

## Request for proposal (RFP): Pilotlight Digital Community Hub

### 1. Invitation to Tender

Pilotlight invites proposals from **senior, mission-aligned digital partners** to design and build our **Digital Community & Learning Hub** – a cornerstone of our ambition to become a **system-changing platform for the social sector**.

This is not a conventional technology procurement. It is an invitation to form a strategic partnership at a pivotal moment in Pilotlight's evolution.

We are seeking a partner who understands that digital platforms are not just delivery mechanisms, but powerful enablers of **human connection, learning, equity and long-term impact**. The successful partner will work alongside our leadership and staff teams to co-create a platform that strengthens charities, mobilises skilled volunteers at scale, and builds enduring communities of practice across sectors.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) sets out our ambition, strategic context and core requirements. It is intentionally not over-prescriptive. We welcome partners who bring insight, challenge and innovation – and who are motivated by the opportunity to contribute to meaningful, system-level change.

### 2. About Pilotlight

Pilotlight is a leading charity unlocking the power of **skills-based volunteering** to help charities tackle their toughest strategic challenges.

For 30 years, we have partnered charities with highly skilled volunteers ("Pilotlighters") from business and the professions to strengthen leadership, improve organisational resilience and accelerate social impact. Our work sits at the intersection of charity ambition and business expertise – grounded in trust, purpose and long-term partnership.

As the pressures facing charities intensify, Pilotlight is transforming its model to meet the scale and complexity of the challenge. Our 2025–2030 strategy sets out a clear ambition: to evolve from a primarily programme-based organisation into a **platform for system change**.

Our future model will be:

- **More accessible** – breaking down geographic, structural and financial barriers to participation

- **More scalable** – extending impact beyond time-bound programme cohorts
- **More connected** – building enduring communities rather than one-off interventions
- **More data-informed** – embedding learning, insight and impact measurement throughout our work
- **More needs led** – working collaboratively with our charity partners to coproduce scalable solutions

The Digital Community & Learning Hub is central to enabling this shift.

### 3. Project Overview

| Project Title       | Pilotlight's Digital Community & Learning Hub   |
|---------------------|---|
| Issued By           | Pilotlight  |
| Contact             | Libby Morgan, Systems and Technology Manager<br><a href="mailto:lmorgan@pilotlight.org.uk">lmorgan@pilotlight.org.uk</a><br>07483 014 782 |
| Date Issued         | 22 December 2025  |
| Submission Deadline | Wednesday 28 January 2026   |

### 4. Background & Context

Pilotlight delivers consistently high-quality programmes and partnerships. However, our current digital infrastructure constrains our ability to:

- Increase our reach in keeping with our ambition to scale
- Sustain meaningful engagement beyond live programmes
- Support scalable peer learning and leadership development
- Provide intuitive, equitable access to resources and insight
- Connect people, data and learning across the full Pilotlight ecosystem

As demand for skills-based support grows and as charities face increasing complexity, pressure and uncertainty Pilotlight must evolve how we convene, support and learn at scale.

This project builds on extensive discovery and design work, including:

- Sprint workshops with internal teams, charities and volunteers
- Mapping of end-to-end user journeys across multiple personas
- Benchmarking against best-in-class community and learning platforms
- Early exploration of integration, data and safeguarding requirements

The Digital Community & Learning Hub will provide the digital backbone for Pilotlight's next chapter – connecting charities, volunteers, businesses and staff into a single, trusted environment that enables learning, collaboration and collective impact.

## 5. Strategic Objectives

The Digital Community & Learning Hub will enable Pilotlight to deliver against its strategic ambition to **grow a movement for skills-based social change**.

Specifically, the Hub will:

- Enable charities, volunteers and partners to **connect, learn and collaborate year-round**, not only during live programmes
- Act as a **single, trusted home** for resources, insight and learning across the Pilotlight ecosystem
- Support **scalable leadership development, peer learning and volunteering pathways**
- Deliver a **distinctive, human and emotionally resonant experience** that reflects Pilotlight's values of trust, purpose and ambition
- Embed **equity, accessibility and safeguarding by design**, ensuring participation is safe and inclusive
- Provide **robust data, insight and impact measurement** to inform decision-making and demonstrate value
- Create a flexible digital foundation that can evolve as Pilotlight's model continues to scale

## 6. Scope of Partnership

Pilotlight is seeking a delivery partner – not simply a supplier – to work collaboratively across discovery, design, build and launch.

The appointed partner will:

- Invest in learning about our organisation to build solutions that reflect our purpose and priorities
- Work with Pilotlight to refine MVP scope, priorities and success measures
- Translate user needs into clear, accessible and scalable digital journeys
- Design and build the platform in line with best-practice accessibility, safeguarding and security standards
- Integrate the Hub with Pilotlight's existing systems and data architecture
- Support testing, piloting and iteration ahead of full launch
- Provide documentation, training and ongoing support

Delivery is expected to follow **agile, sprint-based methods**, aligned to Pilotlight's organisational operating rhythms and learning culture.

## 7. Functional Requirements

Suppliers should respond to the requirements below, explaining **how** they would meet them and highlighting any assumptions and any phasing that is recommended or requirements to achieve each feature.

