

**Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Cyber
Security Guidance: General Edition**

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Cyber and Technical Security Guidance

Summary

This site documents some of the security decisions that the [Ministry of Justice \(MoJ\)](#) has made for the products we operate, and our relationships with suppliers.

The MoJ [Technical Guidance](#) covers technical decisions in the MoJ more widely.

Note: This guidance is dated: 12 July 2021.

Offline content

This offline version of the guidance is available as a PDF file for convenience. However, it is time-limited: it is not valid after 12 August 2021. For the latest, current version of the guidance, see [here](#).

Getting in touch

- [To report an incident](#).
- For general assistance on MoJ security matters, email security@justice.gov.uk.
- For Cyber Security assistance or consulting, email CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk. More information about the Cyber Security Consultancy Team is [available](#).
- Suppliers to the MoJ should first communicate with their usual MoJ points of contact.

Information structure

The documents are listed in the next section.

Information security policies

Management direction for information security

Avoiding too much security	All users
IDENTIFY, PROTECT, DETECT, RESPOND, RECOVER	All users
IT Security All Users Policy	All users (Policy)
IT Security Policy (Overview)	All users (Policy)
Line Manager approval	All users

Mobile devices and teleworking

Mobile device policy

Remote Working	All users
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Teleworking

Accessing MoJ IT Systems From overseas	All users
General advice on taking equipment overseas	All users
Personal Devices	All users

Human resource security

Prior to employment

Minimum User Clearance Levels Guide	All users
National Security Vetting questions	All users
National Security Vetting for External Candidates FAQ	All users
Pre-employment screening	All users
Pre-Employment Screening and Vetting of External Candidates - FAQs	All users
Security clearance appeals policy	All users

During employment

Personnel risk assessment	All users
Training and Education	All users
Voluntary drug testing policy	All users
Voluntary drug testing policy procedures	All users

Termination and change of employment

End or change of employment	All users
Leavers with NSC and NSVCs	All users

Asset management

Responsibility for assets

Acceptable use	All users
Acceptable use policy	All users (Policy)
Guidance on IT Accounts and Assets for Long Term Leave	All users
IT Acceptable Use Policy	All users (Policy)
Protect Yourself Online	All users
Web browsing security	All users

Information classification

Government Classification Scheme	All users
Information Classification and Handling Guide	All users
Information Classification and Handling Policy	All users (Policy)
OFFICIAL and OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE	All users

Media handling

Removable media	All users
Secure disposal of IT equipment	All users

Access control

User access management

User responsibilities

Protecting Social Media Accounts	All users
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System and application access control

Password Managers	All users
Passwords	All users
Using LastPass Enterprise	All users

Physical and environmental security

Secure areas

Physical Security Policy	All users
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Equipment

Clear Screen and Desk Policy	All users
Equipment Reassignment Guide	All users
Laptops	All users
Locking and shutdown	All users
Policies for MacBook Users	All users

Operations security

Control of operational software

Guidance for using Open Internet Tools	All users
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Communications security

Information transfer

Bluetooth	All users
Email	All users
General Apps Guidance	All users
Secure Data Transfer Guide	All users
Web browsing security policy profiles	All users (Policy)

Information security incident management

Management of information security incidents and lost devices

Lost devices or other IT security incidents	All users
Reporting an incident	All users

Compliance

Compliance with legal and contractual requirements

Data Security and Privacy	All users
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Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment Process

Risk reviews	All users
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Other Guidance

Technical Guidance

The MoJ [Technical Guidance](#) should be read together with this security-focused guidance.

The [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#) provides the base material for all security guidance in the MoJ.

Getting in contact

Reporting an incident

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) colleagues should visit <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/security/report-a-security-incident/> on the MoJ Intranet. Alternatively, if the incident is of a cybersecurity nature then use [Report a cyber security incident](#).

Cyber Security Consultancy Team: asking for help

Overview

This document tells you about the Cyber Security Consultancy Team. It explains how to ask for help, outlines how we handle your requests, and describes what happens next.

To ask for help from a cyber security consultant, send an email to: CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

About the team

The Cyber Security Consultancy Team is part of Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Security & Privacy. The MoJ Chief Information Security Officer leads the consultants.

The team provides help and guidance around cyber security matters, such as:

- Understanding the risks facing your systems and services.
- Designing and implementing effective mitigations for these risks.
- Developing services using security best practices.
- Checking that you or your third party suppliers have enough, and appropriate, cyber security measures in place.
- Applying IT Security policy to specific scenarios.

Asking for help

If you need help dealing with a cyber security task or problem, send an email to:
CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk

Some requests are better handled by other teams. For urgent matters such as incidents, or to get help about physical or personnel security, contact security@justice.gov.uk. For help with data protection, contact privacy@justice.gov.uk.

The consultancy team keep an eye open for email requests. Normally, you'll get an acknowledgement or more detailed reply within two working days.

To help us help you, please answer these questions in your email request, as best you can:

1. Who is the work for?
2. Why is it important?
3. What happens if the work is not done (or not done on time)?
4. What is your need (old-style accreditation on an existing contract, guidance or advice, review of proposed approach,...)?
5. What skills or experience does the work need (known or predicted)?
6. When is the next project milestone that needs cyber consultancy input or involvement?

How the Consultancy team handle requests for help

Each working day, we review all new requests.

Our Service Level Agreement aims to get a reply to you within two working days of us receiving the request. Some large or complex requests might need more information and discussion. These requests take extra time for us to work out the best way to support you.

Some requests might not be appropriate for the team. In such cases, we send a prompt reply, explaining why it would be better to talk with a different team. We'll usually recommend a more appropriate team, and provide contact details for them.

What happens next

If your request is not appropriate for the Consultancy team, we'll tell you immediately after the initial assessment.

If your request is appropriate for the Consultancy team, the assigned consultant contacts you directly. They will engage with you to start providing the help you need.

If things go wrong...

If you disagree with our decision about your request, or there is some other problem, contact us again:
CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

If you'd prefer a different escalation route, contact ciso@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Information security policies

Management direction for information security

Avoiding too much security

This guidance applies to developers and system administrators who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Is it possible to have too much security? Yes. Providing too much security for things or information that do not need protection is a waste of resources. It undermines the value of the security for things that do need it.

[Security by obscurity](#) is one of the weakest approaches for protecting something. It's far better to have a technical control in place to protect the system.

Not all domain names or IP addresses in Government systems are sensitive items

An example is a domain name or IP address. These values do not need to be secret for all systems. Only those that need it. It might be tempting to say that 'all IP addresses are OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. This is then used as a reason for an (in)action, such as "I can't email you that network diagram because it contains IP addresses." But the statement has wider consequences. It imposes a set of security requirements for everyone. It imposes them irrespective of the actual secrecy required.

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE is not a different classification to OFFICIAL. It doesn't need special technical controls or procedures. Rather, it's a reminder to look after a piece of information. It's not a controls checklist. Using labels too casually conflicts with the idea of thinking about information and what we're doing with it, and using that to decide how best to secure the information.

Of course, you might need to keep the access details for some systems secure. An example might be where you cannot maintain or patch a legacy system. But these should be exceptional or 'edge' cases.

There are only a small number of situations where you need to protect IP addresses or domain names. It's usually where the context makes the information sensitive in some way. IP addresses can be personally-identifiable information. For example, a system log file might hold the IP address of a client accessing the system. This might reveal a link between an individual and their use of MoJ services. But the IP address of a public sector server or a router should not be personal data.

Remember also that within the MoJ, systems almost always have [RFC1918](#) addresses. These are normally not routable from the Internet. If you can access the system from the Internet, then you have other problems to resolve. Address them by appropriate security measures rather than hoping that secrecy is enough.

In other words, avoid saying that 'all IP addresses and domain names must be secure'. Instead, think about and justify the handling protections around each piece of information. Ask what data or capability is actually in need of protection, and from what risks.

It's not only about domain names or IP addresses

The need to keep some aspect of a system secret might be evidence that the technical security measures around the system are not complete, adequate, or appropriate to the risks. A well-designed system won't depend on secrecy alone for security.

IDENTIFY, PROTECT, DETECT, RESPOND, RECOVER

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is required to adhere (but prefers to exceed) to the [Minimum Cyber Security Standard \(MCSS\)](#).

The Standard

The [UK HMG Security Policy Framework](#) mandates protective security outcomes that the MoJ must achieve (and suppliers to MoJ, where they process MoJ data/information).

More information is available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-minimum-cyber-security-standard>.

IDENTIFY

IDENTIFY is a prerequisite standard that requires:

- appropriate information security governance processes;
- identification and cataloguing of information held/processed; and
- identification and cataloguing of key operational services provided.

PROTECT

PROTECT is the core standard to provide fundamentally defences to information and requires:

- access to systems and information to be limited to identified, authenticated and authorised systems/users;
- systems to be proportionally protected against exploitation of known vulnerabilities; and
- highly privileged accounts (such as administrative level) to be protected from common attacks.

DETECT

DETECT is the core standard to detect when attacks are taking, or have taken, place and requires:

- capture event information (and apply common threat intelligence sources, such as [CiSP](#));
- based on PROTECT, define and direct monitoring tactics to detect when defence measures seem to have failed;
- detection of common attack techniques (such as commonly known applications or tooling); and
- implementation of transaction monitoring solutions where systems could be vulnerable to fraud attempts.

RESPOND

RESPOND is the core standard to define the minimum of how organisations should respond to attacks and requires:

- development and maintenance of an incident response & management plan (including reporting, roles and responsibilities);
- development and maintenance of communication plans, particularly to relevant supervisory bodies, law enforcement and responsible organisations such as the NCSC;
- regular testing of the incident response & management plan;
- assessment and implementation of mitigating measures on discovery of an incident (successful attack); and
- post-incident reviews to ensure feedback into the iteration of the incident response & management plan.

RECOVER

RECOVER is the core standard to define the minimum of how organisations should recover from an attack once it has been considered closed, and requires:

- identification and testing of contingency mechanisms to ensure the continuance of critical service delivery;
- timely restoration of the service to normal operation (a plan to do so, and testing of that plan);
- from DETECT & RESPOND, immediately implementing controls to ensure the same issue cannot arise in the same way again, ensuring systematic vulnerabilities are proportional remediated.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

IT Security Policy (Overview)

Introduction

This policy gives an overview of information security principles and responsibilities within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and provides a summary of the MoJ's related security policies and guides.

Who is this for?

This policy is aimed at three audiences:

Technical users

These are in-house MoJ Digital and Technology staff who are responsible for implementing controls throughout technical design, development, system integration, and operation. This includes DevOps, Software Developers, Technical Architects, and Service Owners. It also includes Incident Managers from the Event, Problem, Incident, CSI and Knowledge (EPICK) Team.

Service Providers

Defined as any other MoJ business group, agency, contractor, IT supplier and partner who in any way

designs, develops or supplies services (including processing, transmitting and storing data) for, or on behalf of, the MoJ.

General users

All other staff working for the MoJ.

Within this policy, “all MoJ users” refers to General users, Technical users, and Service Providers as defined above.

Associated documentation

For further guidance on IT Security, see the policy below.

- [IT Security All Users Policy](#): which provides further details of the responsibilities of all MoJ users at the MoJ.

Principles

All MoJ users **MUST**:

- Comply with the MoJ's [Acceptable Use Policy](#) wherever they work.
- Report all security incidents promptly and in line with MoJ's IT Incident Management Policy.
- Make themselves aware of their roles, responsibilities and accountability and fully comply with the relevant legislation as described in this and other MoJ guidance.
- Be aware of the need for Information Security as an integral part of the day to day business.
- Protect information assets under the control of the organisation.

Further information can be found in the [IT Security All Users Policy](#).

Enforcement

- This policy is enforced by lower level policies, standards, procedures and guidance.
- Non-conformance with this policy could result in disciplinary action taken in accordance with the MoJ's Disciplinary procedures. This could result in penalties up to and including dismissal. If an employee commits a criminal offence, they might also be prosecuted. In such cases, the MoJ always co-operates with the relevant authorities, and provides appropriate evidence.

Incidents

Note: If you work for an agency or ALB, refer to your local incident reporting guidance.

Operational Security Team

- Email: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #security

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

IT Security All Users Policy

Introduction

This policy provides more information on the actions expected of all Ministry of Justice (MoJ) users when using MoJ equipment and infrastructure. It is a sub-page to the [IT Security Policy Overview](#).

Note: In this document, the terms “data” and “information” are used interchangeably.

Who is this for?

This policy is aimed at three audiences:

Technical users

These are in-house MoJ Digital and Technology staff who are responsible for implementing controls throughout technical design, development, system

integration, and operation. This includes DevOps, Software Developers, Technical Architects, and Service Owners. It also includes Incident Managers from the Event, Problem, Incident, CSI and Knowledge (EPICK) Team.

Service Providers

Defined as any other MoJ business group, agency, contractor, IT supplier and partner who in any way designs, develops or supplies services (including processing, transmitting and storing data) for, or on behalf of, the MoJ.

General users

All other staff working for the MoJ.

Within this policy, “all MoJ users” refers to General users, Technical users, and Service Providers as defined above.

Approach

The MoJ ensures that IT security controls are designed and implemented to protect MoJ data, IT Assets, and reputation, based around the following requirements:

Confidentiality

Knowing and ensuring that data can only be accessed by those authorised to do so.

Integrity

Knowing and ensuring the accuracy and completeness of data, and that it has not been deliberately or inadvertently modified from a previous version.

Availability

Knowing and ensuring that IT systems and data can always be accessed when required and authorised.

Assets

This policy applies to all premises, physical equipment, software and data owned or managed by the MoJ. This includes IT systems, whether developed by the MoJ or managed by IT service providers. It covers the use of IT equipment and the data processed on those IT systems, irrespective of location. It provides direction and support to preserve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of MoJ resources.

Security classification

All MoJ Staff are responsible for ensuring data is:

- Classified correctly as detailed in the [Information Classification, Handling and Security Guide](#).
- Distributed only in accordance with the statements of this policy and related guides.
- Protected by the appropriate security controls to ensure its confidentiality, integrity and availability.

Physical and personnel security

The Physical Security Policy defines how physical access to assets must be controlled within the MoJ to prevent unauthorised access, use, modification, loss, or damage. All MoJ users must understand that:

- All MoJ IT systems and services must be assessed against environmental risks, for example flood or fire, to maintain the asset's confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
- The MoJ's IT Teams are not directly responsible for the physical security and environment of the MoJ sites.
- Physical security controls and the environment in which the MoJ IT systems operate form part of a system's overall risk landscape. All MoJ users **MUST** ensure they adhere to the security controls and requirements set out in this policy.
- Unless otherwise formally agreed by the MoJ, all MoJ users, including agency staff and contractors who have access to MoJ data, require [Baseline Personnel Security Standard \(BPSS\)](#) assessment, as a minimum.
- [National Security Vetting](#) should only be applied for where it is necessary, proportionate, and adds real value.
- The MoJ does not have a standing requirement for system administrators or application developers to maintain Security Check (SC) clearance.

Further information on physical and personnel security is available from MoJGroup Security (mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk) and [CPNI Guidance](#).

Identity and access control

The MoJ ensures that information and IT assets can be accessed only by authorised personnel, and that each individual is accountable for their actions.

Email security

The MoJ Email Security Guide specifies the controls and processes required to protect the MoJ's email systems from unauthorised access or misuse, that may compromise the confidentiality, integrity or availability of the data stored and shared within them.

The guide outlines the various security levels required to transfer information from the MoJ's email servers to organisations outside the MoJ and other government departments. It covers topics such as the threats to email security (phishing) and secure email transfer.

Remote working and portable devices

The MoJ has in place [Remote Working](#) guidance that sets out the requirements for safely accessing and using the MoJ's systems and applications when working remotely, for example from home, another government office, or while travelling.

Mobile computing is the use of portable equipment such as mobile phone, laptop or tablet, and which supports remote working. Mobile computing equipment provided by the MoJ must be used in line with the [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

Any request to take MoJ IT equipment overseas must follow the guidance provided in the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and the [Accessing MoJ IT Systems From Overseas](#) information.

Roles and responsibilities

All MoJ users are responsible for ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data within the MoJ. This includes all MoJ data and assets. These responsibilities extend to all assets referenced in this policy.

All MoJ users are required to comply with the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Information Assurance Framework Process.

Specific roles and responsibilities are described within each sub-page. All MoJ users must comply with these roles and responsibilities, and understand these as being a part of their ultimate responsibility for information security within the MoJ.

For the purpose of this Information Security Policy, the following roles are described. They have specific responsibilities in the implementation and monitoring of different provisions of the policy.

Role	Responsibility	Which includes...
Senior Information Risk Owners (SIROs)	The MoJ SIRO is responsible for the overall MoJ information risk policy and guidance, and ensures it continues to provide appropriate risk appetite and a suitable risk framework.	<p>Implementing and managing information risk management in their respective business groups.</p> <p>Regularly reviewing the application of policy and guidance to ensure it remains appropriate to their business objectives and risk environment.</p> <p>Authorising any exceptions and deviations from the IT Security Policy with consideration of the impact any changes might have to other users.</p>

Role	Responsibility	Which includes...
Delegated Agency SIROs	The delegated agency SIRO is responsible for the information risk policy and guidance as it applies to their systems and personnel, and ensures the agency adheres to the MoJ's risk appetite and risk framework.	In line with the MoJ SIRO, but for Agency systems and personnel.
Information Asset Owners (IAO)	IAOs, also known as IA Leads, must be satisfied that all required technical, personnel, physical and procedural security controls are in place and followed. IAOs are responsible for ensuring the management and security of their information asset over the whole asset lifecycle.	<p>Logging and monitoring.</p> <p>Reviewing access permissions.</p> <p>Understanding and addressing risks associated to their information assets.</p> <p>Ensuring secure disposal of information when it is no longer required.</p>
System Owners	System Owners are responsible for managing access control rules for their particular system.	Verifying access rights in order to assist a scheduled review audit of User accounts and permissions.
Contract Owners	Contract Owners are responsible for ensuring contractors adhere to the IT Security Policy set out here and in associated documentation.	<p>Verify that contracts are written to reflect the MoJ's IT Security Policy.</p> <p>Ensure contractors comply with the requirements set out by this policy and associated documentation.</p> <p>Being responsible for escalating the risk of non-compliance by a supplier, and seeking guidance on suspected non-compliance with security requirements in a contract.</p> <p>Ensure that the contractor is responsible for any sub-contractors that they employ directly or indirectly, and that the contractor, not the MoJ, is responsible for ensuring that those sub-contractors comply with this policy and associated documentation.</p>

Incidents

Note: If you work for an agency or ALB, refer to your local incident reporting guidance.

Operational Security Team

- Email: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #security

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Line Manager approval

This guidance applies to all staff and contractors who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Some MoJ IT Policy documents need you to get a review or approval from a Line Manager or other senior person. Do this before taking an action or working in a particular way.

Examples include:

- [General advice on taking equipment overseas](#).
- [Personal Devices](#) Personal device use.

This guidance describes what you should do. The guidance contains steps to follow for [Line Managers](#), and their [Direct Reports](#).

Steps to follow (Line Managers)

Note: If at any time you need help about this process, or the applicable MoJ IT Policies, just ask: security@justice.gov.uk.

1. Check that your direct report (DR) has said what they want in their request. The request should identify which MoJ IT Policies apply.
2. Check that the request is valid from a business perspective. If not, deny the request ([step 7](#)).
3. Check that [Acceptable Use](#) is in the list of applicable policies.
4. Review the requirements or obligations within the MoJ IT Policies that apply to the request.
5. Check that the DR understands and will follow the requirements or obligations. For example, have a discussion with them, or ask them for more information or evidence.
6. If they are able to follow the applicable MoJ IT Policies, send a formal approval to the DR. An email is enough for this.
7. If you don't think they can follow the Policies, or there's a weak business case for the request, refuse it.
8. Keep a copy of your formal reply, in accord with Data Retention requirements.
9. Some MoJ IT Policies need a copy of formal approval for other parties. For example, before your DR travels to some countries on MoJ business, send a copy of your approval to Operational Security: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk.

Steps to follow (Direct Reports)

Note: If at any time you need help about this process, or the applicable MoJ IT Policies, just ask: security@justice.gov.uk.

1. Check that your business need is valid.
2. Check which MoJ IT Policies apply to your request. Include [Acceptable Use](#) in the list of applicable policies.
3. Check that you understand the requirements or obligations within those MoJ IT Policies.
4. Prepare evidence to show that you will follow all the requirements or obligations. Check that you have all the required information.
5. Send a formal approval request to the authorities required by the MoJ IT Policies. Ensure that you include:
 - Your request.
 - The business case.
 - The list of applicable MoJ IT Policies.
 - Evidence that you understand and can follow the requirements or obligations.
6. Be ready to have a more detailed discussion about your request, or to supply more information.

7. If you get formal approval, keep a copy, in accord with Data Retention requirements.
8. If your request is denied, check that you understand the reasons. Use this understanding to tackle your business task again, if appropriate.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Mobile devices and teleworking

Mobile device policy

Remote Working

Key points

- Be professional, and help keep Ministry of Justice (MoJ) information and resources safe and secure at all times.
- Think about where you are working, for example - can other people or family see what you are working on? Be thoughtful about information privacy.
- Never send work material to personal email accounts.
- Keep MoJ accounts and password information secure.
- Take care of your equipment. Devices are more likely to be stolen or lost when working away from the office or home.
- Do not leave MoJ equipment unattended.
- Get in touch quickly to report problems or security questions.

Overview

The Remote Working Guide gives you advice and guidance on the main security issues that are likely to affect you as a remote worker or a user of mobile computing facilities, (e.g. desktop/laptop computer, smart phones, etc), within the MoJ, including its Agencies and Associated Offices.

It also sets out your individual responsibilities for IT security when working remotely.

Audience

This guide applies to all staff in the MoJ, its Agencies, Associated Offices and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), including contractors, agency and casual staff and service providers, who use computing equipment provided by the Department for remote working or mobile computing, or process any departmental information while working remotely or while using MoJ mobile computing equipment.

What is remote working?

Remote working means you are working away from the office. This could be from home, at another MoJ or government office, whilst travelling, at a conference, or in a hotel.

Protecting your workspace and equipment

Remote working is when you work from any non-MoJ location, for example, working at home. It's important to think about confidentiality, integrity and availability aspects as you work. This means protecting equipment, and the area where you work.

Always:

- Keep MoJ equipment and information safe and secure.
- Protect MoJ information from accidental access by unauthorised people.

- Lock or log off your device when leaving it unattended. For long periods of non-use, shut down your device.
- Keep your workspace clear and tidy - follow a 'clean desk policy', including paperwork, to ensure MoJ information isn't seen by unauthorised people.
- Use MoJ IT equipment for business purposes in preference to your own equipment such as laptops or printers.
- Be wary of anyone overlooking or eavesdropping what you are doing.

Never:

- Let family or other unauthorised people use MoJ equipment.
- Leave equipment unattended.
- Work on sensitive information in public spaces, or where your equipment can be overlooked by others.
- Advertise the fact that you work with MoJ materials.
- Take part in conference or video calls when you are in public or shared spaces such as cafes or waiting rooms.
- Send work material to your personal email address.
- Redirect print jobs from MoJ printers to a personal printer.

Working securely

It's important to consider the security of how you work remotely.

- **Work locations** - as with home working above, you need to be equally, if not more, vigilant when working in public spaces.
- **Confidentiality** - be aware of others eavesdropping or shoulder surfing, both what you are working on and what you are saying eg conference and video calls.
- **Keep MoJ equipment and information**, including printouts and documents, safe and secure.

