond-sell-off-uk-long-term-borrowing-costs-us-bond-yield>

24

Civil Service World: DWP to insource UC checks

<https://www.civilserviceworld.com/professions/article/dwp-to-insource-2700-staff-carrying-out-universal-credit-checks>

References and links 5

25

The Guardian: councils' core spending on social care

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/sep/30/councils-core-spending-social-care-england>

26

BBC News: Scottish local government restructuring

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c6d79wv425gxo>

27

GOV.UK: reforms to bring empty homes back into use

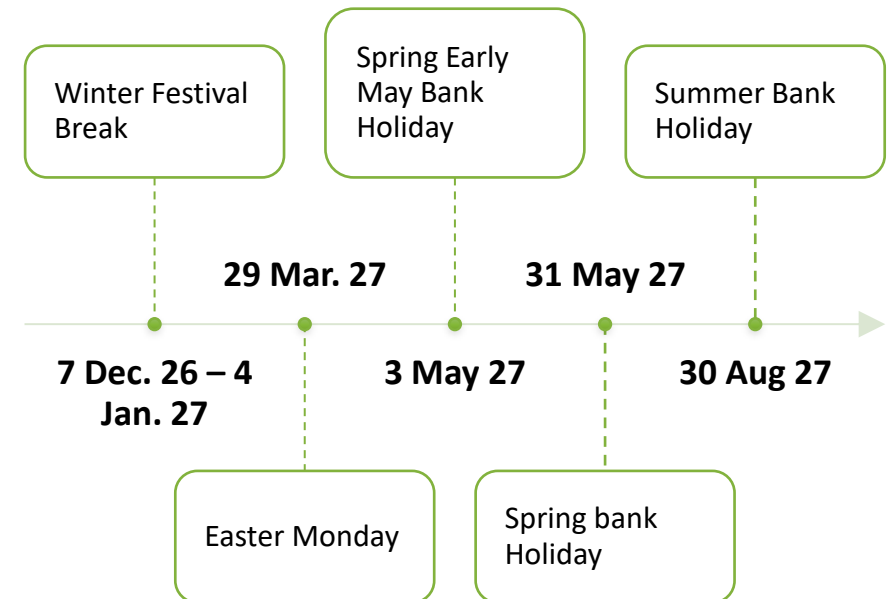
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-reforms-to-bring-more-long-term-empty-homes-back-into-use--2>

Previous Sessions

11 May 26	<u>New councilors, no overall control and the realities of governing</u>
18 May 26	<u>Houseboats, standards and digital government</u>
1 Jun 26	<u>Youth inactivity, public sector pipelines and the rise of AI generated appeals</u>
15 Jun 26	<u>Local government reorganisation, council tax and social care</u>
29 Jun 26	<u>Council Tax, Data Quality and the Growing Arrears Crisis</u>
10 Jul 26	<u>Devolution of Welfare and the Future of Revenues and Benefits</u>
20 Jul 26	<u>When one council's solution becomes another's cost</u>
27 Jul 26	<u>End of Year Review</u>
17 Aug 26	<u>Mid-break update: a busy summer for Revenues and Benefits</u>
31 Aug 26	<u>Mid-break update: Revenues and Benefits face widening financial and operational pressures</u>
7 Sep 26	<u>From Supplier Failure to Hidden NEETs and Box Shifting: The Monday Group Returns</u>
14 Sep 26	<u>LGR, the triple lock and what happens next</u>
21 Sep 26	<u>AI, Council Tax and the the limits of a quick fix</u>



Dates where there will be no sessions





Blogs

Blogs



[The Welfare Card Returns: What Does the Evidence Actually Say?](#)

[Reflections on Ascendant by the Sea: Why Community Still Matters – Visionary Network](#)

[Reform's £50 Billion Welfare Plan: A Costing Is Not a Social Contract](#)

[Housing Benefit closes at last, but Universal Credit has not simplified housing support – Visionary Network](#)

[A Tale of Two Reorganisations](#)

[The danger is not change. The danger is not knowing what you do not know](#)

[When good intentions meet council tax reality, residents may pay the price](#)

[DWP spring forecast 2026 why the real welfare story is not just higher spending but a changing social contract](#)

[Subscription Spending, Household Budgets and Consumer Behaviour](#)

[How Councils Can Use Administrative Data to Support the Delivery of the CRF](#)

[The Stagflation Trap: Why the UK's Cost-of-Living Crisis is Making a Dangerous Return](#)

[The Case for Plain English Council Tax Reduction Schemes by Paul Howarth](#)

Other Blogs

IFS

Unfreezing the personal allowance

BENEFITS IN THE FUTURE

'Tis the season to be jolly... misleading, in the Daily Mail

BENEFITS IN THE FUTURE

Lies, Damned Lies and the Telegraph

ENTITLEDTO

Child Benefit take-up hits a new low: the downside to 'wealth testing' benefits

ENTITLEDTO

Local Authorities left with their hands tied by lifting of the 2-child limit

ENTITLEDTO

Benefit take-up may be getting worse, but it's hard to know



[IFS: How unequal is Britain?](#)

[Better Policy: Is Council Tax A Rip-Off?](#)

[JRF: Poverty Statistics Are Changing](#)

[IFS: Is the minimum wage costing jobs?](#)

[Private eye: Farage's Flagship Council \(And Other Stories From Rotten Boroughs\)](#)

[IFS: Are Pensioners really better off?](#)

[More or Less: Can You Really Get £71,000 in Benefits?](#)

Podcasts

About Visionary Network



VISIONARY NETWORK
The Independent Local Tax and Welfare Network

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.

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.