

Providing support for people to claim Universal Credit: supplier event

DWP currently provides grant funding to support people to make and maintain their Universal Credit (UC) claim up until their first correct UC payment.

DWP is looking at how best to fulfil these requirements in the future by considering our strategy and the capability of the marketplace.

The requirements have not yet been finalised, and DWP is hosting an industry pre-market engagement event to give potential delivery partners the opportunity to better understand DWP's objectives and challenges, and for DWP to gain insight from the market about potential ways forward.

About the Department for Work and Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department, it administers a range of working age, pension age, disability and ill-health benefits to over 20 million claimants and customers.

DWP priorities include:

- running an effective welfare system that enables people to achieve financial independence by providing assistance aimed at supporting them into employment
- creating a fair and affordable welfare system which improves the life chances of citizens
- delivering outstanding services to our customers and claimants
- delivering efficiently: transforming the way we deliver our services to reduce costs and increase efficiency

DWP currently provides grant funding to organisations to support people to make and maintain their Universal Credit (UC) claim up until their first correct UC payment. For example, support to:

- set up an email address
- work through claimant to-do's
- access the UC phone service to make a claim
- access DWP home visiting support
- help verify identity
- help provide additional evidence
- help access adaptations such as direct payments to landlords and conditionality easements
- apply for advances and help to access other financial support
- help prepare for first monthly payment
- signpost out to other provision and support

Future strategy

This event is aimed at how best to fulfil these requirements in the future by considering our strategy and the capability of the marketplace.

The requirements have not yet been finalised, and DWP is hosting an industry pre-market engagement event to give potential delivery partners the opportunity to better understand DWP's objectives and challenges, and for DWP to gain insight from the market about potential ways forward.

We want to engage with all potential delivery partners (commercial and not for profit) to establish interest and further understand how the support could be delivered, including an indication of realistic timescales for implementation, transition and training, as well as indicative costs.

Some of the key considerations for delivery may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- the delivery model e.g. single national delivery, lot-based regional delivery, lot-based channel delivery
- the channels for support e.g. telephony, digital, face-to-face
- a grant versus commercial contract
- a 2-year delivery agreement

At this stage it is not confirmed if DWP require a single or multiple delivery partners to deliver the different channels for support, however we would welcome and encourage feedback from potential delivery partners regarding partnership working or consortiums and building relationships with other organisations to provide wrap around support where necessary.

The event will be held virtually over MS Teams and hosted by Tech UK on Thursday 19 May at 10am and will last no longer than 90 minutes.

There will be an introduction from the Universal Credit Programme, providing a high-level overview of the requirement. Following the introduction, there will be an opportunity for suppliers to ask any questions.

After the event, suppliers will be invited to complete a questionnaire, providing supporting information on a range of areas that will support DWP's strategy. The supplier responses will be reviewed and where appropriate, suppliers may be invited to a 1-2-1 session to explore ideas and discuss further.

Please note that due to technical capacity constraints suppliers will be limited to a maximum of 2 representatives.

Registration is for this pre-market engagement event only. This is not a Contract Notice or an invitation to tender for a contract opportunity. In the event that DWP wishes to progress with any procurement activity, a separate Contract Notice will be advertised on Contracts Finder and Find a Tender (FTS) websites.

Care will be taken not to provide any individual organisation or organisations with a competitive advantage at any stage in the pre-market engagement process.

Minister for Defence Procurement at SupportNET 22

Two years ago I was relatively new in post and I regret I wasn't able to join you on that occasion but now I know it was referred to as a Support Net superspreader event and therefore perhaps I regret it a little less.

It is great, in happier circumstances, for us all to be together in the same room.

Last year I joined you virtually and I recall quoting then from the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu, who you will all be familiar, who said the line between success and failure is of course logistics.

This year, I don't feel I need to delve 2,000 years into Chinese literature to make the same point. We've been seeing it daily on our television screens.

Those pictures of the 40-mile Russian convoy sat stuck on the road to Kyiv have become some of the defining images of Putin's war.

Indeed, Russia's failure in almost all of its initial objectives may be found to be deeply rooted in the logistics and supply mistakes, amongst others, that they have been making.

Expensive equipment is getting literally bogged down because it relied, in part, on failing old tyres which have been unmonitored.

Russian soldiers have been relying on cheap handheld radios because theirs don't work.

And, if reports are to be believed, they've even resorted to scavenging and looting because their rations are not just weeks or months but years out of date.

Napoleon, who learned a few things about logistics of the cold climate as you'll recall, famously talked about an army marching on its stomach.

And it's fair to say that the UK has a good track record when it comes to Defence logistics and support networks.

And we'll be reminded in this, the 40th anniversary year of the Falklands War, that we succeeded in maintaining an 8000-mile-long supply chain that ultimately led us to victory.

And just last year, we utilised every asset of Defence to carry out the biggest peacetime airlift in history from Kabul.

But in this new era of rising threats – where war in Europe is no longer a distant memory but a stark reality – we cannot afford to take our eye off the ball.