### 7.1. Core (Must-Have) Features

#### Content Management

- Central resource library (documents, video, links, learning modules)
- Metadata, tagging, search and recommendations
- Version control and approval workflows

#### Personalised Dashboards & Integrations

- Integration with Salesforce (standard and custom objects)
- Read-only dashboards surfaced within the Hub
- Secure access to SharePoint-hosted documents (no duplication)

### **Authentication & Role-Based Access**

- Secure login, role assignment and permissions
- Differentiated experiences for charities, volunteers, corporates and staff

### **Community & Collaboration**

- Forums, peer support circles and discussion groups
- Mentoring and matching functionality
- Moderation and safeguarding controls

### **Events & Programme Promotion**

- Event discovery and promotion
- Integration with Eventbrite (or equivalent)

### **Member Directory & Networking**

- Searchable profiles with privacy controls
- Connection and networking workflows

### **Analytics & Impact Measurement**

- Admin dashboards tracking engagement and behaviours
- Exportable data for reporting and evaluation

### **Accessibility & Safeguarding**

- WCAG 2.1 AA compliance
- Reporting, escalation and audit tools

### **Responsive Design & Branding**

- Mobile-first, responsive experience
- Alignment with Pilotlight brand guidelines

### **7.2. Optional / Desirable Features**

- Mobile app
- HubSpot or additional CRM/marketing integrations
- Gamification (badges, progress, recognition)
- Ecommerce (programme registrations, paid features)
- Advanced reporting and data visualisation

Suppliers should price these separately.

## 8. Technical & Non-Functional Requirements

Suppliers should describe their proposed architecture and approach, covering:

- Cloud hosting, scalability, availability and disaster recovery
- UK/EU data residency
- Security (OWASP, GDPR, MFA, SSO, penetration testing)
- Salesforce, Eventbrite and identity integrations
- Data management, retention and consent
- Accessibility engineering and safeguarding tooling
- Support model, SLAs, documentation and training

Pilotlight welcomes supplier recommendations on technology stack, with clear rationale.

## 9. Budget & Pricing

Pilotlight has not set a fixed budget and invites suppliers to propose **best-value solutions**.

Proposals must include:

- Clear breakdown of costs
- MVP vs optional features
- Ongoing support and licensing costs

## 10. Timeline (Indicative)

| Phase                              | Timing          |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procurement & supplier appointment | 30 January 2026 |
| Discovery, design & MVP sign-off   | Q1 2026         |
| Build & integration                | Q1–Q2 2026      |
| Pilot / soft launch                | Mid Q2 2026     |
| Full launch                        | Q3 2026         |

## 11. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against:

- Demonstrable relevant experience (community platforms, charity sector)
- Technical capability and integration approach
- Accessibility, safeguarding and data protection
- Value for money
- Delivery methodology and partnership approach
- References

A scoring matrix will be applied by the evaluation panel.

## 12. What Success Looks Like

From Pilotlight's perspective, success means more than a well-built platform.

A successful Digital Community & Learning Hub will:

- Deliver an MVP that meets user needs and strategic intent within agreed timelines and budget
- Be experienced by charities, volunteers, corporates and staff as intuitive, human and valuable
- Enable sustained engagement beyond programmes and cohorts
- Integrate seamlessly with Salesforce, SharePoint and related systems
- Generate meaningful insight into engagement, outcomes and organisational learning
- Demonstrate clear value for money and long-term return on investment
- Meet the highest standards of accessibility, safeguarding and data protection
- Provide a flexible foundation for future innovation, iteration and scale

Ultimately, this Hub should help Pilotlight **extend its reach, deepen its impact and strengthen the system that supports charities to thrive.**

### 13. Appendix: Definitions

| Term  | Definition  |
|---|---|
| <b>Accessibility</b>                          | The design and development of the Hub to ensure it is usable by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities, in line with WCAG 2.1 AA or higher.   |
| <b>Admin User</b>                             | A Pilotlight staff member with elevated permissions to manage content, users, and settings within the Hub.  |
| <b>Charity Leader</b>                         | An individual taking part in a Pilotlight programme who work for or represent a Charity Partner.  |
| <b>Corporate Pilotlighter</b>                 | An employee of a partner business who volunteers as a Pilotlighter through a corporate partnership with Pilotlight.   |
| <b>CRM (Customer Relationship Management)</b> | The system used by Pilotlight to manage relationships and interactions with charities, Pilotlighters, and partners. Salesforce is the main CRM used by Pilotlight.  |
| <b>Digital Community &amp; Learning Hub</b>   | The online platform to be developed through this tender, providing a central space for connection, learning, collaboration, and resource sharing among all user groups.   |
| <b>End User</b>                               | Any external user accessing the Hub who might be Charity Pilotlighters, Individual Pilotlighters, Corporate Pilotlighters or prospective Pilotlighters, etc.  |
| <b>Impact Measurement</b>                     | The process and tools used to track, analyse, and report on the outcomes and effectiveness of the Hub and its programmes.   |
| <b>Individual Pilotlighter</b>                | An individual who participates in Pilotlight programmes independently in a personal capacity, not as part of a corporate partnership. They provide support to charities through their skills, experience, and time. |



|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>MVP (Minimum Viable Product)</b> | The initial version of the Digital Community & Learning Hub, containing the essential features required to launch and deliver core value to users. |
| <b>Partner Business</b>             | An organisation that collaborates with Pilotlight to provide volunteers (Corporate Pilotlighters) and/or other support to charities.               |
| <b>Partner Charity</b>              | A charitable organisation who Pilotlight partners with to support employees taking part in Pilotlight Programmes.                                  |
| <b>Peer Support Circle</b>          | A group or forum within the Hub where users can share experiences, challenges, and advice with one another.  |
| <b>Project</b>                      | A structured engagement with a Partner Charity and Pilotlighters that addresses a brief put together in the Charity recruitment process.           |
| <b>Resource Library</b>             | The section of the Hub where documents, toolkits, templates, and learning materials are stored and accessed by users.                              |
| <b>Safeguarding</b>                 | Policies and procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all users, particularly vulnerable groups, when using the Hub.                       |
| <b>SSO (Single Sign-On)</b>         | A user authentication process that allows users to access multiple related systems with one set of login credentials.                              |

We look forward to receiving your proposal and exploring how we can work together to build a powerful digital community for the social sector.