**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RfI)**

**issued by**

**Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)**

**in relation to**

**Universal Credit Navigator Tool**

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# What you need to know

 What ‘We’ and ‘You’ Means:

* When we use ‘we’, ‘us’ or ‘our’ we mean **The Department for Work and Pensions** **(DWP)** When we use ‘you’ or ‘your’ we mean your organisation, or the organisation you represent, in completing this Request for Information (RfI).
* The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) regulate how we procure. This means that we and you must follow processes that are fair, transparent, and equitable for all bidders.

#  2. Rfi Scope

* DWP requires information on the ability to provide the products and services specified in the section ‘Information Required’.
* This Request for Information (RfI) is used to gain a better understanding of the types and availability of products and services, as well as the commercial terms on which to acquire them.
* You are asked to advise if your organisation would be interested in bidding for this opportunity as part of your response to the RfI.
* If you are not interested, it is requested that a reason be submitted as this is valuable feedback for DWP to consider.
* You are requested to provide your responses using the Word document provided ‘RfI Response template for UC Navigator tool’.
* Do not share or provide any sales literature, artefacts, presentations, blogs, Linkedin links or documentation relating to your company, DWP only invite responses to the questions set out within the questionnaire.
* Please note that responding to this RfI does not guarantee selection for any subsequent stages of the procurement process.

3. Background to DWP

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DWP is responsible for welfare, pensions, and child maintenance policy. As the UK’s biggest public service department, it administers the State Pension, Universal Credit, and a range of working age, disability, and ill health benefit to over 22 million claimants and customers.

DWP is responsible for:

* understanding and dealing with the causes of poverty rather than its symptoms
* encouraging people to work and making work pay
* encouraging disabled people and those with ill health to work and be independent
* providing a decent income for people of pension age and promoting saving for retirement
* providing value for money and reducing levels of fraud and error
* reducing work-related death and serious injury in workplaces through the [Health and Safety Executive](https://www.hse.gov.uk/)

DWP’s priorities are to:

* run an effective welfare system that enables people to achieve financial independence by providing assistance and guidance into employment
* increase saving for, and security in, later life
* create a fair and affordable welfare system which improves the life chances of children
* deliver outstanding services to our customers and claimants
* deliver efficiently: transform the way we deliver our services to reduce costs and increase efficiency

# 4. Background to the Requirement

DWP is responsible for the delivery of Universal Credit. This is a single benefit for working aged people with limited means. It replaces six existing benefits and covers both those in work and those unable to work due to illness, disability, or caring responsibilities. It pays a standard amount with additional amounts for costs relating to children, housing etc. It is delivered by a modern digital system.

DWP has a duty both to citizens and Parliament to ensure that the Universal Credit system complies with the rule of law. Decisions affecting an individual’s entitlement are subject to appeal rights and individuals are entitled to know the legal basis for these decisions.

The legislation that underpins Universal Credit is complex. Individuals (whether citizens, advisers or DWP staff) may find it hard to interact with. Some of the difficulties that may be encountered include:

* ascertaining what legislation applies to them or to a particular situation;
* understanding the relationship between different legislative provisions;
* dealing with complexity, eg applying a series of conditions or exceptions (or a series of conditions with exceptions);
* understanding how a particular system, created by legislation, can support the business.

A tool which can help users with access to the legal rules and is easily traceable to the official source of those rules, could help provide transparency and confidence in the Universal Credit system.

DWP has already produced a prototype of such a tool, based on a computer readable version of the legislation. It guides the user through the legislation interactively and helps them find accurate answers to questions about legal entitlement.

The tool uses content created by Government lawyers. This comprises a series of logic maps (approximately 80) that represent the Universal Credit rules and have been translated into a high level (domain specific) coding language. The tables into which this language is written, provide links to the source of the rules in legislation.gov.uk and other relevant information.

The prototype consists of a rule’s engine based on the logic maps and a simple interface that calls up the answers to questions about UC entitlement and related information.

We are seeking information about suppliers that could build and provide ongoing maintenance of a similar tool, utilising the existing flow charts and tables. You would need to provide the software to build the rules engine and a suitable interface.

Ongoing maintenance is likely to include updates to content as the legislation changes. DWP will provide updated flow charts and tables, and these will need to be implemented into the tool in a timely manner to support the business need.

The purpose of this RfI is to explore interest in building and maintaining a tool as described. This is likely to be of interest to those active in the field of innovation known as “Rules as Code” or “Code as law” or otherwise interested in the application of AI to legal rules.

The tool produced will have to follow UK Government GDS design principles and meet the accessibility requirements for public sector bodies.

[Government Design Principles - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles)

[Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps)

# 5. Location of Work

It is anticipated that this would be carried out remotely. Occasional travel to one of the DWP Hub locations listed below maybe required:

* Benton Park View, Newcastle
* Quarry House, Leeds
* Peel Park, Blackpool
* St Peter’s Square, Manchester
* Kings Court, Sheffield
* Caxton House, London and
* Arena Central, Birmingham

The work would involve working closely with DWP lawyers based in Caxton House.

# 6. Security and Vetting Requirements

The default security standard for DWP is the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), however other levels of Security Clearance may be required on occasions dependent on the particular project.