Last year, I spoke about the publication of our Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper, which constituted the biggest review of our Defence since the end of the Cold War.

Those two documents recognised the importance of getting logistics right.

Not simply by reorganising the Army into more self-sufficient Brigade Combat Teams able to meet demand by drawing on their own dedicated logistics and combat support units.

But by investing in modernising and transforming engineering and logistical support systems to improve the availability and sustainment of our capabilities, our equipment and our people across all the domains.

Indeed, the Defence Support organisation was created to pursue these common goals.

They are making sure that no British serviceperson suffers that Russian ration fiasco.

In fact, today I can reveal that we have been trialling new, nutritionally balanced ration packs, which show a 23% increase in performance for Commando Forces – despite being smaller and lighter to carry. Napoleon no doubt would have approved.

But this is only a small element in the start of the transformation in logistics that we're looking for. From my perspective, I want to see and succeed in meeting four key objectives.

First, we must strengthen our strategic base.

In other words, the infrastructure and systems upon which we depend to store our stock and to process complex transactions that supply materiel to the front line.

Over the past year, our Agile Stance Campaign Plan has been probing the fragilities in our supply lines and fixing them.

I'm glad to say we're now seeing accelerated investment in sites like Longtown on the Scottish borders, the development of a Supply Chain Strategy that will enable improved agility and resilience, and an enhanced focus on Supply Chain Resilience.

But I know the people here in this room are likely to have plenty more enterprising and innovative solutions to some of the challenges we face. And I'm very keen to hear from you.

How do we increase scalability and production through the lifetime of a platform?

To what extent can we be standardising parts across Defence so that they will always be available, rather than buying our whole stock of wheelnuts for tanks up front and then storing them somewhere indefinitely?

Can we change commercial agreements so that industry holds the financial liabilities for maintaining stock levels? Would that incentivise industry to design around off-the-shelf solutions more readily?

My second objective touches directly on the theme of today's conference – improving the readiness and availability of our equipment.

Whether that's through more resilient designs for future platforms, or better through-life management. Here too there are critical questions to consider around contracting for availability.

For example, should we have contracts which ensure kit is ready for a set number of days in a year?

How do we best work together to ensure that our bottom-line availability requirements are always met?

Involving industry contractually in the numbers and maintenance required from the outset for our equipment.

The Army and Navy are already starting to integrate these ideas. The former's Land Integrated Operating Service specifically addresses support contracts and seeks better equipment availability and through-life management.

While the Naval Enterprise Support Strategy is about reducing the amount of time vessels spend in maintenance by working with an agile, global supply chain and support network.

My third aim is about rapidity in the digital world. Our Command Paper tasks us with creating a digital spine that underpins everything else in our transformed Defence network.

But that spine needs to be able to exploit data through a common digital architecture, spanning factory to foxhole, to ensure agile, flexible support that is suited to the demands.

And it needs to ensure the interoperability of every platform we use throughout our organisation, and those of our allies too.

It might sound simple, but the magnitude of the task is simply daunting when you consider the number of organisations tied into this common digital framework and the security implications of that.

It is another area where we are looking to draw on your expertise.

What is the best way to ensure every new platform we invest in can be plugged

into the same digital spine for decades to come?

How can we exploit the Business Modernisation for Support programme to fundamentally revolutionise our processes, enabling those in support to generate your own part of the digital spine?

My fourth and, you'll be pleased to hear, my final point is about sustainability and resilience.

The imperative for energy security has been underlined in recent weeks as nations scramble to reduce their reliance on Russian oil and gas.

This is not just a major concern for the cost of living in our country; it also has a direct effect on Defence procurement.

The platforms we procure today will likely be around in 20 years' time, by which time our current reliance on hydrocarbons will have been reduced in favour of electric, hydrogen and other energy solutions.

But we must be ready for this change while recognising there are real operational benefits to becoming more sustainable that go well beyond earning plaudits for being socially responsible.

Consider that an armoured vehicle which can run silently and recharge itself from the sun – what an enticing prospect for Defence.

If we don't have a long logistical tail, we will be far less vulnerable to future threats.

We are already seeing successes with the launch of our Prometheus programme of solar farms on Army land, as well as the development of the world's first biofuel for fighter jets.

The massive price hikes we've seen for hydrocarbons show the enhanced resilience on which we can benefit in this renewable space.

As I've already intimated, we can't achieve these four Rs – real estate, readiness, rapidity and resilience without working together.

We need partners who are ready to work with us on defining new patterns that achieve our joint objectives. Partners committed to skills development and innovation.

Partners who will help us identify problems and join forces in finding solutions.

I am determined to get this partnership with all of you in this room right.

Last year I spoke about how we are using the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy to reform relationships with the sector.

Since then, we have made progress, by strengthening our Defence Suppliers Forum and setting up new working groups for SMEs.

By using our National Security Technology and Innovation Exchange to give industry and academia the world-class facilities they need to succeed.

And by establishing Regional Defence and Security Clusters to promote skills sharing and foster collaborations between higher tier Defence suppliers and SMEs across the country.

But I do want you to tell me what more we can do.