Even when working remotely, you must still follow the security policies and operating procedures for MoJ systems you access and work with.

Using your own equipment

The main guidance is available [here](#).

Wherever possible, you should always use official MoJ equipment for business purposes. Never send work material to your personal email accounts.

If you are working remotely, or do not have access to MoJ equipment, it might be tempting to use your own equipment, especially printers. The advice is to avoid printing anything, and in particular not to use personal printers.

However, if you really must print MoJ information, you:

- Should connect directly to the printer using USB, not wifi.
- Should not print out personal information relating to others.
- Should not redirect print jobs from an MoJ printer to a personal printer.
- Should consult the information asset owner or line manager before printing the information.
- Must store any and all printed materials safely and securely until you return to MoJ premises, when they must be disposed of or filed appropriately.
- **Must never** dispose of MoJ information in your home rubbish or recycling.

Basically, think before you print.

Privacy

It is important to protect privacy: yours and that of the MoJ. Events like the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic are often exploited by people wanting to get access to sensitive or valuable information. This often results in an increase in attempts to get access to personal information or MoJ accounts, using phishing and email scams. Be extra vigilant whenever you get an unexpected communication.

Be aware of your working environment when you work with MoJ information. If anyone might see the data, or hear you talk about it as you use it, that could cause privacy problems. Be aware of SMART devices around your remote location, and ensure they are switched off if conducting video or voice communications.

Guidance and suggestions for improving Privacy appear throughout this guide, but it's worthwhile highlighting these points:

- Lock your computer, even when unattended for short periods.
- Think about whether an unauthorised person, such as a family member, might see the information you are working with.
- Don't write down passwords. Use a password manager.

Contacts for getting help

In practice, all sorts of things can go wrong from time-to-time. Don't be afraid to report incidents and issues; you will be creating a better and safer work environment.

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk and servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk email addresses are no longer being monitored.

Note: Use of the Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk Slack channel ([#digitalservicedesk](#)) is being withdrawn, and should be avoided.

HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

Incidents

Note: If you work for an agency or ALB, refer to your local incident reporting guidance.

Operational Security Team

- Email: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: [#security](#)

Privacy Advice

Privacy Team

- Email: privacy@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: [#securityprivacyteam](#)
- Intranet: <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-information/protecting-information/>

Cyber Security Advice

Cyber Consultants & Risk Advisors

- Email: security@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: [#security](#)

Historic paper files urgently required by ministers, courts, or Public Inquiries

MoJ HQ staff

- Email: Records_Retention_@justice.gov.uk

HMCTS and HMPPS staff

- Email: BranstonRegistryRequests2@justice.gov.uk

JustStore

- Email: KIM@justice.gov.uk

Related information

[NCSC Home working: preparing your organisation and staff CPNI Home Working Advice](#)

To access the following link, you'll need to be connected to the HMPPS Intranet.

[HMPPS Advice](#)

Teleworking

Accessing Ministry of Justice (MoJ) IT systems overseas

This guidance information applies to all staff, contractors and agency staff who work for the MoJ.

Note: If you are national security cleared to SC or DV levels, or subject to STRAP briefing, follow this process for all your trips, regardless of whether they are for business or personal reasons.

As a government official travelling overseas, you should consider that you may be of interest to hostile parties regardless of your role. By following MoJ policies and processes, you can help reduce the risk to yourself and limit the damage of exposure of sensitive information.

In general, it is acceptable for MoJ users to access MoJ services from overseas, and to do this using their MoJ equipment. But before you travel, consider:

- Do you need to take MoJ IT equipment overseas or access MoJ IT systems to do your job?
- Can the business need be met in another way or by someone else?
- If you just need to manage your inbox while away, can you delegate permissions to your inbox to a colleague to manage on your behalf?
- Have you left enough time to check and obtain necessary approvals? The process can take several weeks, depending on the circumstances. This is because it may be necessary to apply additional technical controls to protect you, your device, and any data the device can access.

Steps to follow before travelling

Part One

1. Get confirmation from your Senior Line Manager that there is a business need for you to take MoJ equipment overseas and access MoJ services. Keep a note of the answers you get.
2. Proceed directly to [Part Two](#) of this process below if you are travelling to or passing through one of the following countries:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China (including Hong Kong), Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the northern area of the Republic of Cyprus, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Syria, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

3. Proceed directly to [Part Two](#) of this process below if you are national security cleared to SC or DV levels.
4. If you are subject to STRAP briefing and intend to travel to or through countries not in Western Europe, North America, Australia, or New Zealand, proceed directly to [Part Two](#) of this process below, and notify the STRAP team at STRAPTeam@cluster2security.gov.uk.
5. If you have reached this step, you do not need to seek further formal approval for your trip.
6. Take a copy of this guidance; it includes useful contact details that help in the event of a problem while travelling.
7. Check if you need to do anything to prepare for [International Roaming](#). See the [International Roaming](#) section below.

Part Two

1. Collect the following information:

- Name.
- Email address.
- Your business area.
- Your Security Clearance.
- The network you use to access MoJ data, services or applications, for example DOM1 or Quantum/MoJO, or online services such as AWS or Google Workspace.
- The make/type of equipment you want to take with you.
- Asset Tag details.
- Countries you'll be visiting or passing through.
- Dates of travel.
- Transport details where possible, for example flights or rail journeys.
- Proposed method of connecting, for example MoJ VPN, Global Protect VPN (for Macs), wifi, or Mobile Data (3G/4G/5G).
- Reason for maintaining access while overseas.
- The MoJ data, applications, or services you expect to access during your trip.
- Who you are travelling with.

2. The next step depends on your MoJ business area:

- If you are part of MoJ HQ, HMPPS HQ, HMCTS, or NPS, contact your Senior Line Manager and ask for approval to take MoJ equipment overseas and access MoJ services. Ask for any special details or considerations that apply to your proposed travel arrangements. Keep a note of the answers you get.
- If you are part of HMPPS (but *not* HQ), contact your Governor and ask for approval to take MoJ equipment overseas and access MoJ services. Ask for any special details or considerations that apply to your proposed travel arrangements. Keep a note of the answers you get.

3. Fill in the [overseas travel form](#).

4. Send the completed form to security@justice.gov.uk, including the answers obtained from the earlier parts of this process.
5. Your request will be considered, and an answer provided, as quickly as possible.
6. When you have received all the approvals, send a copy of your request and the approvals to OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk.
7. When Operational Security have acknowledged receipt of the request and approvals, the formal process is complete.
8. Check if you need to do anything to prepare for [International Roaming](#). See the [International Roaming](#) section below.
9. Take a copy of this guidance; it includes useful contact details that help in the event of a problem while travelling.

International Roaming

While travelling, you might incur roaming charges when using your MoJ equipment for calls or accessing services. These charges must be paid by your Business Unit. This is another reason for having a good business need to take MoJ equipment overseas.

By default, MoJ equipment is not enabled for use overseas. Before travelling, request the ServiceNow Catalogue item for International Roaming, and the remote wipe function. This helps protect the MoJ equipment in case of loss or theft.

Note: International Roaming can be found on [Service Now](#) using: **Home > Order IT > Telephony > Mobile Devices > Request for International Roaming**.

If you have any problem when using MoJ equipment overseas

Contact the [Technology Service Desk](#) immediately. Tell them if the MoJ equipment is lost, stolen or was potentially compromised. This includes any time the equipment is deliberately removed out of your sight, such as by a customs official.

If any security-related incident occurs overseas, regardless of whether it involves MoJ equipment, you should contact the [Operational Security Team](#) as soon as possible. See the [Contacts](#) section below, and the guidance on [Reporting a Security Incident](#) on the MoJ Intranet. This includes information on reporting an incident outside of UK working hours. For convenience, the out-of-hours telephone number for reporting incidents is repeated [below](#).

If there is a problem with your MoJ equipment, it might be necessary to disable your ability to connect to the MoJ network or services from your device. The Service Desk will do this if required. MoJ-issued phones might still have some functionality, to let you make phone calls, but the device should be treated as compromised and not used any more for any MoJ business.

Related pages

- [General advice on taking equipment overseas](#)
- [Overseas travel](#)
- [Staff security and responsibilities during employment](#)

External websites

- [Foreign and Commonwealth Office: travel and living abroad](#)

Contacts

Operational Security Team

- Email: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #security

Dom1 - Technology Service Desk

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- Tel: +44 800 917 5148 from outside the UK, chargeable

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk email address is no longer being monitored.

Digital & Technology - Digital Service Desk

- Email: servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #digitalservicedesk

Information Incident Reporting Line

- Tel: +44 (0)20 3334 0324 for HMPPS staff at any time.
- Tel: +44 (0)20 3334 0324 for MoJ staff **outside UK working hours**.

During UK working hours, MoJ (but not HMPPS) staff should follow the process on the [Reporting a Security Incident](#) page on the MoJ Intranet.

MoJ Security

- Email: security@Justice.gov.uk

General advice on taking equipment overseas

As a government official travelling overseas, you should consider that you are highly likely to be of interest to a range of hostile parties, regardless of your role or seniority. Laptops, tablets and phones are very desirable pieces of equipment to steal and travelling overseas with it puts you at a greater security risk of being a victim of theft.

You should never put yourself in any danger to protect the security of an IT device, as the level of impact to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) of a compromise does not warrant the risk of injury or loss of liberty. By following your department policies and the advice issued, you can help reduce the risk to yourself and your colleagues.

General guidance

Remove unnecessary files from your device when travelling overseas so that the risk of data exposure is reduced in case of loss or theft.

Keeping safe whilst conducting sensitive work overseas

Be aware that voice calls and SMS messages are not secure and voice calls can be intercepted whilst overseas. Keeping your phone with you at all times helps in having a high level of physical control over the equipment:

- Keep any password/PIN separate from the device.
- Be careful when using your device in situations where it may be lost or stolen, such as busy public places and while transiting customs or security at airports.
- Think about where you are working to ensure that you are not being observed (for instance, somebody looking over your shoulder in a crowded place).
- Never leave the device unattended - not even for a moment.
- If it is not practical to keep the device with you securely at all times (for instance, you are at the swimming pool or gym), consider storing the device in the hotel safe.

Note: Standard hotel safes are not entirely secure and it is normally possible for hotel staff to override controls to gain access. In addition therefore you should also store your device in a tamper proof envelope. You should ensure you have a sufficient number to last the duration of your period of travel. If the tamper evident seals show signs of disturbance or the device exhibits strange behaviour, it should be considered compromised. In either case, you must discontinue use of the device and contact your Service Desk immediately and report the device as potentially compromised.

Guidance on using mobile phones

As a government official you may be of interest to a range of hostile parties and therefore:

- If it is not practical to keep the device with you securely at all times (for instance, you are at the swimming pool or gym), consider storing the device in the hotel safe.
- Avoid conducting work related sensitive phone conversations as they can be intercepted and if you do, ensure you can't be overheard. Examples of sensitive information might include prisoner/offence details, court cases of foreign nationals, terror attacks and extremists.
- Do not use public charging stations or connect the phone to a vehicle by USB or Bluetooth as information can be downloaded from your phone.
- Be aware that hotel and public wifi spots are not secure, as they can easily be monitored.
- Make sure you use the phone's password or PIN.
- If the phone is taken from you or you believe it may have been compromised in any way, report it to the [Departmental Security Officer](#).

What to do if you are asked to unlock the device by officials

The extent to which an individual wishes to prevent the customs or security staff from accessing the data will directly relate to its sensitivity. Do not risk your own safety. If the device is being carried by hand to an overseas destination, the sensitivity of the data it holds should not justify any risk to personal safety.

- Try to establish your official status and good faith from the outset.
- Remain calm and polite at all times.
- Carry the names and telephone numbers of a relevant departmental contact and invite the official(s) to contact them to confirm that you are who you claim to be.
- If the official continues to insist on the user inputting his/her password, repeat the above steps.
- State that you are carrying official UK government property that is sensitive and that you cannot allow access.
- Ask to see a senior officer or supervisor. You may want to take the names and/or contact details of any officials involved in the event that you wish to pursue a complaint, or an investigation is required, even at a later date.

If you are on official business:

- State that you are a UK civil servant etc. travelling on HMG official business.

- Where appropriate, produce an official document (e.g. on headed notepaper or with a departmental stamp) or identity card that clearly gives your name, photograph and affiliation.
- Produce a letter of introduction from the overseas organisation or individual you are visiting.
- Carry the names and telephone numbers of the officials to be visited in your destination and invite the official(s) to contact them to confirm that you are who you claim to be.

In the event that a device is removed out of your sight (such as by a customs official) then it should be considered compromised. You must [contact the Technology Service Desk immediately](#) and report the device as potentially compromised.

The Technology Service Desk will disable your ability to connect to the MoJ network from your device. Be aware that although the device will still work as a mobile phone, it should be treated as compromised and not used for any MoJ business.

Contacts for getting help

In practice, all sorts of things can go wrong from time-to-time. Don't be afraid to report incidents and issues; you will be creating a better and safer work environment.

If unsure, contact your Line Manager.

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk and servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk email addresses are no longer being monitored.

Note: Use of the Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk Slack channel ([#digitalservicedesk](#)) is being withdrawn, and should be avoided.

HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

Incidents

Note: If you work for an agency or ALB, refer to your local incident reporting guidance.

Operational Security Team

- Email: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: [#security](#)

Personal Devices

This guidance applies to all staff and contractors who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It provides advice about using personal devices for work purposes.

A personal device is any desktop, laptop, tablet, phone, external drive or similar device that the MoJ does not own.

Not everyone has access to an MoJ device for remote use. If you need equipment, you can request it. It can be provided quickly. Contact your Line Manager for details, and to raise a request through the Service Desk.

In unusual circumstances, it might not be possible to organise provision of equipment. In such cases, you can request access to an MoJ virtual environment.

Note: Except when connecting to an MoJ [virtual environment](#), or with documented approval in exceptional circumstances as described [below](#), you must not use a personal device for work purposes.

Guidance

- If you have an MoJ-issued device or virtual environment, you must use that.
- You must not use a personal device to access Office 365 tools (email, calendar, Word, Excel, Powerpoint, etc.) for work purposes.
- You must not use a personal device to access Google Workspace tools (Gmail, Docs, Slides, Sheets, Drive, Meet, Hangouts, etc.) for work purposes.
- This guidance applies to all tools accessed through a web browser or installed client applications.
- Do not send MoJ information to your personal email account.
- Do not use personal accounts for work purposes.
- Do not store work files or information on a personal device (desktop, laptop, tablet or phone).
- Do not store work files or information on a personal storage device or memory stick (external drive, thumb drive, USB stick, etc.).
- Some teams within the MoJ might have permission to use personal devices for some tasks. This permission continues, but is being reviewed on an on-going basis. Ensure that you have documented approval recording your permission. Ensure that the permission is no more than 12 months old. To request or refresh permission, ask your Line Manager to seek approval by checking with the Operational Security Team: security@justice.gov.uk.

Note: You are not asked or required to use your own devices for work purposes. If you have access to MoJ devices for work purposes, you must use them by default.

Virtual environment

The MoJ can enable access to a Virtual Environment to help with exceptional circumstances. This is where suitable provision of a physical device is not possible.

Request a virtual environment through the `Creation of WVD instances` product offering within the Service Catalogue in MoJ Service Now.

Note: A virtual environment does not offer the same capabilities or performance as a physical MoJ-issued device. Using an MoJ-issued device is always preferable.

Human resource security

Prior to employment

Minimum User Clearance Requirements Guide

Introduction

This Minimum User Clearance Requirements Guide outlines the level of security clearance required for staff in order to access specific account types.

Security clearance levels

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) uses the [national security vetting clearance levels](#):

- Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS)
- Counter Terrorist Check (CTC)
- Security Check (SC)
- Developed Vetting (DV)

Where appropriate, Enhanced checks apply, for example Enhanced Security Check (eSC).

Minimum user clearance requirements

Most of the MoJ IT systems are able to process OFFICIAL information. Therefore all roles in the MoJ require staff to attain BPSS clearance as a minimum to be granted access rights to view OFFICIAL information. Some roles require staff to have higher clearance.

For an individual to perform any of the following tasks, clearance higher than BPSS is required:

- Has long term, regular, unsupervised access to data centres or communications rooms.
- Has regular privileged unsupervised and unconstrained access to systems which contain data for multiple MoJ systems, for example backups, or console access to multiple cloud services.
- Has cryptography responsibilities and handling, under advice from the Crypto Custodian.
- Has access to multiple system security testing outcomes which reveal vulnerabilities in live services.
- Has a role such as system support or IT investigation role, such that without further authority or authorisation, an individual might:
 - Act as another user.
 - Obtain credentials for another user.
 - Directly access other users' data.

If an individual does not need to perform any of the above tasks, then BPSS, DBS or Enhanced Check is sufficient.

The MoJ HQ and Executive Agencies might have additional, specific requirements for DV/DV STRAP clearance for individual systems. These requirements should be followed where applicable.

Please contact the Cyber Assistance Team and refer to the [Vetting Policy](#) for further information.

Checking someone's clearance status

To check someone's clearance status, collect the following information:

- Their first name.
- Their last name.
- Their date of birth.

Send this information to the MoJ Group Security Team, by emailing: mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk. The team will check with the Cluster, to determine the individual's clearance status, if any. If you are authorised to receive the answer, the team will reply to you with the answer.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

National Security Vetting for External Candidates FAQ

This document provides recruiting managers with answers to frequently-asked questions regarding national security vetting for external candidates.

The processes described in this document are under continual review as part of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) “simpler processes” activities. These FAQs will be updated as required.

Section 1: Directly employed staff

Q1. How does the vacancy manager know what level of clearance a role requires?

Vacancy managers **SHALL** always advertise their roles with the correct level of clearance required. Levels of clearance are defined by the requirements of the role being filled, not by the level of clearance the candidate already possesses. Your National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC) can confirm whether your role requires national security vetting in addition to pre-employment checks. Wrongly classifying roles at advert stage leads to delays in on-boarding.

If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q2. What is the pre-employment check process?

This depends on how the candidate is being recruited and their level in the organisation.

Bands A-F (non-SCS) recruited through fair and open recruitment

- All candidates **SHALL** undergo pre-employment checks relevant to the role.
- SSCL will inform applicants to bring their Right To Work (RTW), ID and address documentation to interview.
- Line managers **SHALL** check these documents, make a note of the document reference numbers and input these into Oleo at the Interview Scores Entered stage.
- If the applicant is successful at interview, SSCL will make a provisional offer and ask the candidate to upload copies of the same RTW, ID and address documents into Oleo.
- If NSV is required for the role (as indicated by the vacancy manager in the advert), SSCL will also send a link to the candidate so they can complete an on-line security questionnaire on the NSVS portal.

SCS Grades

- The MoJ SCSBP team work closely with the Government Recruitment Service (GRS), who manage the SCS recruitment campaigns through open and fair competition.
- GRS notify the MoJ SCSBP Team of the successful candidate at interview stage.
- The MoJ SCSBP team contact the candidate to initiate the on-boarding process and send the candidate forms to complete so that SSCL can prepare and issue their contract.
- SCSBP team also arrange a date to meet the candidate and verify their identity documents. These details are used to complete the Clearance Request Form (CRF) and send this to SSCL through the NSVC in the business area.
- Once SSCL process the CRF, a link is sent to the candidate in an email to complete the required security checks on the NSVS portal.

Non-directly employed staff

See [Section 2](#).

Q3. How long do the pre-employment and vetting checks take?

Clearances can involve multiple teams depending on the level of check.

If all information and the correct documents have been provided, the timescales are:

- Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS): average six days.
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) standard checks: New checks: average five days.
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) enhanced checks: New checks: average six days.
- Counter terrorist check (CTC): new checks: minimum six weeks.
- Security clearance (SC): new checks: minimum six weeks.
- Developed vetting (DV): new checks: minimum 18 weeks.

Although the majority of DBS enhanced checks are completed in six working days, in some parts of the country police authorities quote an estimated response time of six to seven weeks.

Section 2: Staff recruited from external sources (non-directly employed)

As well as any clearance, all staff joining the MoJ from external sources (non-directly employed) are required to complete a BPSS check.

Non-directly employed workers include the following:

- Consultants.
- Contractors.
- Agency staff.
- Fee-Paid workers.

Managers **SHALL** ensure that these applicants undergo the mandatory BPSS checks covering: identity, nationality, immigration, Right To Work (RTW), employment history, and criminal records checks. SSCL will not conduct these checks.

For posts that require NSV:

- The vacancy manager **SHALL** discuss this with their NSVC and obtain a code which needs to be entered on the CRF submitted to SSCL.
- If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).
- SSCL only accepts requests with a valid vetting reference code provided on the CRF.
- SSCL sends a link to the candidate so they can complete their on-line security questionnaire on the NSVS portal.

To progress NSV applications, SSCL requires evidence of completion of BPSS checks from the contractor or agency before NSV can be initiated. If you need more information, contact SSCL on 0845 241 5359 (option 1).

Section 3: National security vetting

Q1. What is National Security Vetting (NSV)?

There are three levels of national security clearance:

- Counter terrorist check (CTC).
- Security clearance (SC).
- Developed vetting (DV).

These are mandatory for certain job roles and locations throughout the MoJ.

You need the appropriate level of national security clearance if:

- You have a proximity to public figures who have been assessed to be at risk from terrorist attack.
- You work in a role which has the potential to cause significant damage to MoJ or its assets.

Q2. How long does national security vetting take?

See [Q3, Section 1](#).

Q3. National Security Vetting takes too long, can the candidate start at BPSS and apply for NSV once they are in post?

If NSV is required for a position, candidates **SHOULD NOT** start until their NSV is confirmed.

In exceptional circumstances, a policy dispensation request can be made to mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk, who will give a recommendation on whether to grant or refuse the request. Any risk mitigation measures deemed to be required will also be provided for the Senior Security Advisor and the business unit to sign-up to.

Contractors and Agency staff, who **SHALL** have their NSV in place before they start, should contact their NSVC in the first instance. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Section 4: National Security Vetting Applications

Q1. I submitted an NSV request several weeks ago, how do I see its status?

If you require confirmation of the security clearance level, ask your NSVC who will make enquiries for you. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q2. SSCL have told me that they have completed sponsors' actions, what does that mean?

It means that your security questionnaire has been forwarded to United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV), and the vetting process has started. All actions are complete at the MoJ, and there are no further actions until UKSV return the file with a decision.

Q3. Why is the candidate required to fill in forms on the NSVS portal, and provide information that may already be held elsewhere in the recruitment process?

NSV is a separate process and is not HR-related. For legal reasons, we often ask questions to confirm facts. Even if we have that information elsewhere, we still require confirmation. It is usually easier to gather everything we need in one process; the alternative would be to repeatedly ask for further information. Experience has shown that this causes significant delay. We don't ask for information that we do not need.

Q4. What if the candidate doesn't complete specific dates and details for the Security Questionnaire?

All information declared on the Security Questionnaire **SHALL** be completed in full and to the best of the candidate's knowledge. If certain dates or information are not known, they should include an explanation in the information box provided. Missing or incorrect data delays the application, as the file is referred to a vetting officer who needs to investigate and find the missing data.

Q5. What happens if the candidate misses information out?

We cannot give too much detail about the vetting process for security reasons. However, we can confirm that your information is checked in a variety of systems and databases. If information is mismatched, it forces the file to be referred to a vetting officer. This intervention causes significant delay. Thirteen percent of all NSV cases are rejected because the subject doesn't provide their official middle name(s). It is also not unusual for people to put the wrong date of birth.

It is crucial that accurate information is provided. It really helps vet people more quickly.

Q6. My candidate applied for national security vetting some time ago and hasn't heard anything, who can I check this with?

