



BLACKSTONE&

G-Cloud 15 | Lot 3 – Cloud Support Services

Discovery & Alpha Services

Service Description

GDS-compliant discovery and alpha phase delivery helping organisations explore problems, validate solutions, and build evidence for investment. We conduct user research, map service landscapes, define hypotheses, build prototypes, and develop business cases—ensuring informed decisions before committing to beta development while meeting government service standard assessment requirements.

Service Overview

The Discovery & Alpha Services help public sector organisations explore problems thoroughly and validate solutions effectively before committing to significant development investment.

The GDS service manual establishes discovery and alpha as essential phases in digital service development. Discovery ensures you understand the problem space deeply—who your users are, what they need, and what constraints you're operating within. Alpha ensures you explore potential solutions and build evidence that you can deliver successfully.

Many organisations struggle with these phases, either rushing through them to reach "delivery" or conducting them in ways that don't generate the evidence needed for confident investment decisions. Our service addresses these challenges:

Discovery Excellence: We bring experienced user researchers, business analysts, and service designers who know how to uncover genuine insights rather than confirming assumptions. Our discoveries generate actionable understanding of user needs, service landscapes, and technical constraints.

Alpha Rigour: We apply disciplined experimentation in alpha, testing hypotheses through prototypes and spikes that generate genuine evidence. Our alphas answer the critical questions about whether solutions should be built and how.

Assessment Preparation: Service assessments can be daunting. We help teams prepare by ensuring evidence is gathered throughout and presenting it effectively to assessors.

Business Case Development: Investment decisions require robust business cases. We develop cost-benefit analyses and options appraisals that command confidence from decision-makers.

Service Features

- GDS Discovery phase facilitation and delivery management
- User research: interviews, surveys, contextual inquiry, and personas
- Service landscape mapping and existing capability assessment
- Problem definition, hypothesis formation, and success criteria
- Alpha phase prototyping and technical spike development
- Business case development with cost-benefit and options analysis
- Technology assessment and architectural options appraisal
- Service assessment preparation and coaching support
- Stakeholder engagement workshops and vision alignment sessions
- Knowledge transfer embedding research practices in client teams

Service Benefits

- Evidence-based investment decisions reducing delivery risk
- User needs validated before committing significant resources
- Clear problem definition preventing scope creep and waste
- Service assessment readiness increasing approval success rates
- Stakeholder alignment through collaborative discovery workshops
- Technical feasibility confirmed through working prototypes
- Robust business cases supporting spend control approvals
- Reduced time-to-beta through focused, efficient discovery
- Internal capability built through embedded research practices
- GDS compliance assured through experienced delivery leadership

Available through G-Cloud 15 Framework | Lot 3 – Cloud Support Services