So the ball is being thrown back into your court.

I've spoken about our aims, our ideas and some of the frictions involved. But I want your take on how we take this symbiotic relationship between Government and industry to the next level.

Be in no doubt, in this more dangerous age, we are only too aware of your value, and we're determined to have your back because we know that when the chips are down, you will have ours.

Three Hundreds of Chiltern

News story

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has this day appointed Imran Nasir Ahmad Khan to be Steward and Bailiff of the Three Hundreds of Chiltern.



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Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse: foreign ministers' joint statement on World Press Freedom Day

Press release

The Foreign Secretary and her counterparts in the Global Partnership signed a joint statement to call attention to the threats that women journalists face.



Joint statement through the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse on World Press Freedom Day:

Today, on World Press Freedom Day 2022, the undersigned foreign ministers for country members of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse call attention to the pressing need for enhanced safety of women journalists and media workers.

Women in journalism are disproportionately impacted by threats and attacks, which are more often gendered and sexualized than threats against their male counterparts and increasingly take place online. Many women journalists face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence, including on the basis of other characteristics, including race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The latest study from 2020 (UNESCO) shows that almost 75% of women journalists worldwide have experienced online violence.

Social media is a critical avenue for journalists and media organisations to engage their audiences, but it is also a vector of online harms.

Furthermore, the escalation of technology-facilitated gender-based

violence is of urgent concern and forms a serious threat to an inclusive and diverse media landscape. It is a risk to media pluralism and democracy. Online threats to women journalists and media workers can lead to self-censorship and disengagement from the digital public square, undermining their ability to exercise their human rights and enjoy freedom of expression compounding the forms of violence they face offline. All people – including women – should be able to speak out without fear of harassment, discrimination or violence. There is also in many places a culture of impunity surrounding online attacks on women journalists and media workers, which perpetuates the cycle of gender-based violence.

Today, we call upon all states, media companies, workplaces, technology platforms and civil society groups to speak out against technology facilitated gender-based violence, to prevent and address all forms of violence against women journalists and media workers, both online and offline, and defend their ability to practice journalism freely and safely.

- Australia Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne
- Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Jeppe Kofod
- Republic of Korea Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Chung Eui-yong
- Sweden Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Ann Linde
- United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Minister for Women and Equalities, Rt Hon Liz Truss
- United States Secretary of State, Antony J Blinken

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UK donates fleet of armoured vehicles to Ukraine to evacuate civilians from besieged areas

- UK to donate a fleet of 13 armoured vehicles to Ukraine to rescue civilians from besieged areas.
- Vehicles will also transport key workers to rebuild vital infrastructure
- Delivery of the highly specialised fleet is in direct response to a request from the Government of Ukraine

The UK is sending a fleet of 13 protective armoured vehicles to Ukraine, to

safely evacuate people from the shelled areas in east of the country.

The steel-plated vehicles will be sent following a direct request from the Ukraine government for safe and resilient transport for civilians. They will also be used to transport officials from Ukrainian ministries to temporary command posts set up for government work and the rebuilding of key infrastructure, such as energy supplies, in besieged areas.

The Ukrainian police and the National Guard will also utilise the fleet to rebuild vital railway lines in the east of Ukraine.

The fleet is made up of highly specialised 4x4s that have been upgraded with armour to resist high velocity bullets, anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices – all tactics which have been used by Russian forces to slaughter civilians.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The intentional targeting of innocent civilians is a war crime.

This latest donation of armoured vehicles will help protect innocent Ukrainians attempting to flee Russian shelling and support Ukrainian officials carrying out vital work.

The unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to have a massive human cost, including the murdering of innocent civilians and mass displacement of families, as well as the destruction to vital infrastructure including schools and hospitals. It is estimated that more than 12 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance with the actual figure likely to be much higher.

The vehicles, donated from the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office's fleet, will start to arrive in the east of Ukraine in the coming days with UK government logistics teams working with partners on the ground to dispatch them as quickly as possible.

That package includes £220 million to provide medical supplies and basic necessities on the ground, saving lives and protecting vulnerable people. This includes support through the UN, the Red Cross and NGOs, including the DEC and UK-Med.

The UK has also sent a rapid donation of food supplies following a request from the government, committed to donating up to 42 ambulances to help bring vital lifesaving care, and sent more than 5 million medical items to support lifesaving work in Ukraine.

The UK has also been playing a lead role in supporting Ukraine militarily, committing to provide Stormer armoured vehicles, Air Defence Systems, 120 armoured vehicles, new anti-ship missiles, and over 5,000 anti-tank missiles, in addition to the Challenger 2 tanks provided to Poland to backfill those they are donating to Ukraine.

The UK Ambassador to Kyiv, Melinda Simmons, also returned to Kyiv on Friday.

- the fleet is part of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) supply and is worth £660,000. The vehicles will be delivered in batches to meet the request from the Government of Ukraine
- the vehicles are protected by steel plating, with reinforced glass, enhanced suspension and upgraded brakes, and include internal VHF 2-way radio for long range communication outdoors