SC/CTC each take a minimum of six weeks, with an average of nine weeks. DV takes at least 18 weeks. If this time frame has passed, contact the NSVC who requested the clearance. They can contact SSCL for an update.

If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q7. Why can't candidates use Apple products to submit the security questionnaire?

NSVS is run by UKSV. There are very strict controls in place to make certain that the information you provide is secure. Apple products work in a different way. UKSV can't be assured, by Apple, that their platform is secure.

We do not expect that this will change in the foreseeable future.

Section 5: Changes to roles or personal circumstances

This section contains information for managers and staff who are already in the MoJ, and have changes to their roles or personal circumstances:

Q1. I am a manager and I think a member of my team needs a national security vetting clearance to do a new piece of work. What should I do?

Talk to your National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC). All business areas that have at least one member of staff who holds Security Clearance should have one. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q2. My national security vetting clearance is going to expire soon, what should I do?

Speak to your national security vetting contact (NSVC), they will decide if it needs to be renewed and help you start the process off. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q3. My personal circumstances have changed, who should I advise?

For all changes in personal circumstances, please contact Cluster 2 Personnel Risk Management by emailing: VettingAftercare@cluster2security.gov.uk. Failure to report relevant changes could result in withdrawal of clearance.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

National Security Vetting questions

The processes described in this document are under review as part of Ministry of Justice (MoJ) "simpler processes" activities and these FAQs will be updated as required.

A downloadable version of this document is available [here](#).

National security vetting

What is national security vetting?

There are three levels of national security vetting (NSV) or clearance:

- Counter Terrorist Check (CTC).
- Security Check (SC)
- Developed Vetting (DV)

These are mandatory for certain job roles and locations throughout the MoJ.

You need the appropriate level of national security clearance if:

- You have a proximity to public figures who have been assessed to be at risk from terrorist attack.
- You work in a role which has the potential to cause significant damage to the MoJ or its assets.

Can NSV clearance be transferred from another government department?

Candidates cannot choose to transfer their NSV clearance, which lapses on their last day of employment. The MoJ determines what NSV is required for **the new role** and, if necessary, requests that a candidate's NSV clearance is transferred over before starting a new application for NSV. Not all other government department (OGDs) agree to transfer or share; it is their choice and there are various reasons for transferring or not transferring.

Three scenarios are given here:

Scenario 1: The level of clearance required for the new role is the same level the exporting department held for the individual.

For example, the new role requires SC clearance, and the candidate's exporting department held valid SC clearance for them.

Answer: Transfer can take place provided the exporting department confirms a valid NSV clearance **and** agrees to transfer it to the MoJ. In most cases these transfers can take place. In some exceptional circumstances, departments may refuse to transfer clearance to the MoJ. Where this happens, the candidate is required to complete NSV again.

Scenario 2: The level of clearance required for the new role is higher than the level the individual possesses in their current department.

For example, the role requires SC clearance and the current department holds CTC.

Answer: As the level of clearance is higher, the employee is required to complete an application for the new level on the NSV portal. A link is sent to them by SSCL once they have accepted a provisional offer.

Scenario 3: The level of clearance required for the role is lower than the current department holds.

For example, the employee currently possesses DV clearance with their present department but their new post in MoJ requires SC.

Answer: For security reasons, the MoJ **CAN NOT** transfer the higher level of clearance as the **role** does not require it. However, information is extracted to ensure that the candidate is not required to re-apply for a lower level of transfer. This is subject to the current department agreeing to transfer.

Can a candidate start work before applying for NSV?

If NSV is required for a position, candidates **SHOULD NOT** start until their NSV is confirmed.

In exceptional circumstances, a policy dispensation request can be made to [MoJ Group Security](#), who will provide a request form and then give a recommendation on whether to grant or refuse the request. Any risk mitigation measures

deemed to be required (such as plans to segregate the candidate from data that they don't have clearance to see) will also be provided for the Senior Security Advisor and the business unit to sign-up to.

As a minimum requirement, a candidate **SHALL** have submitted their Security Questionnaire on the NSVS portal. This does not extend to Contractors and Agency staff, who **SHALL** have their NSV in place before they start. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Directly employed staff

How does the vacancy manager know what level of clearance a role requires?

Vacancy managers must always advertise their roles with the correct level of clearance required. Levels of clearance are defined by the requirements of the role being filled, and not by the level of clearance the candidate already possesses. Your NSVC can confirm whether your role requires national security vetting in addition to the usual pre-employment checks. Wrongly classifying roles at advert stage will lead to delays in on-boarding.

If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

What is the pre-employment check process?

The checks required depend on how the candidate is being recruited and their level in the organisation.

Bands A-F (non-SCS) recruited through fair and open recruitment

- All candidates must undergo pre-employment checks relevant to the role, although staff transferring from OGDs have simplified checks.
- SSCL will ask applicants to bring their Right to Work, ID and address documentation to interview.
- Line managers must check these documents, make a note of the document reference numbers and input these into Oleo at the Interview Scores Entered stage.
- If the applicant is successful at interview, SSCL will make a provisional offer and ask the candidate to upload copies of the same RTW, ID and address documents into Oleo.
- If National Security Vetting (NSV) is required for the role (as indicated by the vacancy manager in the advert), SSCL will also send a link to the candidate so they can complete an on-line security questionnaire on the National Security Vetting Service (NSVS) portal.
- If the candidate already has any NSV clearances (and has noted this in their pre-appointment form), it may be possible to transfer these to the new role.

Bands A-F (non-SCS) recruited as exception to fair and open recruitment

- These include managed moves and loans and are not advertised in Oleo.
- The vacancy manager should arrange for the individual to bring their original Right to Work, ID and address documentation to be checked.
- The vacancy manager should then submit a Clearance Request Form (CRF) to SSCL recording the details of these documents.
- SSCL send the successful candidate a provisional offer with links to the "Lumesse" system where they must upload the same documents.
- If NSV is required for the role, the vacancy manager must discuss this with their NSVC and obtain a code which needs to be entered on the CRF. SSCL will only accept requests with a valid vetting reference code provided on the Clearance Request Form.
- SSCL will send a link to the candidate so they can complete their on-line security questionnaire on the NSVS portal.
- If the candidate already has any NSV clearances, it may be possible to transfer these to the new role.

SCS Grades

- The MoJ Senior Civil Service Business Partners (SCSBP) team work closely with the Government Recruitment Service (GSR), who manage the SCS recruitment campaigns through open and fair competition.
- GSR notify the MoJ Senior Civil Service Business Partners (SCSBP) Team of the successful candidate.
- The MoJ SCSBP team contact the candidate to initiate the on-boarding process and send the candidate forms to complete so that SSCL can prepare and issue a contract.

- SCSBP team also arrange a date to meet the candidate and verify their identity documents. These details are used to complete the CRF and send this to SSCL via the NSVC in the business area.
- Once SSCL process the CRF, a link is sent to the candidate via an email to complete the required security checks on the NSVS portal. This process is also used to transfer existing clearances for OGD candidates.

How long do the pre-employment and vetting checks take?

Clearances can involve multiple teams depending on the level of check.

If all information and the correct documents have been provided, the timescales are:

- Baseline Personal Security Standard (BPSS): average six days.
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) standard checks: New checks: average five days.
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) enhanced checks: New checks: average six days.
- Counter terrorist check (CTC): new checks: minimum six weeks.
- Security check (SC): new checks: minimum six weeks.
- Developed vetting (DV): new checks: minimum 18 weeks.

Although the majority of DBS enhanced checks are completed in six working days, in some parts of the country authorities estimate a response time of six to seven weeks.

Non-directly employed

As well as any clearance, all staff joining the MoJ from external sources (non-directly employed) are required to complete a BPSS check. SSCL will not conduct these checks and it is the recruiting manager's responsibility to ensure that they are done.

Further guidance, and a link to the BPSS Verification Form, can be found on the MoJ Intranet [here](#).

Non-directly employed workers include the following:

- Consultants.
- Contractors.
- Agency staff.
- Fee-Paid workers.

For posts that require NSV:

- The vacancy manager must discuss this with their NSVC and obtain a code which needs to be entered on the CRF submitted to SSCL.
- If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).
- SSCL will only accept requests with a valid vetting reference code provided on the CRF.
- SSCL will send a link to the candidate so they can complete their on-line security questionnaire on the NSVS portal.

To progress NSV applications, SSCL require evidence that BPSS checks have been completed from the contractor/ agency before NSV can be initiated. If you need more information contact SSCL on 0845 241 5359 (option 1).

National Security Vetting Applications

Why are candidates asked to repeat information supplied elsewhere in the recruitment process?

NSV is a separate process and is not HR-related. For legal reasons, we often ask questions to confirm facts. Even if we have that information elsewhere, we still require confirmation. It is usually easier to gather everything we need in one process; the alternative would be to repeatedly ask for further information. Experience has shown that this causes significant delay, and we don't ask for information that we do not need.

What happens if the candidate misses information out?

All information declared on the Security Questionnaire must be completed in full and to the best of the candidate's knowledge. If certain dates or information are not known, they should include an explanation in the information box provided. Missing or incorrect data delays the application as the file is referred to a vetting officer who must investigate and find the missing data.

We cannot give too much detail about the vetting process for security reasons; however, we can confirm that your information is checked in a variety of systems and databases. If information is mismatched, it forces the file to be referred to a vetting officer, this intervention causes significant delay. Thirteen percent of all NSV cases are rejected because the subject doesn't provide their official middle name(s). It is also not unusual for people to put the wrong date of birth. It is crucial that accurate information is provided, it really helps vet people more quickly.

How do I check the progress of an application?

SC/CTC takes a minimum of six weeks, and DV takes at least 18 weeks. If this time frame has passed, contact the NSVC who requested the clearance, they will contact SSCL for an update.

Why can't Apple products be used to submit the security questionnaire?

NSVS is run by UKSV and there are very strict controls in place to make certain that the information you provide is secure. Apple products work in a different way and UKSV can't be assured, by Apple, that their platform is secure.

We do not expect that this will change in the foreseeable future.

Changes to roles or personal circumstances

This section contains information for managers and staff who are already in the MoJ and have changes to their roles or personal circumstances.

How do I decide if a new piece of work requires staff to have NSV?

If you need to decide if a new piece of work requires clearance, talk to your NSVC. All business areas that have at least one member of staff who holds Security Clearance should have one. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

How do I renew NSC?

If your, or one of your staff's, NSC is due to expire soon, speak to your NSVC, they will decide if it needs to be renewed and help you start the process off. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

If my personal circumstances change, who do I tell?

For all changes in personal circumstances please contact Cluster 2 Personnel Risk Management by emailing: VettingAftercare@cluster2security.gov.uk. Failure to report relevant changes could result in withdrawal of clearance.

You can find more information [here](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Pre-employment screening

Pre-employment screening involves a series of checks to help us make informed decisions about the suitability of individuals to work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and its agencies. These checks ensure the following:

- Compliance with current legislation, for example evidence of Right to Work in the UK
- That applicants are who they say they are.
- The integrity of the applicant, our organisation, and the safety of staff and individuals in our care.

Pre-employment screening procedures are required for all people applying for posts or working within the MoJ, including:

- [Directly employed staff](#).
- [Staff transferring from Other Government Departments \(OGD Transfers\)](#).

FAQs

- [Pre-employment screening and Vetting FAQs](#)

Downloads

- [Applying criminal records checks](#)

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Pre-Employment Screening and Vetting of External Candidates - FAQs

This document describes pre-employment screening and National Security Vetting when recruiting External Candidates.

It answers Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for recruiting managers.

A downloadable version of this information is available [here](#).

Section 1: Pre-employment screening for directly employed staff

Q1. What is pre-employment screening?

Pre-employment screening involves a series of checks to help us make informed decisions about the suitability of people to work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and its agencies. These checks ensure:

- Compliance with current legislation, for example evidence of right to work in the UK.
- That applicants are who they say they are.
- The integrity of the applicant, the organisation, and the safety of staff and others in our care.

All individuals working with the MoJ **SHALL** be required to complete a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check prior to taking up their role.

In addition, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearances might be required but only where the role involves interaction with children or vulnerable adults. These clearances are carried out through either a Standard or an Enhanced check.

National Security Vetting (NSV) might be required but only where the role requires Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), Security Clearance (SC) or Developed Vetting (DV) clearance. See [Section 2](#) for more information. [NSV](#) is separate and additional to pre-employment screening checks.

Q2. What is BPSS?

Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is the minimum level of clearance for all people working across the Civil Service. A BPSS check comprises of the following components or checks:

- Confirmation of right to work in the UK.
- Confirmation of ID and address.
- Eligibility.
- Criminal convictions.
- Employment history.
- Counter-signatory reference (where relevant).
- Health check (where relevant).

Q3. How does the vacancy manager know what level of clearance a role requires?

Vacancy managers **SHALL** always advertise their roles at the correct level of clearance required. Levels of clearance are defined by the requirements of the role being filled, not by the level of clearance the candidate already possesses. Your National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC) can confirm whether the role requires national security vetting in addition to pre-employment checks. Wrongly classifying roles at advert stage leads to delays in on-boarding.

If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q4. What is the process for completing pre-employment checks?

This depends on how the candidate is being recruited, and their level in the organisation.

Bands A-F (non-SCS) recruited through fair and open recruitment

- All candidates **SHALL** undergo pre-employment checks relevant to the role.
- SSCL ask applicants to bring their Right to Work (RTW), ID, and address documentation to interview.
- Line managers **SHALL** check these documents, make a note of the document reference numbers, and input these into Oleeo (the recruitment website), at the Interview Scores Entered stage.
- If the applicant is successful at interview, SSCL makes a provisional offer, and asks the candidate to upload copies of the same RTW, ID, and address documents into Oleeo.
- If NSV is required for the role (as indicated by the vacancy manager in the advert), SSCL also sends a link to the candidate so they can complete an on-line security questionnaire on the NSVS portal.

SCS Grades

- The MoJ SCSBP team work closely with Civil Service Resourcing (CSR), now called Government Recruitment Service (GRS), who manage the SCS recruitment campaigns through open and fair competition.
- GSR notify the MoJ SCSBP Team of the successful candidate at interview stage.
- The MoJ SCSBP team contacts the candidate to initiate the on-boarding process, and sends the candidate forms to complete so that SSCL can prepare and issue their contract.
- SCSBP team also arrange a date to meet the candidate and verify their identity documents. These details are used to complete the Clearance Request Form (CRF) and send this to SSCL via the National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC) in the business area.
- Once SSCL processes the CRF Form, a link is sent to the candidate by email to complete the required security checks on the NSVS portal.

Non-directly employed staff

See [Section 2](#).

Q5. How long do the pre-employment and vetting checks take?

Any clearances can involve multiple teams and depend on the level of check.

If all information and the correct documents have been provided, the average time for the checks to be completed is:

- Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS): average 6 days
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) standard checks: New checks average 5 days
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) enhanced checks: New checks average 6 days
- Counter terrorist check (CTC): New checks minimum six weeks, averaging six weeks
- Security clearance (SC): New checks minimum six weeks, averaging six weeks
- Developed vetting (DV): New checks minimum 18 weeks.

Although the majority of DBS enhanced checks are completed in six working days, in some parts of the country police authorities quote a six to seven week response time.

Section 2: Staff recruited from external sources (non-directly employed)

All staff joining the MoJ from external sources (non-directly employed) are required to complete a BPSS check.

Non-directly employed workers include the following:

- Consultants.
- Contractors.
- Agency staff.
- Fee-Paid workers.

Managers **SHALL** ensure that these applicants undergo the mandatory BPSS checks covering identity, nationality, immigration, right to work, employment history, and criminal records checks. They can check the results on the BPSS Verification Record form, which employers **SHALL** complete to verify that the checks have been made.

Note: SSCL do not conduct these checks.

Further guidance, and a link to the BPSS Verification Form, can be found on the MoJ [Intranet](#).

If you have posts that require NSV

If NSV is required for the role, the vacancy manager **SHALL** discuss this with their National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC), and obtain a code that is entered on the Clearance Request Form (CRF) prior to submission to SSCL.

If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

- SSCL only accepts requests with a valid vetting reference code provided on the CRF.
- SSCL sends a link to the candidate so they can complete their on-line security questionnaire on the NSVS portal.

To progress NSV applications, SSCL requires evidence of completion of BPSS checks from the contractor or agency before NSV can be started. If you need more information, contact SSCL on 0845 241 5359 (option 1).

Section 3: National Security Vetting

Q1. What is National Security Vetting (NSV)?

There are 3 levels of national security clearance:

- Counter Terrorist Check (CTC).
- Security Clearance (SC).
- Developed Vetting (DV).

These are mandatory for certain job roles and locations throughout the MoJ.

You need the appropriate level of national security clearance if:

- You have a proximity to public figures who have been assessed to be at risk from terrorist attack.
- You work in a role which has the potential to cause significant damage to the MoJ or its assets.

Q2. How long does national security vetting take?

Typical timings from completion of application are

- Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): New checks minimum six weeks, averaging six weeks.
- Security Clearance (SC): New checks minimum six weeks, averaging six weeks.
- Developed Vetting (DV): New checks minimum 18 weeks.

Q3. NSV takes too long, can the candidate start at BPSS and apply for NSV once they are in post?

If NSV is required for a position, candidates **SHOULD NOT** start until their NSV is confirmed.

In exceptional circumstances, a policy dispensation request **CAN** be made to the Cluster 2 Security Unit (C2SU). Do this by emailing [MoJ Group Security](#). C2SU recommend whether to grant or refuse the request. Any required risk mitigation measures will be provided by C2SU and **SHALL** require the Senior Security Advisor and the business unit to sign-up to these required measures.

Contractors and Agency staff **SHALL** have their NSV in place before they start. For help, contact your NSVC in the first instance. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Section 4: Applying for NSV

Q1. I submitted an NSV request several weeks ago, how do I find out where it is?

Contact the SSCL contact centre on 0845 241 5359 (option 1). SSCL are responsible for the registration and sponsoring of all applications for the NSVS portal.

Q2. SSCL have told me that they have completed sponsors' actions, what does that mean?

It means that your security questionnaire has been forwarded to United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV), and the vetting process has started. All actions are complete at the MoJ. There are no further actions until UKSV returns the file with a decision.

Q3. Why is the candidate required to fill in forms on the NSVS portal and provide information that may already be held elsewhere in the recruitment process?

NSV is a separate process to anything HR-related. For legal reasons, we often have to ask applicants questions to confirm facts. Even if we have that information elsewhere, we still require the applicant to confirm it. It is usually easier to gather everything we need in one process; the alternative would be to repeatedly return for further information. Experience has shown that this causes significant delay, and we don't ask for information that we would not need.

Q4. What if the candidate doesn't complete specific dates and details for the Security Questionnaire?

All required information on the Security Questionnaire must be completed in full and to the best of the candidate's knowledge. If certain dates or information are not known, an explanation should be added in the information box. Missing or incorrect data will delay the application because the file will be referred to a vetting officer who will have to investigate and find the missing data.

Q5. What happens if the candidate leaves out information?

For security reasons we cannot give too much detail about the vetting process; however, we can confirm that information is checked in a variety of systems and databases. If information is mis-matched, it forces the file to be referred to a vetting officer and this intervention causes significant delay. Thirteen percent of all NSV cases are rejected because the subject doesn't provide their middle name(s) and it is not unusual for people to put the wrong date of birth. It is crucial that accurate information is provided; it really helps vet people quickly.

Q6. My candidate completed the national security vetting application some time ago and hasn't heard anything, who can I check this with?

SC/CTC takes a minimum of six weeks and DV takes at least 18 weeks. If this time frame has been passed, contact the National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC) who requested clearance and they can contact SSCL for an update.

If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q7. Why can't candidates use an Apple machine or iPad to submit the NSV security questionnaire?

NSVS is run by UKSV. There are very strict controls in place to make certain that the information you provide is secure. Apple products work in a different way and UKSV can't be assured by Apple that their platform is secure. We do not expect that will change in the foreseeable future.

Section 5: Changes to roles or personal circumstances

This section contains information for managers, and for staff who are already in the MoJ, regarding changes to roles or personal circumstances.

Q1. I am a manager and I think a member of my team needs a national security vetting clearance to do a new piece of work. What should I do?

Talk to your NSVC. All business areas that have at least one member of staff who holds Security Clearance should have one. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q2. My national security vetting clearance is going to expire soon, what should I do?

Speak to your NSVC. They decide if it needs to be renewed and help you start the process off. If you don't know who your NSVC is, see the download [here](#).

Q3. My personal circumstances have changed, who should I advise?

For all changes in personal circumstances, contact Cluster 2 Personnel Risk Management by emailing VettingAftercare@cluster2security.gov.uk.

You can find more information [here](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Security clearance appeals policy

The Cluster 2 Security Unit (C2SU) forms part of the Transforming Government Security programme, which aims to standardise and strengthen operational security across Government.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is part of Cluster 2, and so must adhere to this policy.

This policy applies to permanent members of staff and contractors' employees employed on the work of the MoJ, and those organisations for which the Cluster 2 Security Unit holds the responsibility for vetting, including non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs).

It also applies to:

- Existing contractors' employees or other non-permanent staff, who are already engaged in the work of the MoJ.
- Existing permanent members of staff of other government departments and organisations who have applied for a security clearance with the MoJ.
- Existing contractors' employees already engaged on government work in other departments and organisations who have applied for a security clearance with the MoJ.

It *does not apply* to individuals on initial recruitment to the Civil Service seeking a first security clearance for permanent employment or contractual work with the MoJ.

It *does* include existing employees of a contractor who are newly deployed to contracted work for the MoJ.

Policy

The MoJ provides a right of internal appeal to the Permanent Secretary where an individual who falls within the scope of this policy has a security clearance refused or withdrawn by the Cluster 2 Security Unit. The appeal **SHOULD** be submitted within 15 working days of notification of the refusal or withdrawal decision.

Where the Permanent Secretary upholds the vetting decision to refuse or withdraw security clearance, there is a further avenue of appeal to the independent Security Vetting Appeals Panel (SVAP). This appeal **SHOULD** be submitted within 28 days of notification that the vetting decision has been upheld.

To achieve this requirement, the Cluster 2 Security Unit must:

- Ensure that the decision to refuse or withdraw national security clearance for an existing permanent or contracted employee (as identified previously) is communicated to the individual promptly and in writing.
- Ensure that the individual is given the full reasons for the decision, and the relevant facts upon which it was based, as far as considerations of security and confidentiality allow.
- Provide the employee with a clear explanation of their right to an internal appeal and the mechanisms by which they can make that appeal, and of their entitlement, should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome, to appeal to the Security Vetting Appeals Panel (SVAP).
- Ensure the appeal process will be carried out independently from the vetting decision makers and anyone involved in the original decision to refuse or withdraw clearance. The process will also - as far as issues of national security and confidentiality allow - be undertaken with transparency, providing a fair opportunity for the appellant to address the reasons for the decision.

Further guidance

Detailed guidance on the processes and timescales for internal and external appeals is given in the Security Clearance Appeals Procedures.

More information about the Security Clearance Appeals Procedures can be obtained from [MoJ Group Security](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

During employment

Personnel risk assessment

This guidance is written for departmental and line managers that manage staff. These staff may include, but are not limited to: permanent employees, individuals on attachment or secondment, contractors, consultants, agency and temporary staff.

Personnel security risk assessment focuses on employees and contractors, their access to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) assets, and the risks they could pose. This is set against the adequacy of existing countermeasures. This risk assessment is crucial in helping you communicate to senior managers the risks to which the organisation is exposed.