# 7. Information Required

DWP kindly asks you to submit responses to the information requests below, utilising the attached Word document entitled ‘RfI response template for UC Navigator Tool’:

Are you a supplier with a core capability to produce the ask above, if so, please provide details? Please note information provided will not form part of any assessment of supplier capability.

1. Please confirm your Legal Entity i.e. SME, Micro, Large Enterprise etc.
2. Do you have experience in the technologies used such as “Rules as Code” or “Code as law” and are you able to navigate coding? If yes, Please explain.
3. How would you manage maintenance issues such as policy changes?
4. How would you make the tool user friendly?
5. Where do you think the tool should be hosted?
6. Please provide any general comments or observations (positive or negative) on the approach DWP are proposing.
7. Do you have experience in producing software that meets UK Government GDS design principles?
8. Do you have experience in producing software that meets with accessibility requirements for public sector bodies?
9. How would you implement and support a test phase/phases of the tool?
10. How would you support users during ongoing running of the tool?
11. Based on the information provided in this RfI, is there anything that would prevent you from responding to an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for a UC Navigator Tool?

# 8. Timelines for RfI

Please see the below for the RfI timelines:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time / Date** | **Activity** |
| 17:00 5th September 2023 | RfI issued |
| 17:00 5th September 2023 | Clarification period opens |
| 10:00 15th September 2023 | Clarification period ends |
| 17:00 20th September2023 | Deadline for submission of RfI responses |

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# 9. When and how to ask clarification questions

* We hope everything is clear after you’ve read this RfI document.
* If you have any questions,

You need to send your questions through to cddigital.ucwa@DWP.GOV.UK before the clarification period ends. This is the only way we can communicate with organisations. Try to ensure your question is specific and clear

# 10. Other

## **Rfi Costs**

DWP will not reimburse any costs incurred in connection with the preparation and / or submission of the supplier RfI response.

## **Right to cancel or vary this Rfi**

DWP reserves the right to:

* Change the basis of or the procedures for this RfI at any time; amend, clarify, add to or withdraw all or any part of the RfI at any time, including varying any timetable or deadlines set out in the RfI; and:
* Cancel all or part of this RfI at any stage and at any time.

Right to confirm or request updated Rfi

* DWP reserves the right to require organisations to confirm that their RfI response remains accurate at all stages of the RfI process and/or to request updated Information.
* DWP also reserves the right to specify additional standards or requirements according to their specific requirements.

Conduct – Specific obligations

You must not directly or indirectly canvass any Minister, officer, public sector employee, member, or agent regarding this RfI or attempt to obtain any information from the same regarding this RfI (except where and as permitted by the RfI). Any attempt by the organisation to do so may result in the organisation’s disqualification from this RfI and any subsequent ITT.

## **Notices to organisations**

* This RfI and any related documents referred to have been prepared by DWP to gather information.
* Whilst prepared in good faith, the RfI documents are intended only as a preliminary background explanation of the Department’s activities and plans. Therefore, it is not intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter any contractual relationship with DWP.
* The RfI documents do not purport to be all inclusive or to contain all of the information that organisations may require.
* Neither DWP or its advisors, (included but not limited to) the directors, officers, partners, employees, other staff, agents, or advisers of any such body or person:
	+ Makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RfI documents.
	+ Accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the RfI documents or for its fairness, accuracy or completeness; or
	+ Shall be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.
	+ Nothing in the RfI documents is, or should be, relied upon as a promise or a representation as to the DWP’s ultimate decisions in relation to the RfI.
	+ The publication of the RfI documents in no way commits the DWP to progress with procurement activity or to award any contract.

## **Confidentiality**

The contents of the RfI are being made available by DWP on the conditions that the Supplier:

* + Treats the RfI as confidential at all times, unless the information is already in the public domain;
	+ Does not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen, except where, and to the extent that, the Information is already in the public domain;
	+ Only uses the Information for the purposes of preparing a Response (or deciding whether to respond); and
	+ Does not undertake any promotional or similar activity related to this RfI within any section of the media.
	+ The Supplier may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to its members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors, advisers or to any other person provided that:
	+ This is done for the sole purpose of enabling the organisation to submit its response and the person receiving the information undertakes in writing (such written undertaking to be made available to DWP on its request) to keep the information confidential.
	+ It obtains DWP’s prior written consent in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of Information; or
	+ The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to this RfI; or
	+ The organisation is legally required to make such a disclosure.
	+ DWP may disclose information submitted by organisations during this RfI to its officers, employees, agents or advisers or other government departments who are stakeholders in this RfI.

# 11. Contact Information

**Procurement contact details**

Email Address: **cddigital.ucwa@DWP.GOV.UK**

# Appendix 1 – Glossary

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| --- | --- |
| **Expression or Acronym**  | **Definition**  |
| BPSS  | Baseline Personnel and Security Standard [Government baseline personnel security standard - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-baseline-personnel-security-standard)  |
| CCS | Crown Commercial Service |
| DWP | Department for Work and Pensions |
| GDS | Government Digital Standards |
| RfI | Request for Information |
| ITT | Invitation to Tender |
| UC | Universal Credit |