

Terms of Reference for the *Merlin Standard* Advisory Group

The Advisory Group has no formal status within the pilot, but is expected to be a key conduit of provider views, ideas and suggestions to assist DWP in the way it develops the following 3 key priorities to support the Code of Conduct, as follows:

1. developing the *Merlin Standard*
2. creating a mediation service
3. enhancing communication, including sharing best practice

The Advisory Group will therefore structure its time and efforts to collectively:

- help to influence the development of the *Merlin Standard*, including championing acceptance and benefits for Welfare to Work providers
- review the design of the new standard and the underpinning assessment and certification process
- assist the development of the mediation service that will be made available and tested as part of the pilot
- support progress towards a stand alone and self financing industry led service being formed at the end of the pilot to achieve co-regulation between providers and DWP

The following is therefore not an exhaustive list, but is designed to highlight the sort of activity the Advisory Group will deal with. There will additionally be a DWP Working Group which will focus on the internal interfaces between the new standard and existing interfaces with providers. Advisory Group activity to include:

- strategic direction of the *Merlin Standard* in conjunction with DWP during the pilot
- development of, and provision of an independent mediator service for the sector
- establishment and review of risk management policies related to the *Merlin Standard*
- agree appropriate cost structures and financing options for the future self financing arrangements
- recommending the composition of the Advisory Board, election procedures and succession planning arrangements in anticipation of stand alone status at the end of the pilot period, including the structure of corporate governance arrangements