This guidance aims to help risk management practitioners to:

- Conduct personnel security risk assessments in a robust and transparent way.
- Prioritise the insider risks to an organisation.
- Evaluate existing countermeasures, and identify appropriate countermeasures to mitigate those risks.
- Allocate security resources, which might be personnel, physical or informational in nature, in a way which is cost-effective and proportionate to the risk posed.

Personnel security

Personnel security is a system of policies and procedures that seek to manage the risk of people exploiting, or having the intention to exploit, their legitimate access to the organisation's assets for unauthorised purposes. Those who seek to exploit their legitimate access to systems and data are called “insiders” and they pose an “Insider Risk”.

A person who causes harm to the MoJ might have access to assets for one day a month, or every working day. They might be a permanent member of staff, or a contractor. Their access might be in a traditional office, or site setting, or remote. This guidance covers all people who are given legitimate access to MoJ assets and premises.

The guidance for Personnel Risk is not prescriptive. It provides a framework to work with but, to be successful, it requires the MoJ to bring together the right people and information. The more you put into this process, the more worthwhile and useful the results will be.

Risk management

Risk management is the foundation of the personnel security management process and is a continuous cycle of:

- Identification: identify the risks to the role.
- Risk assessment: assess the risks to the organisation and its assets in terms of the likelihood of a threat taking place, and the impact that such an event might have.
- Implementation: identify and implement security measures to reduce the likelihood and impact of the threat to an acceptable level, bearing in mind that risk can not be completely removed.
- Evaluation: assess the effectiveness of the countermeasures and identifying corrective actions.



Figure 1: Risk Management Cycle

The methodology defines risk as the product of two factors:

- The likelihood of an event occurring.
- The impact that the event would have.

When each of these factors has been evaluated, they are combined and this provides the overall measure of risk.

The cyclical nature of the process ensures that the implementation and evaluation stages are reviewed each time a risk assessment is repeated.

Much of the value of the risk management process comes from the systematic exploration of threats, opportunities, and countermeasures, through engagement with other parties. These differ between departments but can include HR, security, senior management, information specialists, and other technical specialists as appropriate.

The Risk Management process

The MoJ uses the risk management process developed by the Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI). A copy of the CPNI's guide can be found [here](#).

Managers and other risk management professionals **SHALL** follow the process set out in the guide, and maintain detailed records. These **SHOULD** be made available when requested by Audit, Group Security, or HR.

Downloads

- [Ongoing personnel security: A good practice guide](#).
- [Personnel security risk assessment](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Training and Education

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ)'s Information Security awareness programme plays an essential part in maintaining security. It informs all MoJ staff of:

- Their duties with regard to security.
- Their responsibilities to protect the assets they have access to and use. The assets include information, equipment, people and buildings.
- The importance of reporting any actual or suspected security incidents.

Source

Guidance is provided to staff via the [Security section](#) of the MoJ Intranet. All new staff starting work within the MoJ will receive mandatory IA training. This should ensure that the new staff member is made aware of their security responsibilities whilst working at the MoJ.

Voluntary drug testing policy

Scope

This policy covers access to a range of government assets at risk from a wide range of national security threats. These threats may be related to terrorism, espionage, sabotage, or serious organised crime. Vulnerabilities may also arise from disaffected employees (known as “insiders”) who could seek to exploit their level of access.

This policy **SHOULD** be read in conjunction with the [Voluntary Drug Testing Policy Procedures](#).

Purpose

Substance misuse threatens the efficiency and delivery of business. It might impair judgment and affect an employee's ability to carry out their role and responsibilities effectively and to the standard expected from HMG and the public.

Additionally, it might make an individual vulnerable by leaving them open to pressure, inducement, or blackmail. It might also affect their suitability to continue to hold security clearance.

This policy sets out the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) approach to voluntary drug testing which is used as a risk management tool for personnel security. It helps identify potential risks and vulnerabilities to national security and allows them to be managed appropriately and proportionately.

Specifically, it seeks to:

- Minimise the likelihood of existing employees becoming a security concern.
- Implement security measures in a way that is proportionate to the risk.

Government Functional Standard Outcomes

The [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#) states personnel assurance is fundamental to good security. It demands that Government organisations deliver the appropriate combination of recruitment checks, vetting, and on-going personnel security management. This allows them to be assured about their people and to mitigate risks from well-placed insiders.

Policy Statement

To achieve this security outcome, the following **SHALL** be followed by the MoJ.

- Determine the need for voluntary drug testing using a threat and risk management approach, based on evidence supplied throughout the National Security Vetting (NSV) process.
- Individuals **SHOULD** co-operate fully with any request to provide a voluntary sample collection for drug testing.
- Confirmation of test results, and any subsequent decision making made, **SHALL** be held on the individual's vetting file, and stored in accordance with the organisation's retention periods.
- Test results **SHALL NOT** be used for any other purpose than deciding suitability to hold NSV. Exceptions to this include legal obligations (for example Court order, or Police warrant), or the transfer of records to another Vetting Authority, as part of clearance confirmation procedures, or where there is an overriding corporate duty of care to the vetting subject.
- Any new information or concerns affecting the reliability of an individual **SHALL** be reported to, and dealt with by, [MoJ Group Security](#), in conjunction with the Senior Security Advisor.

Voluntary drug testing policy procedures

Introduction

The Cluster 2 Security Unit (C2SU) forms part of the Transforming Government Security programme which aims to standardise and strengthen operational security across Government.

Cluster 2 is one of four cross-Government Security Clusters which delivers operational security services to the following Government organisations:

- Home Office
- DEFRA
- Department for Education
- Department for Transport
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government

The MoJ Senior Security Advisor (SSA) is responsible for the overall management of security and for ensuring that the Cluster services and policies provided meet Government and organisational aims for improved security in Government.

If you have any queries about this information, contact [MoJ Group Security](#).

Procedures

These policy procedures support and underpin the [Voluntary Drug Testing Policy](#). Unless otherwise noted, these procedures **SHALL** be complied with fully.

Aftercare arrangements: Use of Voluntary Drug Testing

A security clearance requires ongoing review. A voluntary drugs test is one of a range of vetting aftercare arrangements which provides assurance and confirms that staff are suitable for ongoing access to sensitive government information and assets. Drug testing is a voluntary process which enables security clearances to be assessed and granted in cases where they would ordinarily be refused.

Voluntary drug testing is used when illegal drug use is admitted to during the vetting process.

C2SU decide on a case-by-case basis whether drug testing is necessary. C2SU also identify any potential security risks to Government assets in consultation with the MoJ Senior Security Advisor. In any event, the individual must commit to not using any type of illegal drugs during any period of employment with the MoJ.

Drug testing arrangements

C2SU set a timeframe in which an individual will be periodically tested for a panel of illegal drugs by an accredited and approved drug testing provider.

Disclosure of personal information

Personal information needs to be disclosed to the approved drug testing provider to support the administration of the drug testing process. By agreeing to take part in the voluntary drug test, the individual is subsequently consenting to the following personal information being provided:

- Full name.
- Date of birth.
- Place of work (for example, MoJ).
- Declaration of illegal drug use both historic and current (including type of drug(s), frequency, and quantity).
- Declaration of controlled substances both historic and current (for example, prescription medications).
- Other medical history required to help safely facilitate the drug testing process.

This information is used only for the purposes of facilitating the drug testing process.

Sample collection

The primary method for the sample collection is a hair sample. However, in some circumstances other alternative methods, such as a urine sample, may be used for drug testing analysis. At each drug test an alternative hair or urine sample is taken to allow for independent re-testing, if required (for example if a test result is inconclusive or further evidential testing is required).

The individual is expected to co-operate fully with any request to provide a sample collection. If the initial request cannot be met due to availability issues, such as pre-arranged annual leave commitments, the individual must arrange as soon as possible with the C2SU's drug testing provider, and no later than five working days after the unavailable period, to provide a sample collection for drug testing analysis.

If, due to a change of circumstances beyond the individual's control, they are unable to attend the scheduled appointment, they must give advanced notice (minimum of 24 hours) and reason(s) for non-attendance to C2SU and the drug testing provider. The appointment must be rescheduled within seven days of the original appointment date.

Failure to either provide advanced notice to C2SU and the drug testing provider, or reschedule the original appointment date within the set timeframe, is interpreted as the individual's unilateral withdrawal from the vetting aftercare arrangements, and could lead to withdrawal of the security clearance.

Failure to co-operate with any part of the drugs testing process, or if C2SU has reason to believe that deliberate attempts by the individual are being made to delay, frustrate, or circumvent the process, is interpreted as the individual's unilateral withdrawal from the national security vetting aftercare arrangements and could lead to the withdrawal of the security clearance.

Raising concerns

Any concerns about the sample collection process, or about the approved drug testing provider, must be raised with C2SU at once and in any event prior to receiving confirmation of drug testing results. C2SU investigates any concerns raised with the approved drug testing provider.

Confirmation of test results

Confirmation of test results is provided in full to the individual, and shared in their entirety with the Cluster 2 Aftercare Security Unit.

Any positive trace of illegal drugs is grounds for assessing the individual's suitability to hold security clearance. The level of security clearance withdrawn is decided by C2SU on a case-by-case basis.

Confirmation of test results, and any subsequent decision making made by C2SU, is held on the individual's vetting file and stored in accordance with C2SU retention periods.

The test results are not be used for any purpose other than deciding on suitability to hold national security vetting. Exceptions to this include legal obligations (for example court order or police warrant), or the transfer of records to another Vetting Authority as part of clearance confirmation procedures, or where there is an overriding corporate duty of care to the vetting subject.

Self-reporting

Following the Cluster 2 department's Drugs and Alcohol Substance Policy, or equivalent, individuals misusing substances are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager and urged to seek expert help and advice at the earliest opportunity.

Additionally, holders of national security vetting clearance at all levels are expected to show the highest level of honesty, integrity, transparency, openness, and frankness in sharing personal information (including lifestyle habits, and changes to them) of security relevance, or when engaging with C2SU. Dishonesty and intent to mislead or conceal is viewed seriously and influences whether the clearance is kept.

All information shared with C2SU is treated in confidence. Support is provided where possible.

Self-reporting of any drug misuse is not necessarily considered as automatic grounds for the withdrawal of security clearance. C2SU assess everyone on a case-by-case basis. However, failure to self-report drug misuse which later comes to light via drug testing, or any other means, is likely to lead to security clearance being withdrawn.

The following contributing factors are considered by C2SU. This is not an exhaustive list:

- The type and quantity of illegal drug usage.
- Previous history of the misuse of illegal drugs.
- How long since the previous declaration of illegal drugs use.
- How the illegal substances were acquired.
- The environment in which the illegal drug use took place.

C2SU assess an individual's suitability to continue to hold security clearance by deciding the level of risk they have of being susceptible to pressure or improper influence, or indicate unreliability, because of their actions. The principles around national security vetting focus specifically on the threats posed to UK national security (for example terrorism, espionage, or other actions that would threaten the UK). The threats and any subsequent risks to the business might differ, so they are assessed and managed by locally produced business-related policy and procedures.

Appealing decisions of withdrawing security clearance

If a security clearance is withdrawn following a positive test result, the appeal rights and processes are the same as for withdrawal or refusal of national security vetting clearance for any other reason. Any appeal is dealt with following the terms of the Security Clearance Appeals Procedure. These state that Right of Appeal applies to those falling under these criteria:

- Permanent members of MoJ staff.
- Current contractors or other non-permanent staff, already engaged in MoJ work.
- Current permanent members of staff of other government departments and organisations who have applied for or transferred a security clearance with the MoJ.
- Current contractors already engaged on government work in other departments and organisations who have applied for or transferred a security clearance with the MoJ.

There is no Right of Appeal for individuals on recruitment to the Civil Service seeking employment or contractual work with the MoJ. For further information on the Security Clearance Appeals Procedure, contact Group Security: mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk.

Appealing a positive drug test

Any disputed drug test **SHALL** be appealed to C2SU, in writing, within five days of receiving confirmation of a test result.

An appeal **SHALL** detail the reason or reasons why the positive result is being disputed. This information **SHALL** be shared with the approved drug testing provider and the positive test results **SHALL** be subject to further scientific expert analysis to decide the probability of the positive test result being incorrect. The results of any secondary testing **SHALL** be treated as final.

Review of drug testing arrangements

The requirement for drug testing individual cases **SHALL** be subject to ongoing review, on a case-by-case basis, by C2SU. The individual **SHALL** be formally notified by C2SU if this aftercare arrangement is withdrawn.

Termination and change of employment

End or change of employment

Managers must ensure that all employees, contractors and third-party users return all assets within their possession and that all access rights (including building passes, access to buildings, IT systems, applications and directories) are removed at the point of termination or change of employment.

If the leaver has security clearance, managers should contact the [Cluster 2 Security Unit](#) to advise that the person has resigned and tell them their leaving date or the date on which they will be moving to a different department.

Leavers should read the HR guidance at [End or change employment](#).

Managers must also [complete a leaver's checklist](#) as a record of actions.

Downloads

[Leavers checklist](#)

A downloadable version of the “End or change of employment” document is available [here](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Leavers with NSC and NSVCs

This information applies to people leaving the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), who have National Security Vetting (NSV), or who are National Security Vetting Contacts (NSVCs).

Staff or contractors that hold clearance of any level **SHALL** attend an exit interview with their manager before they leave the MoJ. Although these interviews are available for all staff, they are compulsory for those with Counter Terrorist Clearance (CTC) or Security Check (SC).

If the leaver holds Developed Vetting (DV) or SC enhanced level, and has been STRAP inducted, they **SHALL** attend a mandatory STRAP debriefing interview with [Cluster 2 STRAP team](#). They **SHALL** also sign a confidentiality agreement and a “Declaration of Cessation of TOP SECRET STRAP Access”.

NSVCs who leave

The post of National Security Vetting Contact (NSVC) **SHOULD NOT** be left empty. NSVCs **SHOULD** work with [MoJ Group Security](#) to ensure that a replacement has been selected, and trained, to take over once they have left.

Manager responsibilities

When a member of staff with clearance leaves their department, the manager **SHALL** inform their NSVC, so that the NSVC can update their records and remove the staff member from the list of cleared personnel. The NSVC passes the leaver's details on to [Cluster 2 Security Unit](#). Managers **SHOULD** also use this as an opportunity to take another look at the role, and confirm whether it still needs clearance and, if it does, to what level. The NSVC can advise managers on this analysis.

Downloads

- [National Security Vetting Contact Guide](#).
- [National Security Vetting Contact Register](#).
- [National Security Vetting Assessment of Need](#).

Related information

- [End or change employment](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to group security matters, contact: mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk. For general security questions or concerns, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Asset management

Responsibility for assets

Acceptable use of Information Technology at work

This guidance applies to all staff and contractors who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Everyone working at the MoJ has access to MoJ Information Technology (IT) resources. You must use them in an acceptable way. This guidance explains what that means. The definitive list of Acceptable Use Policy statements is [here](#).

Summary

Be sensible when using MoJ IT resources:

- The resources are for you to do MoJ work.
- Protect the resources at all times, to help prevent unacceptable use.
- If the use would cause problems, upset, offence, or embarrassment, it's probably not acceptable.
- Context is important. Security risks can increase when working outside your normal workplace.
- Be aware that your use of resources is monitored. During an investigation into a security incident, IT forensic techniques capture evidence.
- If you're not sure if something is acceptable, ask for help first.
- Above all, if you think there is a problem, [report it](#) or ask for help.

The way you use IT is important, because it indicates your approach to work, and can be taken into account when assessing your behaviour and performance.

What is meant by IT?

IT means the devices or services you use for creating, storing, or sharing information. This includes everything from devices (such as laptops, 'phones, mobile Wi-Fi hotspots (MiFi), iPads, tablets, printers, USB "memory sticks") through to online services (citizen-facing online services, staff tools, corporate email).

Acceptable use of MoJ IT

Acceptable use of IT is when you use it to do your work.

IT helps you complete your tasks as efficiently and effectively as possible. Sometimes, you might need account details such as passwords to use the IT. Acceptable use means protecting this kind of information, too.

Acceptable use can also vary according to context. For example, checking sensitive personal details might be perfectly normal within a secured office, but is not acceptable in a public space where anyone else might see those details.

Unacceptable use of MoJ IT

Unacceptable use of IT prevents you or your colleagues from doing work, or is unlawful or illegal, or does not take the context into account.

There are many unacceptable uses of IT, making it impossible to provide a complete list. Examples of things to avoid include:

- Deliberately or accidentally sharing resources or information, such as passwords, with people who are not supposed to have them.
- Using resources without permission.
- Storing sensitive information where it could easily be lost or stolen.
- Using unapproved tools or processes to store sensitive information, such as passwords or credit card details.
- Using your work email address for personal tasks.
- Using a personal account or personal email address for work tasks.
- Excessive private use during working time.
- Installing unlicensed or unauthorised software.
- Redirecting print jobs from MoJ printers to a personal printer.

Why unacceptable use is a problem

Unacceptable use of IT might affect the MoJ in several ways, such as:

- Bad publicity or embarrassment.
- Increased or unexpected costs or delays.
- Civil or legal action.
- Reduced efficiency and effectiveness.

Unacceptable use might also affect you, too:

- Suspension of access, so that you cannot do your work.
- Disciplinary proceedings, up to and including dismissal.
- Termination of contract for contractors and agency staff.

Keeping control

You are responsible for protecting your MoJ IT resources. This includes keeping your usernames and passwords safe and secure.

It also means looking after MoJ equipment, especially when working away from MoJ locations. You are responsible for protecting MoJ equipment issued to you. Any theft of MoJ equipment, or deliberate or willful damage to MoJ equipment, should normally be [reported](#) to the Police and to the Service Desk.

Note: You should normally report instances of theft or damage to authorities as indicated. However, there might be additional circumstances which mean a sensitive handling of the situation is appropriate. It is acceptable to consider the context of the situation when making a report. Ensure you can justify your actions. In cases of uncertainty, don't hesitate to ask your line manager, or other responsible authority for advice.

While you might be careful about acceptable use of MoJ IT, there are still risks from [malware](#), [ransomware](#), or [phishing](#) attacks.

If you get an email from anyone or anywhere that you are not sure about, remember:

- Don't open any attachments.
- Don't click on any links in the email.

If there is any doubt, or you are worried that the [email might be malicious](#) or inappropriate, [report it immediately](#) as an IT security incident.

Personal use of MoJ IT

Limited personal use of MoJ IT is acceptable as long as it does not cause a problem with your work or that of your colleagues. Context is important. For example, doing personal internet banking during your lunch break might be acceptable, but doing the same thing during a work meeting would not.

Personal use of MoJ mobile phones

You might be allocated a mobile phone for use as part of your work. The mobile phone enables you to:

- Make or receive calls.
- Send or receive SMS texts.
- Use Internet services.

This usage must always be for work purposes.

Examples of unacceptable MoJ mobile phone use include:

- Making charitable donations from the mobile phone account.
- Signing up for premium rate text services.
- Calling premium rate telephone services.
- Voting in “reality TV” popularity contests - these usually involve premium rate services.
- Downloading, uploading, or streaming media files that are not work-related, such as music or movies.
- “Tethering” another device to the MoJ mobile phone, and then using the other device for any of the above activities.

... as well as any other activities that are not obviously work-related.

All use of MoJ IT resources is monitored and logged. This includes mobile phone usage listed in account bills. It is possible to see if you used a work-issued mobile phone for unacceptable activities. Unacceptable use is reported to your Line Manager for further appropriate action. Assessing your behaviour and performance takes this kind of activity into account.

Using MoJ IT outside your usual workplace

Some IT resources might be usable away from your usual workplace, such as a laptop. Even outside the office, you must continue to ensure acceptable use of the IT resources.

You should also [ask](#) before taking MoJ IT equipment outside the UK.

Avoid using removable media

Removable media like memory sticks are portable and easy-to-use. Unfortunately, this makes them a security risk, so [avoid using them](#). If however they are essential to your work, follow the [Use of Removable Media](#) guidance.

Personalisation of equipment

A popular trend is to adorn laptops with stickers. This is acceptable as long as the material does not cause problems such as upset, offence, or embarrassment. The same applies if you customise the desktop environment of your equipment, for example by changing the desktop image.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Acceptable use policy

This information applies to all staff and contractors who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Guidance about Acceptable Use of IT within the MoJ is available [here](#).

The definitive list of Acceptable Use Policy statements is available [here](#).

IT Acceptable Use Policy

This document is the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) ICT Security – IT Acceptable Use Policy. It provides the core set of ICT security principles and expectations on the acceptable use of MoJ ICT systems.

Introduction

MoJ ICT systems and services are first and foremost provided to support the delivery of MoJ's business services. To achieve this, most MoJ users are provided with an appropriate general purpose computer environment (i.e. a standard MS Windows desktop) and access to services and communication tools such as e-mail and the Internet.

This policy outlines the acceptable use of MoJ IT systems and services, and, expectations the MoJ has on its staff in this area.

Scope

This policy covers all Users (including contractors and agency staff) who use MoJ ICT systems or services.

Failure to adhere to this policy could result in:

- Suspension of access to MoJ ICT systems and services.
- For MoJ employees, disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal.
- For others with access to MoJ IT systems and services, (specifically contractors and agency staff) termination of contract.

POL.ITAUP.001

All Users **must be** made aware of the IT Acceptable Use Policy (this document) and provided with security awareness training which covers this policy.

POL.ITAUP.002

All Users **must undergo** refresher security awareness training which covers this policy every 12 months.

Protection of assets

It is paramount that all Users protect the confidentiality of information held on, processed and transmitted by MoJ ICT systems. All Users have a role in protecting the information assets which are under their control or have access to.

MoJ ICT systems have been designed to protect the confidentiality of the data held on them however maintaining this requires the application of and adherence to a clear set of operating procedures by all Users, these are collectively known as Security Operating Procedures (SyOPs).

It is important that all Users of an ICT system (include support and system administrative Users) are familiar with these SyOPs and are provided with the appropriate training.

POL.ITAUP.003

All ICT systems **must have and maintain** a set of Security Operating Procedures (SyOPs). For systems undergoing the Accreditation process, these SyOPs can be included as part of the RMADS.

POL.ITAUP.004

All Users of an ICT system (this includes support and system administrative staff) must read the SyOPs applicable and **must acknowledge** that they have both read and understood it before being granted access. A

POL.ITAUP.005

record must be kept of this event and made available to the system Accreditor upon request.

POL.ITAUP.006

All Users **must be** made aware that non-conformance to system SyOPs constitutes a breach of the MoJ IT Security Policy which may result in disciplinary action.

POL.ITAUP.007

Any change to an ICT system's SyOPs **must be** approved by the system Accreditor in advance.

Any request to perform an action on an ICT system which contravenes its SyOPs **must be** approved by the system Accreditor or MoJ ITSO in advance.

For most Users, access to MoJ ICT systems and information held on them is through using a desktop terminal, remote access laptop and/or mobile device (such as a Blackberry device). These devices have the capacity to store large amounts of potentially sensitive information assets. It is important that Users follow Information Management processes and handling guidelines to ensure information is stored and accessed appropriately. Further information on information handling is provided in the [Information Classification and Handling Policy](#).

General Security Operating Procedures (SyOPs)

The policy refers to a key set of general SyOPs which are listed below:

- [IT Security Operating Procedures - System Administrators](#).
- .
- [Remote Working](#).
- IT Security Operating Procedures - ICT Equipment: Desktop – Corporate.
- IT Security Operating Procedures - ICT Equipment: Mobile Devices - RAS Laptop.
- IT Security Operating Procedures - ICT Equipment: Mobile Devices – Blackberry.

To minimise the number of SyOPs in circulation and standardise procedures, the SyOPs listed above act as the primary set where individual ICT systems are expected to conform to in terms of their own SyOPs. Any deviations or additions are at the discretion of the system Accreditor.

POL.ITAUP.008

All ICT systems **must have** documented SyOPs which comply with the general SyOPs listed in this policy (see [here](#)). Any deviations or additions must be recorded in separate SyOPs which form an addendum to one of the SyOPs listed [here](#).

Note – An ICT system may make use of, in their entirety, one or more of the SyOPs listed above as the procedures of that IT system do not deviate from those described in these general SyOPs.

Removable Media

Removable storage media include devices such as USB memory sticks, writeable CDs/DVDs, floppy discs and external hard drives. These devices can potential contain large amounts of protectively marked data and pose a significant risk to the Confidentiality of data held on them. As such, the MoJ controls the use of removable media through SyOPs, technical security controls, and requiring movements of bulk data to be authorised by MoJ ICT IA, this includes completing an Information Asset Movement Form.

POL.ITAUP.009

Any removable media device **must be** approved by MoJ ICT IA where that device is used to store protectively marked data. The type of device and associated SyOPs must be approved by the system Accreditor prior to operational use.

POL.ITAUP.010

All Users **must ensure** that all data stored on or transported by removable media is in accordance with the applicable system SyOPs.

POL.ITAUP.011

All Users **must seek** approval from MoJ OST prior to any bulk transfer of protectively marked data using removable media. MoJ ICT IA will advise on any technical and procedural requirements such as data encryption and handling arrangements.

Passwords

The username and password combination, in the main, is the primary access credential used for authenticating a User to an ICT systems and authorising their access to information assets and services provided by that system. It is therefore important that Users keep their access credentials safe and secure.

POL.ITAUP.012

All Users **must not** share or disclose any passwords with any other person.

POL.ITAUP.013

All Users **must not**:

- Attempt to gain unauthorised access to another User's IT account.
- Attempt to use another Users access credentials to gain access to an ICT system.
- Attempt to access information for which they do not have a 'need-to-know'.
- Use the same password on more than one ICT system.

Legal and regulatory requirements

There are a number of legal and regulatory requirements for which the MoJ must comply with, this in addition to HMG security policy as expressed in the [HMG Security Policy Framework](#).

POL.ITAUP.014

All Users **must be** made aware of legal and regulatory requirements they must adhere to when accessing MoJ ICT systems. This must be included as part of the SyOPs.

MoJ's Corporate Image

Communications sent from MoJ ICT systems or products developed using them (e.g. MoJ branded document or PowerPoint presentation) can damage the public image of the MoJ if, it is for purposes not in the interest of the MoJ, or, it is abusive, offensive, defamatory, obscene, or indecent, or, of such a nature as to bring the MoJ or any its employees into disrepute.

POL.ITAUP.015

All Users **must ensure** that MoJ ICT systems are not used in an abusive, offensive, defamatory, obscene, or indecent, or, of such a nature as to bring the MoJ or any its employees into disrepute.

Potential to cause offence and harm

The MoJ has a duty of care to all staff and to provide a positive working environment, part of this involves ensuring all staff maintain a high standard of behaviour and conduct.

POL.ITAUP.016

MoJ ICT systems **must not** be used for any activity that will cause offence to MoJ employees, customers, suppliers, partners or visitors, or in a way that violates the [MoJ Code of Conduct](#).

Personal use

The MoJ permits limited personal use of its ICT systems provided this does not conflict or interfere with normal business activities. The MoJ monitors the use of its IT systems and any personal use is subject to monitoring and auditing (see [here](#)), and may also be retained in backup format even after deletion from live systems.

The MoJ reserves the right to restrict personal use of its ICT systems. The main methods employed are:

- Filtering of Internet and e-mail traffic – All Internet and e-mail traffic is filtered and analysed, further details are provided [here](#).
- Policy and procedures – This policy and associated SyOPs set out the restrictions placed on the use of an ICT system.

POL.ITAUP.017

Users **must ensure** any personal use of MoJ ICT systems does not conflict or interfere with normal business activities. Any conflict is to be reported to their line manager.

POL.ITAUP.018

Users **must ensure** that any personal use of MoJ ICT systems is inline with any applicable SyOPs and this policy.

POL.ITAUP.019

Users **must be** aware that any personal use of MoJ ICT systems which contravenes any applicable SyOPs, or this policy, constitutes a breach of the IT Security Policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Maintaining system and data integrity

Users need to comply with all applicable operating procedures and ensure that they do not circumvent any security controls in place. Changes to the configuration of an IT system which will affect either the integrity of that system or the integrity of shared data needs to be undertaken or supervised by authorised User or system Administrator.

POL.ITAUP.020

All Users **must request** any changes to ICT system/s or ICT equipment through the IT helpdesk.

Electronic messaging and use of the Internet

Due to the risks associated with electronic communications such as email and the Internet, the MoJ controls and monitors usage of MoJ ICT systems in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

IT systems are designed to protect the MoJ from Internet borne attacks, reduce the risk of MoJ information being leaked or compromised, and, support the MoJ in providing a safe working environment. This is mainly achieved through the filtering and monitoring of all Internet and e-mail traffic.

Also, the use of any high bandwidth services, such as video steaming websites, creates network capacity issues which cause the poor performance key MoJ ICT services. As such, the MoJ restricts access to the Internet based on job role. Amendments can be made on the submissions of a business case for approval by MoJ Operational Security Team (OST).

The MoJ will regard as a disciplinary offence any usage of electric communications (e-mail and other methods such as instant messaging) and the Internet which, breaks the law, contravenes MoJ HR policies, or involves unauthorised access or handling of material that is deemed to be inappropriate, abusive, offensive, defamatory, obscene or indecent.

External E-mail and the Internet are, in general, insecure services where it is possible for external entities to intercept, monitor, change, spoof, or otherwise interfere with legitimate content. The MoJ deploys a number of security controls to protect its Users from Internet and e-mail borne attacks, however these controls are reliant on Users to remain vigilant, follow any applicable SyOPs, and report any suspicious behaviour.

POL.ITAUP.021

All Users **must use** the Internet and e-mail (and other electronic communication systems) in accordance with this policy document.

Managing e-mail use

Users are responsible for ensuring that all information is handled in line with protective marking of that information in accordance with [Information Classification and Handling Policy](#).

The MoJ is connected to the Government Secure Intranet (GSI), which provides a secure environment for sending/receiving E-mails between Government departments. This allows Users with a MoJ E-mail account (e.g. suffix '@justice.gsi.gov.uk') to send E-mails which attracts a protective marking up to and including RESTRICTED to another MoJ or government User where their E-mail suffix ends in '.gsi.gov.uk'.

POL.ITAUP.022

All Users **must ensure** that protectively marked information contained within or attached to an e-mail is handled in accordance with [Information Classification and Handling Policy](#).

E-mail is a major source of malware and route into the MoJ for criminal organisations to defraud staff or exfiltrate information. All Users need to exercise care when handling emails and report any suspicious activity as an IT security incident.

POL.ITAUP.023

All Users **must ensure** that they do not:

- Open any attachments to an E-mail where the source is untrusted, unknown or unsolicited.
- Click on any links within an E-mail where the source is untrusted, unknown or unsolicited.

POL.ITAUP.024

Where a User suspects that an E-mail received is from an untrusted, unknown or unsolicited source, they **must** report it as an IT security incident.

Connectivity and remote access

Remote access is provided to MoJ ICT systems and services allowing Users access from offsite and home locations to connect in. The main methods of access are either via a RAS laptop and/or Blackberry device. In the main, remote access is to a protectively marked MoJ IT system (up to and including RESTRICTED). As such Users need to be aware of both the security controls and procedures of the device used as well as the general physical security considerations. This includes any restriction on the carriage of such devices as they may contain HMG protectively marked data and HMG cryptographic material.

MoJ ICT IA maintains a list of countries where carriage and use of remote access devices is permitted.

Further details can be found in the [Remote Working](#) guidance.

POL.ITAUP.025

All Users **must be** aware of the [Remote Working](#) guidance and must confirm that they have read and understood it before being provisioned with any remote access devices or equipment (e.g. RSA token).

POL.ITAUP.026

Any User wishing to take a remote access device out of the UK **must consult** [Remote Working](#) guidance before doing so or the applicable device IT Security Operating Procedures document.

Monitoring of communications

Communications may be monitored without notice and on a continual basis for a number of reasons including compliance with legal obligations, effective maintenance of IT systems, preventing or detecting unauthorised use or criminal activities (including cyber-intrusion), monitoring of service or performance standards, providing evidence of business transactions, and checking adherence to policies, procedures, and contracts.

The MoJ monitors telephone usage, network, email and Internet traffic data (including sender, receiver, subject; attachments to an e-mail; numbers called; duration of calls; domain names of websites visited, duration of visits, and files uploaded or downloaded from the Internet) at a network level.

The MoJ, so far as possible and appropriate, respects the privacy and autonomy whilst working of all Users, but further to [this information](#), any personal use of MoJ ICT systems will also be subject to monitoring. By carrying out personal activities using MoJ ICT systems, Users are consenting to the MoJ processing any sensitive personal data which may be revealed by such monitoring (for example regular visits to a set of websites).

For the purposes of business continuity it may sometimes be necessary for the MoJ to access business communications (including within e-mail mailboxes) while a User is absent from work (including holiday and illness). Access will only be granted through submission of a formal request to the IT Helpdesk where approval is required from the relevant line manager where the MoJ ITSO and MoJ HR may be consulted.

POL.ITAUP.027

All Users **must be** aware their electronic communications are being monitored in accordance with this policy.

POL.ITAUP.028

All Users **must be** aware that business communication (such as e-mail mailboxes) may be accessed if they are absent from work. This can only be requested and authorised by a line manager where the MoJ ITSO and MoJ HR may be consulted.

Guidance on IT Accounts and Assets for Long Term Leave

Audience and Document Purpose

This document is intended for Ministry of Justice (MoJ) line managers who have a staff member going on any type of long-term secondment, loan, or leave. It provides guidance on how to handle the IT accounts and IT assets (such as desktops, laptops, or mobile phones) of the staff member while they are on leave.

Long term means longer than 2 months.

Types of secondment, loan, or leave where this might apply include:

- Adoption Leave.
- Career Break.
- Loan.
- Maternity Leave.
- Secondment.
- Shared Parental Leave.

For the purpose of this guidance, all of these are examples of “long-term leave”.

Guidance Statement

Retaining assets, and access during leave

This guidance applies to assets, defined as being laptops, desktops, or mobile phones.

- A staff member going on any long-term leave may keep their assets while they remain contractually employed by the MoJ, **AND** where the leave is not longer than 12 months in duration.
- Remind your staff member that the Acceptable Usage Policy applies at all times during their leave. The policy can be found [here](#).
- Preparation or return from any type of leave may be accompanied by changes in working patterns. The Remote Working guidance provides useful advice for anyone who may be working remotely for the first time. The policy can be found [here](#).

Note: Devices that are not used for 3 months or more go in to a technical “quarantine”, intentionally to render them unusable. Staff members should log in to their devices once per month during leave, to ensure that technical quarantine is not activated. Logging in also helps ensure that system updates are downloaded and applied.

Reviewing access to data and information systems

Before the staff member goes on leave, review their access to data and information systems, to ensure that this meets an ongoing need. This means that:

- If the staff member's role is planned to change on their return to the MoJ, consider removing access now to data and information systems which they will no longer need. If their role is not planned to change on their return, you might consider leaving access “as-is” currently.
- Consider removing access to data or information systems which are OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. This is in line with the necessity rigorously to apply the “need to know” principle for OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information. See the guidance on classifying information for more detail <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-information/protecting-information/classifying-information/>

When to remove access and return assets

In a number of circumstances assets should be returned and access should be removed. This is where:

- The leave is longer in duration, and there is no business need or individual need for the user to keep assets and access. This should be considered for any leave above 12 months in duration. This is likely to be for Career Breaks or Loans.
- The staff member has no means of securely storing the asset, for example locking it securely in their home.
- Staff members going on leave for less than 12 months may return their assets and have access removed if they choose to do so.
- Line managers are empowered to determine whether the staff member should keep assets and access, as long as there is appropriate business justification, and staff members are appropriately supported. For example, a communication mechanism for keeping in touch is agreed.
- If, during their leave, the staff member decides to end their employment (resign), their line manager is responsible for following the appropriate leaver's process with them. Refer to the Resignation section of the HR guidance and forms, with particular reference to the Leavers Checklist for Managers. This can be found at: <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/hr/end-change-of-employment/resignation/>

How to remove access and return assets

- Access to systems and return of assets can be organised through the appropriate items in the [MoJ Technology Portal](#). Please see the Knowledge Base article on “Returning your MoJ laptop, accessories and mobile phones” for details. Removal of access to local systems should be arranged with local IT teams.

Note: When a Dom1 account is deactivated, its data is recoverable for up to 12 months. See the Knowledge Base article on “How to Re-instate a Deactivated Email Account or Mailbox”.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Protect yourself online

There are five simple things we can all do to protect ourselves online:

1. Use a strong password to protect your laptop, computer and mobile devices. To choose a good password, follow [NCSC guidance](#).
2. Think before clicking on links or attachments within emails. By hovering your cursor over the link you can see the actual URL. If you are unsure if an email is genuine, [contact your IT or security team](#).
3. Do not use your work email address to register for accounts on websites for personal use. For example, a shopping website does not need your work email address. Using the wrong address could open up your work email account to spam and fraudulent emails. This in turn could harm your department's IT system.
4. Protect your online identity. Do not share sensitive information about your work on social media or online professional networks.
5. Do not disclose your level of vetting. If you share this information, you advertise what resources you have access to. This could make you a target for malicious individuals.

For more information, see the [Acceptable Use guidance](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Information classification

Government Classification Scheme

These summary guidelines are based on “The Government Security Classification (GSC)” as issued by the Cabinet Office in 2018. The link below provides full handling guidance for information classifications including OFFICIAL, SECRET and TOP SECRET:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>

In summary, the majority of information that is created or processed by the public sector is now classified as OFFICIAL. The other two classifications are SECRET and TOP SECRET.

SECRET classification should be used on very sensitive information that justifies heightened protective measures to defend against determined and highly capable threat actors.

TOP SECRET is HMG's most sensitive information requiring the highest levels of protection from the most serious threats.

Classifications can have additional indicators, providing extra information about looking after the information with that classification. A frequently-seen example is OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. This is still classified as OFFICIAL, but there is an additional indicator that tells you the information is of a more sensitive nature, and so should be handled and looked after accordingly.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Information Classification, Handling and Security Guide

All Ministry of Justice (MoJ) employees interact with information, and are responsible for its protection. Information security must be considered during the process of designing, maintaining, and securing the MoJ's IT systems that are used to process information.

However, not all information warrants the strictest levels of protection. This is why information classification is so important to the MoJ – to ensure that the department can focus its security efforts on its most sensitive information. Information security must be proportionate to the security classification of the information, and must be considered throughout the information lifecycle to maintain its confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

Classifying information

The three information security classifications the MoJ uses are OFFICIAL, SECRET, and TOP SECRET. This follows the [HMG Government Security Classifications Policy](#).

Each information security classification has a minimum set of security measures associated with it that need to be applied. These security measures might change, depending on the information lifecycle stage.

Classification	Description
OFFICIAL	All information related to routine business, operations, and services. If this information is lost, stolen, or published, it could have damaging consequences, but is not subject to a heightened threat profile. For regular, unsupervised access to OFFICIAL information, someone would be expected to have achieved Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) assessment.
SECRET	Very sensitive information that requires protection against highly sophisticated, well-resourced, and determined threat actors. For example, where compromise could seriously damage military capabilities, international relations, or the investigation of a serious crime. For regular, unsupervised access to SECRET information, someone would be expected to have passed National Security Vetting Security Check (SC) clearance. In exceptional circumstances, someone with BPSS might be granted occasional supervised access to UK SECRET assets, or be required to work in areas where SECRET or TOP SECRET information might be overheard.
TOP SECRET	Exceptionally sensitive information that directly supports, or threatens, the national security of the UK or its allies, and requires extremely high assurance of protection from all threats.

Securing the MoJ's information must be done with a combination of information security measures:

Type of Measure	Description
PERSONNEL	Personnel should be aware of their security responsibilities and in turn acquire security clearances and undertake training to support the MoJ's information security objectives.
PHYSICAL	Tangible measures that prevent unauthorised access to physical areas, systems, or assets.
TECHNICAL	Hardware or software mechanisms that protect information and IT assets.

It is important to understand that security classification is determined by the level of risk in case of loss or unauthorised access, and not by the type of information.

It is the responsibility of the Data Owner to classify the data.

- Most production data is OFFICIAL information. Within this, some production data might be classified as SECRET information.
- Most personal data is OFFICIAL information. Within this, some personal data might be classified as SECRET information if it meets the risk threshold defined.

The table below sets out the definitions for each security classification, as well as whether it is necessary to explicitly “mark” a piece of information with its classification type.

Classification	Definition	Marking
OFFICIAL	<p>All information related to routine public sector business, operations and services.</p> <p>Almost all personal information falls within the OFFICIAL classification.</p> <p>OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE is not a separate security classification. It should be used to reinforce the “need to know” principle, beyond the baseline for OFFICIAL.</p>	OFFICIAL data does not need to be marked except where SENSITIVE, and must be marked OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE.
SECRET	Very sensitive information that requires protection against highly sophisticated, well-resourced and determined threat actors, for example serious and organised crime.	Must be marked
TOP SECRET	Exceptionally sensitive information that directly supports (or threatens) the national security of the UK or its allies and requires extremely high assurance of protection from all threats.	Must be marked

Additional information on how to manage information is described in the [Information Asset Management Policy](#).

Information security classification may change throughout the information lifecycle. It is important to apply appropriate security classifications and continually evaluate them.

The consequences of not classifying information correctly are outlined below:

- Applying too high a marking can inhibit business operations, such as collaboration, and lead to unnecessary and expensive protective controls being applied.
- Applying too low a marking may result in inappropriate controls, and may put sensitive assets at greater risk of compromise.
- Incorrect disposal can lead to unauthorised access to information. Disposal of information should be done using approved processes, equipment or service providers.

OFFICIAL and OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

All of the MoJ's information is, at a minimum, OFFICIAL information. It is very likely that the information you create and use in your MoJ day-to-day job is OFFICIAL information.

Examples include:

- Routine emails you send to your colleagues.
- Information posted on the intranet.
- Supplier contracts.
- Information and data you use to build a database, such as database secrets, record types, and field types.
- Most production data.
- Most non-production data.

OFFICIAL means that the MoJ's typical security measures are regarded as sufficient.

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE whilst not a formal classification, should be used sparingly, so that its effectiveness is not weakened. This is especially important when you consider that OFFICIAL is already well-protected.

Use **OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE** when you want to remind users to be careful when handling information. This asks them to use extra care, beyond what is expected for the baseline **OFFICIAL** classification.

SECRET

The threshold for classifying information as **SECRET** information is very high. It is unlikely that you will encounter **SECRET** information in your day-to-day job.

SECRET information should not usually be handled unless you have sufficient and valid clearance. If you have gained access to information that you believe is **SECRET**, contact the Cyber Assistance Team (CAT) immediately: CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

To help decide whether some information should be classified as **SECRET**, ask yourself a simple question:

If a hacker gained unauthorised access to the information, could it compromise the security or prosperity of the country?

The answer is most likely “No”. In that case, you should consider using the **OFFICIAL** classification.

TOP SECRET

If the threshold for classifying information as **SECRET** is very high, the threshold for classifying information as **TOP SECRET** is extremely high. It is very unlikely that you will encounter **TOP SECRET** information in your day-to-day job.

TOP SECRET information should not be handled unless you have sufficient and valid clearance. If you have gained access to information that you believe is **TOP SECRET**, contact the Cyber Assistance Team (CAT) immediately: CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

To help decide whether some information should be classified as **TOP SECRET**, ask yourself a simple question:

If a hacker gained unauthorised access to the information, would it directly and immediately threaten the national security of the country?

The answer is most likely “No”. In that case, you should consider using the **OFFICIAL** or **SECRET** classification, as appropriate.

Reclassifying information

The asset owner has responsibility for reclassifying an asset. If another user has reason to believe that an asset is incorrectly classified or has an incorrect handling caveat, they should normally discuss this with the asset owner. The other user cannot unilaterally reclassify the asset.

The exception is where the asset might need a higher classification than that assigned by the asset owner. The reclassification must still be communicated to the asset owner, for consistency. If it is agreed that the classification should be increased, check with the Operational Security Team (OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk) whether additional actions are required to protect the material.

Reclassification examples

When deciding whether it is appropriate or desirable to reclassify information, a useful model is to consider what audience might get value from accessing the information. For example, if a hostile country might want the information, then the information might well be best classified as **SECRET**. Alternatively, a reclassification decision might be required as a result of changing threat advice from intelligence agencies.

Example 1

An asset owner creates a report. The report contains potentially private information about individuals. The asset owner decides that the report should be classified as **OFFICIAL**, with the **SENSITIVE** handling caveat.

A user wishes to share a copy of the report “as-is” with their team. They cannot remove the handling caveat without prior discussion and agreement from the asset owner.

Example 2

An asset owner creates a report. The report contains potentially private information about individuals. The asset owner decides that the report should be classified as OFFICIAL, with the SENSITIVE handling caveat.

A user wishes to share a subset of the report with their team. In particular, the report is substantially re-worked to remove all the private information. The user becomes the owner of this new asset. They are responsible for this new asset. They can decide that the SENSITIVE handling caveat is not required.

The original report retains its OFFICIAL classification and SENSITIVE handling caveat.

Example 3

An asset owner creates a report. The report contains information about plans to handle a pandemic. The asset owner decides that the report should be classified as OFFICIAL, with the SENSITIVE handling caveat.

A user reviews the report. They realise that the information could potentially compromise the security or prosperity of the country. They decide to increase the classification of the report, and treat it as SECRET. They discuss this decision with the asset owner, so that the original report is correctly reclassified.

Handling and securing information

The [HMG Government Security Classifications Policy](#) is the most comprehensive guide on the security measures necessary for each of the three security classifications, including measures related to the following:

- Personnel (administrative) security.
- Physical security.
- Technical (information security).

The following sections set out the minimum measures you need to consider when handling and securing information within the different levels of classification.

Handling and securing OFFICIAL and OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information

Type	Measure	Example
PERSONNEL	Make sure all MoJ staff including contractors undergo baseline security clearance checks.	A contractor working with the MoJ Security Team must undergo a baseline background check (i.e. BPSS check) at minimum. Refer to Security Vetting Guidance .
PHYSICAL	<p>Make sure that you lock your screen before you leave your desk.</p> <p>When working in an unsecured area, for example when working remotely, think about whether unauthorised people might be able to eavesdrop on your conversations, or look over your shoulder at your screen.</p> <p>The MoJ has additional requirements when moving assets which can be found in the HMG Government Security Classifications Policy.</p>	A software developer working from a flatshare should take calls in private, and use headphones and a privacy screen.

Type	Measure	Example
TECHNICAL	Transferring information from one location to another requires planning and preparation, including a risk assessment. More information on this is available in the HMG Government Security Classifications Policy , and from your manager.	A technical architect working on the requirements for a new MoJ platform should lock their laptop before leaving their desk.
	Protect information “at rest” by using appropriate encryption.	In the development of a new cloud-hosted solution, the following criteria should be considered: remote access connections and sessions are encrypted using an appropriate VPN; information stored “at rest” on end user devices and the cloud is encrypted; information in transit between the end user and the cloud service, such as payment services, is encrypted; and the cloud service used is a Digital Marketplace (GCloud) service.
	Appropriate encryption is also necessary when protecting information in transit.	When using any services over the PSN, make sure you fully read the agreements that you make with the service provider for details and definitions about the data you use or transfer using the service, to ensure you understand the risks to compliance, confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
	Digital Marketplace (GCloud) services can be used for OFFICIAL information. You must not use removable media such as an USB memory stick unless it is unavoidable. When you have to use one, it must be MoJ issued, encrypted so that the effects of losing it are minimised, and the data erased securely after use.	

Note: Different information security measures might be applicable throughout the information lifecycle. It is important continually to evaluate security classifications and their corresponding measures. Refer to the [HMG Government Security Classifications Policy](#) for further guidance.

Handling and securing **SECRET** information

Type	Measure	Example
PERSONNEL	Make sure employees and contractors undergo Security Check (SC).	A contractor working with the MoJ Security Team must have at least SC before being allowed to access SECRET information.

Type	Measure	Example
PHYSICAL	<p>Consider using multiple layers of security to protect SECRET information. SECRET information should be held on a secure computer network which is physically isolated from unsecured networks and the internet.</p> <p>Transferring SECRET information from one location to another requires planning and preparation, including the completion of a Risk Assessment and the use of SC-cleared personnel. More information on this is available in the HMG Government Security Classifications Policy and from your manager.</p>	<p>Imagine you are moving locations for a server used to host SECRET information. The encrypted server is secured in a locked and monitored room in 102 Petty France. You have now decided to move it to 10 South Colonnade. This should only be done after relevant parties, including the data owner, line manager, and the system owner, have reviewed and accepted the risks associated with this transfer. The transfer should then be handled by two SC-cleared individuals, for example, employees of a specialised commercial courier company.</p>
TECHNICAL	<p>SECRET information at rest should be protected with very strong encryption. Contact the MoJ Security Team for more information: security@justice.gov.uk.</p> <p>Care should be taken to ensure that SECRET information in transit is only shared with defined recipient users through assured shared infrastructure or using very strong encryption.</p> <p>SECRET information should be processed on IT systems which have been approved for the SECRET threat model. Advice on what commercial IT systems meet this requirement is available from the MoJ Security Team: security@justice.gov.uk</p>	

Note: Different information security measures might be applicable throughout the information lifecycle. It is important continually to evaluate security classifications and their corresponding measures. Refer to the [HMG Government Security Classifications Policy](#) for further guidance.

Handling and securing TOP SECRET information

Type	Measure	Example
PERSONNEL	Ensure employees and contractors undergo Developed Vetting (DV) security clearance checks.	A contractor working with the MoJ Security Team should have at least DV clearance before being allowed to access TOP SECRET information.
PHYSICAL	<p>Handling and storing TOP SECRET information requires exceptional planning, monitoring, and record-keeping.</p> <p>Working remotely with TOP SECRET is not permitted due to the extreme sensitivity of the information.</p> <p>Transferring TOP SECRET information from one location to another requires even greater planning and preparation than for SECRET information, including the completion of a Risk Assessment by senior management and the use of DV-cleared personnel. More information on this is available in the HMG Government Security Classifications Policy and from your manager.</p>	<p>Imagine you are moving locations for a server used to host TOP SECRET information. The encrypted server is secured in a locked and continuously monitored room in 102 Petty France. You have now decided to move it to 10 South Colonnade. This should only be done after you, your manager, and senior managers have reviewed and accepted the risks associated with this transfer. The transfer should then be handled by two DV-cleared individuals, for example, employees of a specialised commercial courier company. When it happens, local police may need to be informed and involved in providing an additional layer of security.</p>
TECHNICAL	<p>When physical security measures cannot be used, TOP SECRET information at rest should be protected with extremely strong encryption. Contact the MoJ Security Team in these circumstances: security@justice.gov.uk.</p>	

Type	Measure	Example
	<p>Care should be taken to ensure that TOP SECRET information in transit is only shared with defined recipient users through accredited shared infrastructure or using extremely strong encryption.</p> <p>TOP SECRET information should be processed on IT systems which have been approved the TOP SECRET threat model. Advice on what commercial IT systems meet this requirement is available from the MoJ Security Team: security@justice.gov.uk.</p>	

Note: Different information security measures might be applicable throughout the information lifecycle. It is important continually to evaluate security classifications and their corresponding measures. Refer to the [HMG Government Security Classifications Policy](#) for further guidance.

Note: For further information on statutory disclosures and transfer to national archives, please refer to the [HMG Government Security Classifications Policy](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Information Classification and Handling Policy

Introduction

This document provides the core set of IT security principles and expectations on the handling and classification of information on Ministry of Justice (MoJ) IT systems.

The MoJ stores and processes a wide variety of information, some of which attracts an HMG protective marking or contains personal information. The MoJ has a duty to protect all the information stored and processed on its IT systems.

This policy outlines the Information Classification and Handling Policy for all information held on MoJ IT systems.

Scope

This policy covers all staff (including contractors and agency staff) who use MoJ IT systems.

The overarching policy on information classification and handling is maintained by [MoJ Security](#). This document only contains IT specific policies which are in addition to the overarching policy.

The overarching policy can be found [here](#).

All Users **must be** made aware of the Information Classification and Handling Policy, and provided with security awareness training which covers this policy.

All Users **must be** provided with refresher security awareness training which covers this policy every 12 months.

Inventory of assets

All information assets need be identified and have a nominated asset owner, to help ensure that the appropriate protection of these assets is maintained.

Examples of what an information asset constitutes are:

- Databases and data files.
- System documentation.
- User manuals, training material, operational or support procedures.
- Security documentation such as RMADS or disaster recovery plans.
- Archived backup data.

The list of information assets and associated Information Assets Owners is coordinated and maintained by individual MoJ business groups, where the responsibility resides with the business group SIRO.

All MoJ business groups **must maintain** a list of information assets, their associated named Information Asset Owner (IAO), and which IT systems they reside on.

Note: Some information assets might not be held on IT systems.

Deriving a classification

At the MoJ, all information assets are assessed against HMG guidance on business impact, and HMG guidance on the protection of personal data. This assessment is used to select the appropriate classification from the [Government Security Classification scheme](#).

All information assets stored or processed on MoJ IT systems **must be** assessed for a Business Impact Level, where an impact level for the Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability for each asset is derived.

The Asset Owner is responsible for determining the classification that applies to an asset.

All users are responsible for applying the appropriate classification to information assets created or handled on an IT system, where a pre-existing classification does not exist.

Note: As outlined in the [MoJ IT Security Policy](#), all MoJ data and assets must have IT security controls designed and implemented to protect Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability.

Further information on the criteria and derivation for classification can be found at: <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-information/protecting-information/classifying-information/>.

Reclassifying information

The asset owner has responsibility for reclassifying an asset. If another user has reason to believe that an asset is incorrectly classified or has an incorrect handling caveat, they should normally discuss this with the asset owner. The other user cannot unilaterally reclassify the asset.

The exception is where the asset might need a higher classification than that assigned by the asset owner. The reclassification must still be communicated to the asset owner, for consistency. If it is agreed that the classification should be increased, check with the Operational Security Team (OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk) whether additional actions are required to protect the material.

Application of Government classification

The Government classification scheme defines how information should be labelled and handled. Output from IT systems containing information that is classified must carry classification labels where it is OFFICIAL or higher. This includes, but is not limited to, printed reports, removable media, electronic messages (such as e-mail) and file transfers.

All IT hardware and removable media assets **must** be labelled with the highest classification from among each of the individual information assets stored or processed on it.

Note: This classification might be reduced if sufficient security controls are applied, for example whole disk encryption, and if there is agreement with the system assurer or Chief Information Security Office (CISO).

All output from an IT system **must** be given the classification of the highest of each of the individual information assets contained within that output.

Where applying a classification label is not feasible, an alternative method **must be** agreed with the system assurer or CISO.

Further information on the criteria and derivation for classification can be found at: <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-information/protecting-information/classifying-information/>.

Information handling on MoJ IT systems

The MoJ policy for handling classified material applies to all MoJ IT assets and all outputs from an IT system.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

OFFICIAL, OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

This information is based upon guidance for handling [OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE data and IT](#).

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL is a UK HM Government information asset classification under the [Government Security Classifications Policy \(GSCP\)](#).

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE is **not** a classification. SENSITIVE is a handling caveat for a small subset of information marked OFFICIAL that require *special* handling by staff above and beyond the described OFFICIAL baseline.

The SENSITIVE handling caveat is a *reminder* as opposed to a requirement for additional controls nor a description of a minimum set of controls.

DESCRIPTORS

Descriptors *can* be applied (but they do not need to be) to help identify certain categories of SENSITIVE information.

Descriptors should be applied in the format OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE [DESCRIPTOR]

The Cabinet Office maintains the following list of core descriptors to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across all departments:

- **COMMERCIAL**: Commercial- or market-sensitive information, including that subject to statutory or regulatory obligations, that may be damaging to HMG or to a commercial partner if improperly accessed.
- **LOCSEN**: Sensitive information that locally engaged staff overseas cannot access.
- **PERSONAL**: Particularly sensitive information relating to an identifiable individual, where inappropriate access could have damaging consequences. For example, where relating to investigations, vulnerable individuals, or the personal / medical records of people in sensitive posts (e.g. military, SIA).

Descriptors are **not** codewords.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Media handling

Removable media

Any Ministry of Justice (MoJ) systems or removable storage media used for work purposes must be encrypted to MoJ security standards. Security encryption is a mandatory government measure, and one of the most important methods we have to protect MoJ information.

What is 'removable' media?

Laptops and [USB memory sticks](#) are the MoJ's most commonly used items of removable media. Removable storage media covers items available to users, such as USB memory sticks, writeable CDs/DVDs, floppy discs, and external hard drives.

Strictly speaking, magnetic tapes are also removable storage media, but it would be very unusual for the average user to have access to or to use magnetic tapes for business purposes.

MoJ security guidance specifies that USB memory sticks and other user-removable media should not be used to store departmental data. Only in exceptional circumstances, and where there is compelling business justification, should MoJ-approved USB sticks with device encryption be used.

USB memory sticks

This guidance is intended to ensure that MoJ data remains secure, and to mitigate the potential impact of lost data sticks.

1. You must only connect approved external removable storage media to MoJ systems.
2. Connecting non-approved memory sticks is a breach of MoJ security guidelines, and could result in disciplinary action.
3. If there is a genuine business requirement to save, retrieve or transfer data via removable media, fill in one of:
 - [Removable media business case form](#)
 - [Data Movement form](#)

Additional guidance information is available about the [Data Movement form](#). When the form is ready, send it to: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk.

4. Each request is evaluated by MoJ Operational Security, with a view to recommending the safest and most appropriate method to contain risk of loss.
5. Normally, you'll get a response within 5 working days.
6. Requests to use a memory stick or other removable media will normally only be granted when there is no other practical alternative. Where approval is granted, only encrypted memory sticks or other removable devices provided by the MoJ are allowed. Use of memory sticks or other removable devices will be subject to stringent conditions, and permitted only after user training.

If you need further assistance or information about this process, [ask](#).

How do I know if my laptop, or USB stick, is encrypted?

All equipment provided through the MoJ's recognised central procurement systems are encrypted and protected to MoJ security standards. You must use MoJ processes to obtain any equipment used for business purposes, including mobile computing devices and removable media.

What's expected of you

Keeping MoJ information safe is everyone's responsibility. Anyone using portable computing equipment must take particular care to safeguard the equipment and the information stored on it. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary procedures.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Secure disposal of IT equipment

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and its Executive Agencies and Arms Length Bodies use a wide variety of equipment, including desktop computers, laptops, USB memory sticks and other mobile devices. This equipment is procured and managed through MoJ suppliers, who are normally responsible for the secure disposal of the equipment when it is no longer used. Typically, a supplier managed device will have a supplier asset tag on it, making it easier to identify who to ask for help with disposal.

However, there are also other devices across the MoJ estate which might have been procured and managed locally. It is crucial that they are disposed of in a secure manner, to prevent data being leaked.

To determine the correct disposal requirement, use the following table to identify the correct outcome, depending on the type of equipment and its security classification. If the table does not cover your exact requirement, contact the Operational Security Team: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk

Note: When disposing of SECRET or TOP SECRET equipment or materials, always contact the Operational Security Team: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk

Equipment or asset type	Data deletion method	Disposal method
Flash (USB)	Delete the data, or erase using manufacturer instructions.	Destroy using commercially available disintegration equipment, to produce particles of a maximum of 6 mm in any direction.
Hard disk drive	Overwrite the entire storage space with random or garbage data, verifying that only the data used to perform the overwrite can be read back.	Break the platters into at least 4 pieces. This can be done either manually or by using a commercially available destruction product suitable for use with hard disks. Alternatively, apply a Lower Level degauss and then apply a destructive procedure that prevents the disk from turning. For example, punch holes into the platters, or twist or bend them.
Magnetic tapes and floppy disks	Overwrite the entire storage space with random or garbage data, verifying that only the data used to perform the overwrite can be read back.	Destroy using a commercially available shredder that meets a recognised international destruction standard. Particles of tape should be no larger than 6 x 15 mm. Alternatively, apply a Lower Level degauss and then cut the tape to no larger than 20 mm in any direction.
Optical media	Data deletion is not possible.	Shred or disintegrate using equipment that meets a recognised international destruction standard. Particles should be no larger than 6 mm in any direction. A high capacity CD and DVD shredder is available at 102 Petty France, suitable for items up to TOP SECRET. Contact OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk for help with this option.

Owners of the data storage devices are responsible for procuring services that meet the necessary destruction outcomes as described above. Assurance shall be required that the appropriate destruction has taken place for any locally procured MoJ assets, and that an audit trail is available for inspection upon request by MoJ security.

Wherever possible and appropriate, managers should pool together equipment with that of local colleagues to share service costs.

Secure disposal organisations

The following organisations are approved to help you with security disposal of equipment:

- TYR security: g-cloud@tyr-security.co.uk
- Data eliminate: info@dataeliminate.com

Moving equipment between sites

If you have any concerns about moving items between sites securely, contact the Operational Security Team: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Access control

User responsibilities

Protecting social media accounts

Hostile attacks on Social Media accounts pose a serious threat to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and its reputation. When attacks happen, they quickly become headline news, and can happen to any account, anywhere in the world.

Two types of attacks are common:

- Attempts to render the account useless by 'bombarding' it with messages.
- Attempts to 'take over' the account.

Steps we can all take to protect ourselves

Ensure our passwords are secure

Passwords are the main protection on our accounts, hence ensuring they are secure is vital. The NCSC has produced [guidance](#) on making secure passwords - the summary of which is that picking three random words to make a password (for example RainingWalrusTeacup) is a good policy for securing Social Media accounts.

Check your email details are up-to-date

Most of the time, the first indication you'll have that something is wrong is when an email is sent to you. This could be to let you know that someone is attempting to log into your account, or that someone is trying to reset your password, or more worryingly, that a new device has logged into your account. Hence it is important that you ensure that your email details are up-to-date, and that your email is secure.

Enable Two Factor Authentication

Two Factor Authentication (2FA) involves requiring a random code to be entered before being logged in. These codes are either sent to the user via SMS or email, or generated every 30 seconds by an app or device the user has which relies on a seed key provided by the service. That seed can then be shared amongst a team, allowing for multiple owners or contributors.

If at all possible, SMS generation should be avoided, as it is theoretically possible for phone numbers to be taken over through various attacks, as well as meaning that only one person can receive the code, which isn't ideal if a team is working on a single account.

If you're using email, then it can be sent to a group account, which also allows for multiple owners or contributors - but it's important to ensure that the email is also protected by 2FA.

If you have a spare 10 minutes, watch [this video](#) for an excellent explanation of how 2FA works and why it's important to have it enabled.

Click the links for details on how to activate 2FA for [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Only use trusted third-party applications

In addition to the official applications, there are many tools and third-party applications that might be used to work with social media accounts.

Some of these tools provide useful extra facilities, such as 'scheduled' posts, or helping you post one message to several different social media channels.

The problem is that you have to give your account details to these tools so that they can post to your account.

This is potentially very dangerous:

- An application might post messages on your behalf, that you do not agree with or are unacceptable.
- An application might store or share your account details.

Only use applications that are trusted and approved for use with your social media accounts. For help with this, [contact Cyber Security](#).

Remove 'unused' applications

People tend not to be very good at removing old or rarely used applications. Older applications should be checked regularly to see if there are any updates.

A good habit is to check your applications once a month or so, and consider:

- Do you still use the application? If not, remove it.
- Whether there is an update available for the application? If so, install it.

As well as increasing safety, removing unused applications frees up storage space on your system.

Check your privacy settings

The whole point of a social media account is to share information. But that doesn't mean you want to share *everything*.

When you first create a social media account, you are normally asked to decide on the privacy settings. These control how much information you share, and who you share it with.

Typical settings that affect privacy include:

- General information about you.
- Your Profile information and photo.
- When you were last active.
- Any status updates.
- Whether you have read direct messages (“Read Receipts”).
- Whether others can add you to their groups, possibly without your knowledge or agreement.

But it's very easy to forget to check the settings, from time-to-time, to make sure they are still correct.

A good habit is to check your account privacy settings once a month or so. Information on privacy settings is available for the main social media environments:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [WhatsApp](#)

For example, in WhatsApp, to prevent someone adding you a group without your knowledge, change your settings: **Settings > Account > Privacy > Groups > My Contacts**. This change means that only people you know (your contacts) can add you to a group.

Limit access to your accounts

You might be tempted to share access to your social media account, for example if you want to have postings regularly, even while you are away.

Avoid sharing access to your social media account. It's easy to forget who the details are shared with. It's also possible that postings might be made on your behalf that you don't agree with, or are not acceptable.

Any MoJ social media accounts that do need to be shared will have proper access controls in place. You should never need to share your account details for work purposes.

If you need more help on this, contact your Line Manager or [Cyber Security](#).

Don't click on suspicious links

Unfortunately, social media postings are a common way of sending you links to malware or other problem material. Postings might also be used to send you 'phishing' attacks.

In the same way that you should be careful with any links or attachments sent to you using email, you should also be suspicious of links or attachments sent to you through social media. This applies to both general postings and messages sent directly to you ('Direct Messages').

For more information, read [this article](#) on the MoJ Intranet.

What to do if your account is bombarded Remember that these attacks are short lived

Due to the amount of organisation and effort required to coordinate such an attack, they do not last long, and like an intense inferno, will soon burn themselves out.

Do not respond to the attack

These attacks are designed to attack the person controlling the account as well as the agency itself. By only responding to messages not involved in the attack - especially those trying to share positive messages, the attackers will run out of interest far sooner than if you engage them. If they are posting harmful or threatening messages, report the accounts.

In a single sentence - "don't feed the trolls".

Feel free to walk away

Dealing with these attacks can be emotionally draining; even just reading the messages can have a far greater impact on you than you realise. Take breaks in the event of an attack, even if it's hard to - consider going for a walk to force yourself away.

Cyber Security Advice

Cyber Consultants & Risk Advisors

- Email: security@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #security

System and application access control

Password Managers

[Ministry of Justice \(MoJ\) guidance](#) makes clear that you should have different passwords for different services. These passwords must be complex.

But how do you remember all these different passwords?

The simplest way is to use a [Password Manager](#). If you have lots of different, and complex, passwords for all your accounts, using a password manager makes life much easier.

This article provides guidance on using password managers within the MoJ.

Password managers and vaults

A password manager stores sensitive information in an encrypted form. Password managers are sometimes called password vaults.

In the MoJ, password managers are tools that you might use for your personal accounts. Password vaults are tools that a team of people might use to look after details for shared accounts.

Password vaults usually have extra strong access controls, such as hardware tokens.

Here, we use password manager and 'password vault interchangeably, except when stated otherwise.

When to use a password manager or a password vault

The following table shows when you might use a password manager or vault:

Scenario	Tool	Notes
Single user, personal accounts	Password manager	For accounts that only you use, or have access to, then you would probably store the details in a password manager. An example would be storing the username and password for your work email account; only you should have access.
Multiple users, shared accounts	Password manager or password vault	Some accounts might be shared between a group of users. For example, a team might need to know the password for an encrypted document. If the access required is for a sensitive or operational system, then a more heavily protected tool such as a password vault might be appropriate.
System access, no human use	Password vault	Some MoJ systems need to 'talk' directly to other systems. No humans are involved in the conversation. The passwords protecting these communications can - and should - be extremely complex. A strongly secured password vault would be ideal for this purpose.

Best practices

The NCSC is [very clear](#):

- “Should I use a password manager? Yes. Password managers are a good thing.”

This is helpful for us in the MoJ, as much of our IT Policy and guidance derives from NCSC best practices.

Good password managers

A password manager should never store passwords in an unencrypted form. This means that keeping a list of passwords in a simple text file using Notepad would be A Bad Thing.

Good password managers encrypt the passwords in a file using strong encryption. It shouldn't matter where you store the encrypted file. Storing the list “in the cloud” lets your password manager access the data from any device. This is useful if you are logging in from a laptop, or a mobile device. Storing the passwords locally means the password manager works even when offline.

A good password manager will have:

- Strong encryption for the list of passwords.
- Network access for encrypted lists stored in the cloud.
- A dedicated app but also a pure web browser method for working with your password list.
- A tool to generate passwords of varying complexity.
- The ability to fill in login pages.

What password manager to use

In the [NCSC article](#), they are very careful not to identify or recommend a password manager. This ... caution ... is the reason why we don't say much about password managers within the MoJ guidance.

There are several password managers used within the MoJ. [LastPass](#) and [1Password](#) are probably the most popular for personal or team passwords. Example password vaults would be Hashicorp Vault, Kubernetes Secrets or AWS Key Management.

For individual use, have a look at LastPass and 1Password. See which one you like best, and try it out. When you decide on a password manager, request approval from your line manager to install and use it: “I'm planning to install and use XYZ to manage my passwords, is that OK?”.

See also [Using LastPass Enterprise](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Passwords

This article provides guidance on passwords within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It helps you protect MoJ IT systems by telling you about choosing and using passwords. Whenever you see the word “system” here, it applies to:

- Hardware, such as laptops, PCs, servers, mobile devices, and any IT equipment.
- Software, such as the Operating System, or applications installed on hardware, or mobile device applications (apps).
- Services, such as remote databases or cloud-based tools like [Slack](#).

This password guidance is for all users.

Best practices for everyone

The MoJ password guidance follows [NCSC guidance](#). The NCSC recommends a [simpler](#) approach to passwords. Some agencies or bodies might have specific requirements or variations. Check your team Intranet or ask your Line Manager for more information.

Follow the [CyberAware advice](#) to generate your passwords. Always use a separate and unique password for each account or service.

The most important points to remember are that passwords should be:

- At least 8 characters long.
- No more than 128 characters long.
- Not obvious.
- Not a dictionary word. A combination of dictionary words might be suitable, such as “CorrectHorseBatteryStaple”.
- Unique for each account or service.

If a system or another person provides you with a password, change it before doing any MoJ work on that system. Examples of 'single-use' passwords include:

- Your own account on a work-provided laptop.
- A shared account for accessing a data analytics service.
- All supplier or vendor supplied accounts.

You must change a password whenever:

- There has been a security incident involving your account or password. For example, someone guessed your password, or you used it on another account.
- There was a security incident with the service that you access using the password. For example, if someone broke into the system that provides the service you use.
- Your line manager or other authorised person tells you to do so.

When required to change a password, you must do so as soon as possible. If you don't change the password soon enough, you might be locked out of your account automatically. The following table shows the maximum time allowed:

Type of system	Maximum time to change a password
Single-user systems, such as laptops	1 week
All other systems	1 day

App-based password protection for files

Some applications - including Microsoft Office tools such as Word, Excel, and Powerpoint - provide mechanisms for protecting files. A password controls whether someone can open, or edit, a file.

While these app-based password protection mechanisms are better than nothing, there are three good reasons for avoiding them if possible.

1. You depend on the application to provide and maintain strong password protection. If the password implementation fails, or has a weakness, you might not know about it. This means that you might think your information is protected, when in fact it is at risk.
2. It is tempting to use a standard password for protecting a file within the app, so that other people can share and work with the file. Changing the password becomes “inconvenient”. The result is that many versions of the data file are all protected with the same password. Also, if anyone has ever been given the password to access the file, they will always be able to access the file.
3. If you forget the app-based password, there might not be a recovery process available to you.

For these reasons, MoJ advice is that you **SHOULD NOT** use password tools within an app to protect data files that are processed by the app. For example, you **SHOULD NOT** use the password tools with Microsoft Word, Excel, or Powerpoint, to protect MoJ information within files. Instead, either:

1. Store the data files in a shared but secure area, such as the MoJ SharePoint storage facility.
2. Use separate encryption tools to protect data files, separate from the app that works with the data files.

Of these two options, storing data files in a shared but secure area is strongly preferred. The reason is that you can add, modify, or revoke access permissions to the storage area easily.

If you have no choice, and have to use app-based password protection, ensure that the same password is not used indefinitely for a data file. You **SHOULD** use a different password for:

- Each major version of a data file, for example version 2.x is different to version 3.x.
- Any data file where the password is more than three months old.

Note: This advice is a specific exception to the [general guidance](#), that you do not normally need to change passwords.

Password expiry

You don't have to change a password because it is old. The reason is that time-expiry of passwords is an [...outdated and ineffective practice](#).

Some current or legacy systems don't allow passwords that follow MoJ guidance. For example, some mobile devices, laptop hard drive encryption tools, or older computers might not be able to support a mix of character types. For such systems, choose passwords that are as close as possible to MoJ guidance.

Password managers

Use a password manager to help you keep track of your passwords.

These are tools that help you create, use, and manage your passwords. A useful overview is available [here](#).

As passwords become more complex, and you need to look after more of them, it becomes increasingly necessary to use a password manager. For example, development teams in MoJ Digital & Technology use [LastPass](#).

You still need to remember one password. This is the password that gets you into the manager application. Once you have access, the application works like a simple database, storing all the passwords associated with your various accounts and services. Some managers have extra features, such as password generators. Some managers can even automatically fill-in username and password fields for you when during log in.

The password manager database is often stored in the cloud so that you can use it anywhere. The database is encrypted, so only you can open it. That's why your single password key is so important. Without it, you can never get access to the password database again.

Using a password manager for your MoJ account and service details is recommended.

You can find additional useful information about password manager tools [here](#).

Default passwords

Change all default passwords when a new, modified, or replacement system arrives. Complete the changes before making the system available for any MoJ work.

Password access attempts

If a password is ever entered incorrectly, a count starts. After at most 10 (ten) consecutive failed attempts at using the correct password, access to the account or system is locked. A successful use of the password resets the count to zero again.

Password reset

If a password lock occurs, a reset is necessary. This requires action by the system administrator or the MoJ Service Desk. The process should be like issuing the password for the first time. Other account details are not changed during the reset. This helps avoid losing any work. Checks ensure that an attacker cannot use the password reset process.

Blocking bad passwords

You should not try and use [obvious passwords](#). Attempts to do so will be blocked.

Single-use passwords

Some passwords are 'one time' or single-use. Administrators and developers use these to grant access to a service for the first time. After using the password once, the user must immediately change the password.

Single-use passwords are time limited. If they are not used within a specific time after generation, they must become invalid.

The following table shows the valid lifetime of a single-use password:

Type of system	Lifetime of a single-use password
Single-user systems, such as laptops	1 week
All other systems	1 day

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Using LastPass Enterprise

What is LastPass?

LastPass is an online password management tool that we make available to you to help you create, store and share passwords. Using it means you no longer need to remember dozens of passwords, just a single primary password. It keeps all your website logins protected, helps with creating new 'strong' passwords and password sharing when required.

LastPass is available as a browser extension for popular browsers and as well as a full software suite (for use outside of browsers) for Microsoft Windows and Apple macOS.

LastPass will securely save your credentials in your own LastPass 'Vault' and then offer to autofill those credentials the next time you need them.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has the Enterprise tier of LastPass.

Who should use it?

MoJ LastPass accounts can be requested by anyone in MoJ Digital and Technology.

At the moment, rollout is limited to technical service/operation teams but we're working on license funding to make it available to everyone.

How to get it

Email lastpass-admins@digital.justice.gov.uk to request access.

Make sure you include in the email:

- which team you're in
- your role in your team / why you need access
- if there were any credentials within Rattic that you need access to based on this [shared spreadsheet of old Rattic credentials](#)

What it can be used for

LastPass can be used for storing usernames and passwords that are specific to you (for example, your MoJ Google account details).

LastPass can also be used for sharing passwords within a team when individual named accounts cannot be created in the service. A good example is running a shared Twitter account.

Personal use

You could use your MoJ LastPass account to store personal non-work information but as it is a work account belonging to the MoJ you may lose access if you change role and will lose access entirely if you leave the MoJ.

MoJ LastPass administrators cannot routinely access the contents of LastPass Vaults but can reset accounts to gain access if there is a good reason to do so.

What it shouldn't be used for

LastPass should not be used for storing MoJ documents - you must use existing MoJ services such as Office 365 or Google Workspace for that.

You shouldn't use LastPass for 'secrets' that belong to systems, only credentials to be used by humans.

How to use it

Getting started

You will be sent an email to your MoJ work email account inviting you to create your LastPass account. LastPass have '[getting started](#)' guides on their website.

Creating your primary password

You need to create a primary password - this is the only password you'll need to remember.

It must be at least 12 characters long (the longer the better).

You can choose to make it pronounceable and memorable (passphrase) such as `CyberSecurityRules!` or `Sup3rD00p3rc0Mp3X!`, as long as you're comfortable remembering it and won't need to write it down.

There are password guidance standards [here](#).

Your primary password **must** be unique and you should **never** use it anywhere else (including a similar version, for example, by simply adding numbers to the end)

Multi-Factor Authentication

You **must** setup multi-factor authentication (MFA, sometimes known as 2FA) for your MoJ LastPass account.

LastPass has a [guide on setting up MFA](#).

If you don't have an MoJ-issued work smartphone you may use a personal device for MFA.

Sharing passwords

To share a password [create a "shared folder" in the LastPass Vault](#).

You should make sure the credentials you're sharing are only available to the people who need to access them for MoJ work. It is your responsibility to remove items or people from shared folders when access to the credential(s) is no longer required.

You must not share your LastPass main password with anyone, even your line manager or MoJ security.

Using it overseas

Taking a device (such as personal smartphone) that has MoJ LastPass installed counts as travelling overseas with MoJ information.

The MoJ has existing [policies on travelling abroad on the MoJ intranet](#) which require various approvals before travel.

It may be simpler to 'log out' of the LastPass applications or uninstall/delete them before travelling outside of the UK and reinstalling when you get back.

Keeping LastPass update to date

Like all software, it is important to keep the software up to date (sometimes known as 'patching'). LastPass software generally should self-update to the latest version by itself however make sure you approve or apply any updates if LastPass asks you to.

Need help?

If you need help *installing* LastPass contact the relevant MoJ IT Service Desk.

If you need help using LastPass such as getting access to shared folders or resetting your primary password as you have forgotten it, contact lastpass-admins@digital.justice.gov.uk

Physical and environmental security

Secure areas

Physical Security Policy

Audience

This policy compliments the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) overall security policy.

Physical security is the practice of protecting elements of government infrastructure, estates and personnel against attacks or compromises in the physical (tangible, real-world) environment.

This Physical Security Policy applies to all employees, contractors, partners and service providers, including those on co-located sites and sites owned by other public bodies. This also includes employees of other organisations who are based in, or work at, MoJ-occupied premises.

Executive Agencies and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) are expected to comply with this corporate framework, but might establish their own arrangements tailored to operational needs, and should therefore supplement this policy with local policy or guidance for any business-specific risk.

Objective

This content provides employees, contractors, partners and other interested parties with a clear policy direction. It requires them to ensure that all necessary physical protective security measures are in place to prevent attack, unauthorised access, damage, or interference (malicious or otherwise) to MoJ assets, and most importantly to prevent physical harm to our people and the public.

Scope and Definition

Physical Security refers to measures that are designed to protect physical locations and the assets, information, and personnel contained within.

This policy sets out the approach to be adopted to manage, develop, improve and assure Physical Security across the MoJ.

It is essential that MoJ business is conducted in an environment where potential threats - including those from both natural and human-made hazards, terrorism, crime, and insider threats - to MoJ assets, information, and personnel have been identified, risk assessed and appropriately mitigated to prevent interference, loss, or compromise (malicious or otherwise). This includes ensuring physical perimeters are protected, and entry controls are in place to provide proportionate protection against natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

Context

This policy sets out a framework to follow a “layered” approach to physical security. It provides suitably secure environments from which the MoJ can operate, to achieve its strategic aims and objectives by implementing security measures in layers, to appropriately protect personnel and assets, including material of differing levels of sensitivity.

This policy provides a high-level organisational objective for the MoJ with regards to Physical Security, supported by **MANDATORY** Physical Security Standards which **MUST** be followed to ensure compliance, as they represent the minimum measures required to protect the security of assets, information and people.

Responsibilities

All employees, contractors, partners, service providers and employees of other organisations who are on MoJ premises and co-located sites remain accountable for the security, health and safety of themselves, colleagues and the protection of Departmental Assets.

The most senior grade based at each site, or in “Moderate Risk” and larger sites the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), has responsibility for ensuring physical security risk assessments are conducted annually. They **MUST** ensure the action plans created to address identified risks and instigate business continuity activities are up-to-date, clearly communicated, regularly rehearsed, implemented effectively, and readily available, in accordance with their significance, importance, or classification.

Managing the physical security controls of sites occupied by MoJ employees is the responsibility of a contracted provider. The physical security controls include, for example:

- Perimeter control.
- Guarding.
- Site access.

The controls are measured in the form of Physical Security Reviews, as undertaken by the Group Security and Governance Team.

It is the responsibility of those procuring supplier contracts for such physical security measures to ensure that the most up-to-date technical and industry standards are met, and that the technology and processes in place are regularly reviewed to ensure that the security controls remain effective and fit for purpose. This includes technical and industry standards for Closed Circuit Television, Access Controls, Intruder Detection Systems, and any other relevant alarm systems which are managed by a contracted supplier.

Policy statements

Physical Security controls **MUST** be implemented that are proportionate to the risk appetite of the MoJ, and in adherence with the Information Security Policy and Acceptable Use Policy and other appropriate personnel and information security standards, including successful completion of the [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#).

All employees must ensure they remain observant, report any suspicious behaviour, and highlight non-compliance. This vigilance will help deter, delay, prevent, or detect unauthorised access to, or attack on, a location, and mitigate the impact should they occur.

Each MoJ occupied premises presents unique physical security challenges. The measures introduced to protect each site **MUST** take into account the risk categorisation and the physical composition of that site. Effective approaches to Physical Security **MUST** follow the **MANDATORY** Physical Security Standards.

The most senior grade manager, or SRO in “Moderate Risk” and larger locations, **MUST** ensure that their site adheres to the Response Level Security Measures Policy, and ensure physical security risk assessment activity is conducted annually, and that the action plans created to address identified risks are implemented.

Compliance

The level of risk and potential impact to MoJ information, assets and people determines the controls to be applied, and the degree of assurance required. The MoJ **MUST** ensure a baseline of physical security measures are in place at each site, and receive annual assurance that such measures are in place to provide appropriate protection to all occupants and assets, and that these measures can be strengthened when required, for example in response to a security incident or change in the Government Response Level.

The implementation of all security measures **MUST** be able to provide evidence that the selection was been made in accordance with the appropriate information security standards ISO27001/27002, Physical Security advice taken from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, and [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#).

The constantly changing security landscape has necessarily dictated that Physical Security measures be constantly re-evaluated and tested in order to meet new threats and other emerging vulnerabilities. This policy and subsequent supporting standards are subject to annual review, or more frequently, as warranted.

Physical security advice

Physical security advice can be obtained by contacting MoJ Group Security: mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk.

Equipment

Clear Screen and Desk

Users shall comply with the following:

- Digital Services equipment shall not be left logged on when unattended. Users shall ensure that password-protected screensavers are activated when any equipment is left unattended.
- Computer screens shall be angled away from the view of unauthorised persons.
- Computer security locks shall be set to activate when there is no activity for a short pre-determined period of time (set to 5 minutes by default). This can be manually activated when required.
- Computer security locks shall require passwords to be re-entered to reactivate the computer.
- Desktops and laptops should be shutdown if you expect to be away from them for more than half an hour.
- Users shall log off or lock their computers when they leave the room.

Clear Desk

Users shall comply with the following:

- Where possible, paper and computer media shall be stored in suitable locked safes, cabinets or other forms of security furniture when not in use, particularly outside working hours.
- Where lockable safes, filing cabinets, drawers, cupboards etc. are not available, doors must be locked if rooms are left unattended. At the end of each session all OFFICIAL and OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information shall be removed from the work place and stored in a locked area.
- When handling OFFICIAL documents security shall follow the requirements laid down in the Government Classification Scheme (GCS).
- OFFICIAL or OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information, when printed, should be cleared from printers immediately.

It is good practice to lock all rooms and office areas when they are not in use.

Information left on desks is also more likely to be damaged or destroyed in a disaster such as fire or flood.

Equipment Reassignment Guide

Introduction

This guide describes how to reassign equipment. It applies to laptops, mobile phones or other Ministry of Justice (MoJ) issued equipment. Reassignment is from one user to another.

Who is this for?

This guidance applies to:

1. **Technical users:** these are in-house MoJ Digital and Technology staff. They are responsible for implementing equipment controls. The controls apply throughout technical design, development, system integration, and operation. This includes DevOps, Software Developers, Technical Architects, and Service Owners. It also includes Incident Managers from the Event, Problem, Incident, CSI, and Knowledge (EPICK) Team.
2. **Service Providers:** defined as any other MoJ business group, agency, contractor, IT supplier, or partner who in any way designs, develops, or supplies services (including processing, transmitting, and storing data) for, or on behalf of the MoJ.
3. **General users:** all other staff working for the MoJ.

“All MoJ users” means General users, Technical users, and Service Providers.

Returning Equipment

When a project completes, or a colleague leaves or moves to a new role, equipment no longer required **SHALL** be returned. The Line Manager (LM) is responsible for using the Service Catalogue to request a return of the item. The equipment might then become available for use by other employees. It might not be cost-effective to consider reusing or reassigning the equipment. Possible reasons include:

- Older technology that might have been heavily used.
- The likelihood of operating problems and failures.
- Lack of support, updates, or patches.
- Slower performance.

As a result, it might be preferable to use a new machine, rather than repurposing a reassigned device. The decision depends on the expected use of the reassigned device.

The LM is responsible for ensuring a review of the equipment. This is to ensure that sensitive data **SHALL NOT** be lost by erasing the contents of the device. This task **CAN** be delegated to the team member most familiar with the data. The LM remains responsible. Any sensitive data identified **SHALL** be copied and relocated to a secure location. This can be the MoJ Teams facility or to Sharepoint. This **SHALL** happen before the device is made ready for reuse or destroyed.

Any IT equipment which is no longer needed, or has reached its “end of life” **SHALL** have its data securely deleted and confirmed to be unreadable and unrecoverable before destruction, redistribution, or reuse of the equipment.

Equipment Reassignment

Equipment **CAN NOT** be passed from one user to another without being formally reassigned.

Equipment **SHALL** be completely “cleaned” to an “as-new” state before it is reused or reassigned. This means that all storage media in the device **SHALL** be fully erased. A sufficiently secure method for “wiping” equipment **SHALL** be used. Deleting visible files, emptying files from the “Recycle Bin” of a computer, or reformatting a device are not considered sufficiently secure methods for wiping equipment. The reason is that data recovery software might be used by a new owner to “undelete” files or “unformat” a device.

To erase data securely, use appropriate “data-shredding” tools for the media being erased. Typically, these tools do not simply delete data, they overwrite it multiple times. The overwriting erases all traces of the data, making it almost impossible for any retrieval. Another option is to re-encrypt the device using a different password, then delete the data to free up space.

Equipment reassignment **SHALL** be recorded by the LM in the appropriate asset register.

Equipment that cannot be reused

If IT assets are no longer needed by the MoJ, and cannot be securely wiped, then the equipment **MIGHT** need to be destroyed physically. More information can be found at [Secure disposal of IT equipment](#)

Regrettably, for security reasons, redundant IT equipment **SHOULD NOT** be donated to charities, schools, or similar organisations.

Leased equipment

Managers **SHOULD** ensure that any equipment that is leased has a data destruction clause written into the contract. Under such an arrangement, the supplier **SHALL** ensure that data is wiped when it is returned.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Laptops

The guidance applies to all Ministry of Justice (MoJ) staff.

Related information

[Lost devices or other IT security incidents](#) on page 111

Storing data on laptops

If you need to store data on your computer you should always remember to move it into:

1. Your local Electronic Document and Record Management (EDRM) system.
2. An MoJ shared drive.
3. Your MoJ-provided 'home' drive.

Do this as soon as you can next connect to the MoJ network.

Where data should be saved when using a laptop

It is best to avoid saving any data on a laptop hard drive. However, if you absolutely must, you should always remember to copy or move the data to the MoJ network as soon as you next can connect to it, either via secure remote access or by direct connection.

In order to avoid potential data loss, save data in:

1. Your local Electronic Document and Record Management (EDRM) system.
2. An MoJ shared drive.
3. Your MoJ-provided 'home' drive.

There is a better chance of recovering lost data if you have saved it to the MoJ network, as data stored on the MoJ network is backed up daily.

The impact of hard drive failures

Hard drive failures can lead to the irrecoverable loss of data. Any data loss can have security implications for the MoJ, and a significant impact on:

- Our business opportunities.
- Our reputation.
- Our ability to deliver services to the public.

If you experience any issues with your laptop or IT service, [ask for help](#).

For more information about the main security issues that are likely to affect remote and mobile workers, refer to the [remote working guide](#).

How to reset your password

To reset your password, you will need to contact the [IT Service Desk](#). They will carry out checks to confirm your identity. This might include asking your line manager or court manager to confirm your identity, by sending an email to the IT Service Desk. Once your identity is confirmed, your password will be reset and you will quickly regain access to your laptop.

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk and servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk email addresses are no longer being monitored.

Note: Use of the Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk Slack channel ([#digitalservicedesk](#)) is being withdrawn, and should be avoided.

HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Locking and shutdown

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has made a commitment towards sustainable IT. The intentions are:

- To reduce overall power consumption for the MoJ by switching off machines and saving energy.
- To reduce the MoJ's overall carbon footprint.

Shutting down a desktop computer

- Close all applications.
- Shut down the computer by clicking the 'Start' button at the bottom left hand corner of the screen. Next, click 'Shut Down'.
- A pop-up box will appear with a drop-down box. Select 'Shut Down' and click 'OK'. After a short delay, your computer will automatically shut down.
- Switch off your monitor screen.

The benefits

By switching off our computers at the end of each working day, we are contributing towards being energy efficient and environmentally friendly. We are all responsible for our own Carbon Footprint. So, please switch off your PC monitor along with your desktop computer at the end of each working day. In addition, please switch off any other PC monitors if you notice they too have been left on overnight.

Dealing with issues preventing you from switching off your computer

If there are any issues preventing you from switching off your desktop computer overnight, then please raise this with the [IT Service Desk](#) immediately as there could be an underlying fault that needs resolving.

If you require any further information regarding this policy, [ask for help](#).

Locking your computer sessions

Access to most computer systems is controlled by a user name and password. If you have the correct information, you are able to 'log in' or 'log on'. The user name identifies the user as a valid user of the system and the password authenticates that the user is who they say they are.

You are responsible for what you do with an MoJ system or service. You might be held responsible for any actions carried out using your user name and password. You must therefore not allow any one else to do work on any system using your user name and password. If you leave your computer logged on when you are away from it, it might be possible for sensitive information held on the computer system to be used, read, changed, printed or copied by someone not authorised to see it.

If you are leaving your computer unattended for a short period of time, 'lock' the computer by activating the password protected screen saver or similar 'locking' facility. A simple and quick way to lock a Windows computer is:

1. To LOCK - press the Windows key and L key, at the same time.
2. To UNLOCK - press the Ctrl, Alt and Delete keys, at the same time, then log in as normal.

A simple and quick way to lock a Mac computer is:

1. To LOCK - press the Ctrl, Cmd and Q keys, at the same time.
2. To UNLOCK - move the mouse or press any key, then log in as normal.

Laptops

All MoJ laptops have hard disk encryption installed. This protects the entire contents of a laptop's hard disk drive to prevent any data stored locally from being accessed in the event the laptop is either lost or stolen.

Laptop incidents

Investigations into security incidents indicate that a common reason for problems is where the correct security procedures are not being followed. For example, laptops are being left logged on overnight.

This is not good security practice.

If a device is lost or stolen whilst the machine is in locked mode, the data on the machine is more vulnerable to a potential security breach.

Leaving the laptop in MoJ premises is not sufficient to guarantee the equipment's security. Laptop losses do sometimes occur within MoJ offices. There is a greater risk of data loss when a laptop is left partially logged on overnight, so you should always fully log off the laptop at the end of your working day.

Laptop security

- Switch off the machine completely at the end of each usage.
- Do not attach the password to the machine or keep the password with the machine.

If you need further assistance or information about this process, [ask for help](#).

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

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HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk

- Tel: 0203 334 0324

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Policies for MacBook Users

Any User of an Ministry of Justice (MoJ)-supplied MacBook must ensure they comply with this policy, to ensure that security is not compromised when using these devices.

These Policies are supplementary to the GOV.UK and MoJ Enterprise policies, procedures and guidance.

If you are unsure about any of the requirements or content, [ask for help](#).

Policies

- You must not share your login details or password with anyone under any circumstances.
- You must change your password if you suspect it has been compromised, or if instructed to do so by your line manager or other authorised individual.
- You must not attempt to access any other person's data unless you have been authorised to do so.
- You must only collaborate with authorised personnel.
- [Get help](#) if you are subjected to any security incident, or suspect you might be.
- You must logoff or lock your computer when leaving it unattended.
- You must keep your MoJ Digital & Technology equipment close to you and in sight at all times when in public areas.

Top things to remember

You are responsible and accountable for the security of your MoJ equipment at all times.

If you don't think you should do something, you probably shouldn't. If in doubt, [always seek advice](#).

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk and servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk email addresses are no longer being monitored.

Note: Use of the Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk Slack channel ([#digitalservicedesk](#)) is being withdrawn, and should be avoided.

HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

System Lockdown and Hardening Standard

Legacy information

Note: This document is Legacy IA Policy material. security@justice.gov.uk It is under review and likely to be withdrawn or substantially revised soon. Before using this content for a project, contact CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Note: This document might refer to several organisations, information sources, or terms that have been replaced or updated, as follows:

- CESG (Communications-Electronics Security Group), refer to the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), contact security@justice.gov.uk.
- CINRAS (Comsec Incident Notification Reporting and Alerting Scheme), refer to the NCSC, contact security@justice.gov.uk.
- ComSO (Communications Security Officer), contact the Chief Information Security Office (CISO) (security@justice.gov.uk).
- CONFIDENTIAL, an older information classification marking, see [Information Classification and Handling Policy](#).
- CPNI (Centre for the Protection of the National Infrastructure), contact the CISO (security@justice.gov.uk).
- DSO (Departmental Security Officer), contact the Senior Security Advisor (security@justice.gov.uk).
- GPG6 (Good Practice Guide 6: Outsourcing and Offshoring: Managing the Security Risks), refer to the NCSC, contact security@justice.gov.uk.
- IS1 (HMG Infosec Standard 1 Technical Risk Assessment), see the [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#).
- IS2 (HMG Infosec Standard 2 Information Risk Management), see the [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#).
- IS4 (HMG Infosec Standard 4 Communications Security and Cryptography), see the [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#).
- IS6 (HMG Infosec Standard 6 Protecting Personal Data and Managing Information Risk), see the [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#).
- ITSO (Information Technology Security Officer), contact the CISO (security@justice.gov.uk).
- RESTRICTED, an older information classification marking, see [Information Classification and Handling Policy](#).
- SPF (Security Policy Framework), see the [Government Functional Standard - GovS 007: Security](#), contact security@justice.gov.uk.

Overview

This standard is designed to help protect Ministry of Justice (MoJ) IT systems by providing basis configuration details for how IT systems should be hardened to defend against malicious attack.

[HMG Security Policy Framework](#) mandatory requirement (MR) 9 concerns technical security controls. To comply with MR 7, the MoJ needs to ensure that it has:

Lockdown policy to restrict unnecessary services;

The lockdown policy itself is covered in the IT Security – Technical Controls Policy whilst this document sets out the MoJ standard for its application.

Scope

This standard provides some high level guidance on IT system hardening with which applied to all MoJ IT systems.

Note: This standard is a generic standard designed to provide high level direction. This standard does not replace the Government Assurance Pack (GAP) which must be considered for MS Windows based systems. The hardening of an IT system will be considered during the Accreditation process where the exact specification for the system will be considered and agreed. For further details on the Accreditation process see.

This standard must be read in conjunction with CESG GPG No.35 and the MoJ Security Architecture Framework.

Demonstration of Compliance

The CESG Information Assurance Maturity Model (IAMM) sets out the minimum maturity level Government departments should attain. Providing secure IT systems captured as a basic requirement in Level 1 and the MoJ will need to demonstrate compliance against this requirement.

Generic hardening standard

Table 1 below provides a generic set of hardening procedures designed to guide IT system development and supplement the [IT Security – Technical Controls Policy](#).

Those configuring MoJ IT systems must consider additional sources of reference such as the Government Assurance Pack (GAP) for MS Windows based systems; Microsoft TechNet and NIST to ensure that specific systems (e.g. SQL server or a UNIX based server) are built to a secure standard. A selection of external reference sources can be found below.

Where this standard provides a generic set of hardening procedures, The MoJ Security Architecture Framework provides a set of vendor and system specific hardening guides which have been approved for use in MoJ IT systems.

The secure configuration of an IT system will be examined during the Accreditation process for further details). This may include an IT Health Check (ITHC) and a review of the system's build configuration.

Table 1 is split into 5 sections:

- General – Procedures which can be commonly applied to most IT systems;
- External devices;
- Account log-on;
- Services, security and networking applications;
- Server specific – Procedures which can be commonly applied to servers.

General

Name	Description
BIOS Lockdown	Access to the BIOS must be restricted to system administrators only.
Removal of unnecessary applications and services	All applications and system services which are not required must be uninstalled or disabled.
Auto-run of data on remote media devices	Auto-run must be disabled.
Screen lockout	Desktops and servers must be configured to lock after 5 minutes of inactivity. Unlock must be by password only.
Time and Date	The Time and Date setting must be configured to central synchronisation servers which synchronises with the GSi time server.

System Preferences	<p>Non-system administrative Users must not have access to change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The desktop background or screensaver setting; • The date or time; • Network settings or internet browser settings; • System security settings or group policy settings. <p>Non-system administrative Users must not have access to the following system settings / utilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system registry; • Access to operating system directories and files; • Access to CMD / Command Line Prompt and local system utilities such as disk defragmenter and disk cleanup.
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External Devices

Name	Description
Bluetooth	Bluetooth must be disabled by default. If required due to business need, Bluetooth devices must be set to not be 'discoverable'.
Webcam	The webcam lens must be obstructed when not in use.
Infrared receiver	The IR receiver must be disabled, ideally at the hardware level (by physically disconnecting the component).
Sound input (microphone)	Sound input from a microphone must be kept at zero level when not in use.
Media drives and external data ports (e.g. USB, FireWire, CD/DVD drive, ...)	All media drives and external data ports must be disabled. Where there is a business justification to allow access, that access must be audited and restricted to an individual User (for example using a technical control such as Lumension).

Account Log-on

Name	Description
Passwords	All passwords must conform to the password guidance .
Guest and 'null' accounts	Guest and 'null' accounts (accounts with a blank username and password) must be disabled and removed where possible.
Fast User Switching	Fast User Switching must be disabled.
Login failure logging	Failed logins must be logged after the 1st failed attempt.
Automatic log in	Any automatic log in feature must be disabled. This does not include Single Sign On functionality where a User has already authenticated themselves to the system.
User list	The option to display a set of usernames list or the previous logged in User's username at logon must be disabled.
Logon Banner	The standard MoJ login banner must be displayed at login, both locally and remotely, see Appendix A .

Services, security and networking applications

Name	Description
Firewalls	An Application Firewall should be installed which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be configured to 'allow only essential services'; • Must log Firewall activity; • Must operate in 'stealth mode' (undiscoverable).
Anonymous FTP	Anonymous FTP must be disabled. Where there is a business requirement for FTP, FTP(S) or SFTP must be used.
Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP)	Where SNMP is required, v2.0 must be used.
Cisco Discovery Protocol (CDP)	CDP must be disabled.
Telnet based administration interface	Telnet access must be disabled.
SSH based administration interface	SSH access must be disabled.
HTTP based administration interface	All web based administration interfaces which are accessible over a network (in other words, not restricted to a localhost) must be encrypted for the entire session using SSL version 3 or TLS version 1.0 or above.
Connection Timeouts	Idle connections must be dropped after a default period.
ICMP Redirects	ICMP redirects must be disabled.
Clear text authentication protocols	All plain-text authentication protocols must be disabled and their functionality replaced with encrypted alternatives.

Server specific

Name	Description
Internet access from web browsers	External Internet access from web browsers must be disabled.
Example, test and temporary installation files.	All example, test and temporary installation files must be deleted when no longer required.
File share access control	Server file shares must be subject to access control restrictions.

External reference sources

In addition to CESG GPG No.35, the following external reference sources provide a good source of information on IT system hardening and secure system configuration.

CPNI

CPNI provides general information on security IT systems including advice on how to build secure systems: <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/cyber-security>.

NIST

NIST is a US standards body and provide a wealth of information which can be used to build secure systems: <https://www.nist.gov/cybersecurity>.

SANS

The SANS Institute provides a source of best practice advice for designing and configuring secure systems including Apple MAC OS and Linux based systems: https://www.sans.org/reading_room/.

Microsoft

Microsoft provides detailed information and configuration details covering the lockdown and hardening of Microsoft server and desktop products.

Appendix A – Login banner

The standard MoJ login banner must be displayed at login. A copy of the banner is as follows:

THIS SYSTEM IS FOR AUTHORISED USERS ONLY.

This is a private system; only use this system if you have specific authority to do so. Otherwise you are liable to prosecution under the Computer Misuse Act 1990. If you do not have the express permission of the operator or owner of this system, switch off now to avoid prosecution.

Operations security

Control of operational software

Guidance for using Open Internet Tools

This information applies to all staff and contractors who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

This guidance gives you:

- An [overview](#) of Open Internet Tools (OIT).
- A [quick checklist](#) to help you decide if you can use an OIT.
- Reasons why you [might](#), or [might not](#), want to use an OIT.
- Things you [must think about](#) when using an OIT, such as [data protection](#).
- Information on [who to contact](#) if you would like help or advice.

Note: To access some of the links in this guide you'll need to be connected to the MoJ Intranet.

Overview

Open Internet Tools (OITs) are applications or services from suppliers outside the MoJ. They often have the following characteristics:

- they are general purpose. This means they are not specific to the MoJ. Other organisations can use them
- they are accessed using the Internet, usually through a web browser. This means that if you have Internet access, you are able to connect to the tools
- they have a basic 'free-to-use' version. This means that you are able to use some or all the capabilities, but with some constraints. For example, an online word-processor might limit you to 5 documents in your account
- they have one or more 'paid for' versions. By paying for the tool, you unlock some or all the constraints

Quick checklist

To help you decide if you can use an OIT to work on an MoJ task, consider the following questions:

- is the task information subject to specific rules or requirements in your part of the MoJ?
- is the task information classified as anything other than OFFICIAL or OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE?
- does the task information include any data identifiable as being about someone?
- is this the first time anyone has used the tool for MoJ business?

- does the tool need access to your account or other data you can access? For example, does it ask to use your MoJ Google or Microsoft Office account?
- does the tool install a web-browser extension?
- is the tool a plug-in for existing OITs we use, such as Slack, Confluence, or Jira?
- could there be damaging consequences if the task information you work with using the tool is:
 - lost
 - stolen
 - published in the media
- are you prevented from exporting all the data from the tool?
- are you prevented from deleting all the data from the tool when you finish working on the task?

If the answer to *any* of these questions is “Yes”, you might not be able to use the OIT.

When you have all the answers, request formal approval to use the OIT from your [Line Manager](#). Do this *before* using the OIT.

Why OITs are an opportunity

OITs offer some significant advantages for you and the MoJ, including:

- enabling you to work the way you want to, more effectively
- usually cheaper than buying or building and supporting a dedicated tool
- no need to build or support the tool
- good use of open standards, such as file formats
- reduced need to have specific hardware or software on computers
- rapid patching to address security issues
- easy updates and deployment of new features
- a large pool of help and support
- easy access, whenever you have a network connection
- increasing availability of some or all capabilities when disconnected from the network

Why OITs are a risk

OITs also pose some threats or risks, including:

- dependency on the tool and supplier
- security of access to the tool
- security of information stored within or processed by the tool
- potential difficulty of enhancing or customising the tool for MoJ-specific requirements

But as long you consider the threats or risks, and address them, OITs provide many benefits for you and the MoJ.

Summary

With careful use, OITs help you to work more effectively and efficiently. Think about them as serious and preferable options for performing tasks.

Using OITs

This guidance helps you:

- understand the conditions or constraints that apply to a tool, or a task performed using a tool
- identify and address threats or risks posed by a new tool

Privacy and personal information

Data protection legislation makes you responsible for personal information you work with. You must keep it safe and secure. In particular, you must follow data protection obligations. These include the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Don't use OITs for storing personal data until you have addressed the need to get consent first. Check if using the OIT might need an update to existing privacy policies or notices. Don't use OITs if unlawful disclosure of the information they process might cause damage or distress.

Data protection legislation might also limit *where* you can process personal data. An OIT should have a privacy statement that describes where it stores or processes data. Be ready to contact the OIT provider for more information about this aspect of their service.

Be sure you can fulfil your data protection responsibilities when using an OIT. It might be helpful to complete a [Privacy Impact Assessment \(PIA\)](#).

Complying with personal information requirements can be complex. Don't hesitate to ask for advice: privacy@justice.gov.uk

Classification and security

An OIT can only store or process information [classified](#) at OFFICIAL level.

Think about the MoJ information you work with. What would happen if you lost it, or it's stolen, or published in the media? Suppose the information was overheard in a cafe, or read from your screen on a crowded train. Could there be damaging consequences? If the answer is "No", then it's probably OK to use OITs to store or send that information.

Think also about information moving across the Internet. The data might be safe within the MoJ and in an approved OIT. But what about the connection between the two? Sending information might involve insecure networks. Be aware of the security implications. Check that enough suitable security measures are in place to protect the information. For example, check for encryption of network connections using [SSL/TLS](#). A simple way to do this is to look for the secure connection indicator in your web browser:



You have a duty of confidentiality and a responsibility to safeguard any HMG information or data that you access. This is [Principle 2](#) of the Government Security Classifications. The MoJ trusts you to work with OFFICIAL information. In the same way, you're trusted to make a reasoned judgement about whether it's safe to use an OIT.

Useful help for deciding what is OK is in [existing social media guidance](#). While it's more about how to act online, the principles are helpful for OITs.

Remember that it is impossible to delete information after it's released in public.

For more information about MoJ IT Security, look on the MoJ Intranet [here](#).

Storage and data retention

Laws and regulations make the MoJ and its employees responsible for managing information. Some examples include:

- the Freedom of Information Act
- the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation
- the Public Records Acts

When we receive a request for information, we need to know where we hold all the relevant information. Storing business information on appropriate MoJ systems helps us, because:

- we can provide evidence about decisions
- we understand the information held, and where to find it
- we can transfer records to The National Archives

Always store MoJ information in MoJ systems. If you use an OIT, make sure the key information is also stored in an appropriate MoJ system. Guidance on what you must keep [is available](#). At regular and convenient intervals, transfer the information to an appropriate MoJ system. Do the same when you finish the work. Don't forget to remove any redundant information from the OIT.

Most OITs let you export your data. You can then store it on an appropriate MoJ system. Sometimes it's easier to copy and paste text into a new document. Make sure that only the correct people have access to the information. This is important after staff or organisational changes, for example.

For more guidance, read the [MoJ Information Management Policy](#). There is also help on [responding to requests for information](#).

Service and support

OITs are often intuitive and reliable. But that doesn't mean they are always available and always work as you expect. The MoJ can't provide technical support or ensure service availability for them. Always have another way of working if the OIT is not available for some reason or for any length of time. In other words, don't let an OIT become business critical.

Check the OIT usage agreement to find out more about the service and support available.

Note: The MoJ cannot provide technical support for OITs.

Common OITs

There are already many OITs used across the MoJ. Permission to use an OIT might vary, depending on where you work in the MoJ. For example, some teams must not access or use some OITs, for security or operational reasons.

Note: Check with your Line Manager if you want to use an OIT for your work, *before* you use it.

Requesting that an app be approved for use

If there is an application or service that is not currently approved, but which you would like to use, you can request a security review.

Begin the request by filling in the [Request a Security Review of a third-party service](#) form, as best you can. The more information you provide, the better. But don't worry if you have to leave some bits of the form blank.

When you submit the form, it is passed to the security team. The app is reviewed, to check things like how safe it is to use, and whether there are any Data Privacy implications. The security team will respond to you with an answer as quickly as possible.

Note: You should submit the request, and wait for a formal “approval” response, *before* you install or use the app on MoJ equipment or information.

If you have any questions about the process, contact the security team: security@justice.gov.uk.

Getting help

For further help about aspects of using OITs within the MoJ, contact:

Subject	Contact
Classification and Security	MoJ Cyber Security team
Storage and Data Retention	Departmental Library & Records Management Services (DLRMS)
Information Assurance	Compliance and Information Assurance Branch
Personal Data	Disclosure Team

Communications security

Information transfer

Bluetooth

This guidance helps you use Bluetooth enabled devices and peripheral devices.

Bluetooth is a very short range wifi technology. In everyday terms, Bluetooth devices can 'talk to each other' if they are very close, for example in the same room. This makes Bluetooth really good for wireless devices, for example a telephone headset, or a mouse or keyboard.

Bluetooth works by 'pairing' devices. This makes it quick and simple to use. The problem is that Bluetooth, and the pairing process, is not very secure. This means that attackers might get unauthenticated access to devices. As an example, an attacker 'listening' to the Bluetooth connection between a computer and a keyboard could possibly intercept passwords or other sensitive information as the details are typed on the keyboard.

This guidance tells you more about the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) view of Bluetooth, from a security perspective. It also gives you hints and tips on how to use Bluetooth more safely.

The aim is to help you maintain the Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability of MoJ data, applications and services. The results should be that:

- the information you access is not compromised
- you can connect devices using Bluetooth, safely
- you are aware of the problems around Bluetooth, and can take the necessary safety precautions

Note: Remember that there might be local rules that apply regarding the use of Bluetooth devices. A good example is in Prisons, where use of Bluetooth would not be available by default. Ensure that you check with local requirements.

Accessibility

Some types of Bluetooth devices are not allowed, by default. However, where there is a good reason for requiring a Bluetooth device, such as for Accessibility reasons, then a request for an exception to use the device will be treated sympathetically and permitted wherever possible.

Contact the Cyber Assistance Team by email: CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk

Bluetooth devices and risks

Examples of Bluetooth devices, and whether they might be used for business purposes, are as follows:

Bluetooth device	Suitable for MoJ work purposes (Y/N)
Keyboards	Y
Mouse	Y
Telephone headsets	Y
Headphones	Y
Earbuds	Y
Trackpads	N - but exception possible for Accessibility reasons
External speakers	Y - but be aware of other people or devices nearby that might be listening
Gaming joysticks and controllers	N - but exception possible for Accessibility reasons
Laptops	Y - for MoJ-issued devices

Bluetooth device	Suitable for MoJ work purposes (Y/N)
Hearing aids	Y
Watches and Fitness bands	N
Smart TVs	N - requires authorisation
Storage devices (similar to USB 'thumb' drives)	N
Internet-of-things 'Smart speakers'	N

A Bluetooth device might be at risk from any of the following:

- Eavesdropping
- Unauthorised access
- Message modification
- Denial of service
- Data exfiltration
- Insecure data transmission
- Phishing

An example of a Bluetooth problem is 'Bluetooth marketing'. As you walk around with your mobile phone, it is continuously looking for Bluetooth devices and wifi access points. It does this to help with accurate location tracking. But other devices can also see your mobile phone. These devices might report tracking information about where you were at any time. This guidance will help you understand more about the problem, and suggest things you can do to reduce the risks.

Best practices for using Bluetooth

Before using a Bluetooth device in a work context, consider the following:

- What is the business case for using the Bluetooth device?
- What data might be or will be access through, or using, the Bluetooth device?
- Does the Bluetooth device have the latest patches and fixes applied - where possible?
- Was the Bluetooth device purchased from a reputable vendor?
- Does the Bluetooth device require a PIN code or similar before connecting?
- Are the Bluetooth devices 'discoverable'?
- Have you connected to any other 'public' Bluetooth devices?
- Are all the devices password protected?
- Might someone be able to see what Bluetooth devices you are using?
- Is the material you are working with OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE or higher?

The best way to ensure your Bluetooth device is as up-to-date as possible is to apply all patches and fixes for all hardware devices as soon as you can.

Bluetooth is a very cheap and simple technology. This means that it is often included in extremely cheap devices; often these use old versions of technology or are not provided with patches and fixes. The best thing is to obtain any Bluetooth devices from reputable vendors, so that it is more likely the device will be supported and maintained correctly.

Many Bluetooth devices try and make connection as easy as possible by enabling 'Direct Connection'. This often means that you only need to 'find' a Bluetooth device on your 'phone or laptop, then click once for a connection to be established. While very easy, this is not safe, because those same direct connections can also happen automatically, 'behind the scenes', without you being aware. If possible, ensure that a Bluetooth connection is allowed only when a PIN or password is supplied. This reduces the risk of 'hidden' Bluetooth connections.

Some Bluetooth devices allow you to choose whether they are 'discoverable'. For example, on Android 'phones, you can go to the Settings -> Connected devices -> Connection preferences -> Bluetooth

visibility or similar. The best advice is to change the Bluetooth settings to not discoverable if you can. Only make the device discoverable when you need to connect to a trusted device.

At regular intervals, check to see what Bluetooth devices are 'known' to your devices. Remove any you don't recognise.

When in public places, make sure you only connect to known devices. Always ensure you are in a secure and safe location such as home, office, or a known isolated place before switching on your Bluetooth.

If someone can see what Bluetooth devices you have, or are using, they might try and use one of their device to intercept or monitor the connection. Try to keep Bluetooth devices out of sight so that no-one knows which ones you might actually be using. Even the bright blue light Bluetooth devices illuminate when they are connected might draw unwanted attention.

Generally speaking, Bluetooth devices do not present extra problems when working with OFFICIAL material. However, the whole point of Bluetooth is to enable and simplify communications, so you need to be extra careful when using Bluetooth devices while working on OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE or higher material.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Email

Overview

This document provides you with guidance for safe and secure use of email within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

In general, always use email in an [acceptable way](#).

In particular:

- Never circulate messages or material that contains obscene, profane, inflammatory, threatening, harassing (racially, sexually or otherwise), and disruptive, or otherwise offensive language.
- Don't use email or other messaging systems for trivial debates or exchanges with an individual or group of people.
- Don't use MoJ email or other messaging systems for anything other than appropriate business purposes.
- Don't make statements that defame, slander or lower the reputation of the MoJ, any person or organisation.
- Don't forward email [chain letters](#) to your contacts. Instead, report them to security@justice.gov.uk.
- Avoid excessive use of email. Be aware of unsuitable attachments, for example video clips, images, or executable files.
- Avoid sending email to large numbers of recipients. Ask yourself if it really makes sense to "Reply All"?
- Keep your operating systems up to date to prevent susceptibility to viruses.
- Scan email attachments to detect viruses and other malware.

Be aware that the MoJ monitors the use of electronic communications and web-browsing. Your manager can request reports detailing your activity if they suspect inappropriate use of email or web-browsing facilities.

[Ask](#) if you want further information.

Monitoring

The MoJ monitors all email for security purposes.

Specifically, communications may be monitored without notice and on a continual basis for a number of reasons including compliance with legal obligations, effective maintenance of IT systems, preventing or detecting unauthorised use or criminal activities (including cyber-intrusion), monitoring of service or performance standards, providing evidence of business transactions, and checking adherence to policies, procedures, and contracts.

In general, the MoJ monitors telephone usage, network, email and Internet traffic data (including sender, receiver, subject, attachments to an e-mail, numbers called, duration of calls, domain names of websites visited, duration of visits, and files uploaded or downloaded from the Internet) at a network level.

Email threats

Although email is a powerful business tool, it has problems. In this guidance, we describe some of the problems, and how you can avoid them.

Email threats often use familiar email addresses to disguise attacks, or to pose as valid emails. Email threats are becoming more frequent and pose one of the biggest problems for MoJ systems and services.

There are many possible threats, including:

- **Viruses:** These can be spread between computers in emails or their attachments. They can make PCs, software or documents unusable.
- **Spam:** This is unsolicited mail sent in bulk. Clicking on links in spam email may send users to phishing websites or sites hosting malware. Often email spam mimics the addresses of people you know.
- **Phishing:** These are emails disguised to look like a legitimate company or bank to illegitimately obtain personal information. They usually ask you to verify your personal information or account details. Often links will direct you to a fake website, made to look like the real thing.
- **Social engineering:** In the context of security, social engineering refers to manipulating people to do something or divulge confidential information. For example, you might get a call from someone pretending to be from a software supplier, claiming that a virus has been found on your PC; they demand personal details before they can remove the virus.
- **Spoofing:** A spoofed email is where the sender (in this case, a criminal) purposely alters part of the email to make it look as though it was from someone else. Commonly, the sender's name/address and the body of the message are made to look as though it was from a legitimate source. It is commonly used to trick the recipient into providing confidential information such as passwords, or to market an online service dishonestly, or to sell a bogus product. Check the real sender of any email you receive if you ever have any doubt or uncertainty. If the sending address is one you don't recognise, do not click on any link contained within the email.

The MoJ scans approximately 14 million messages a month for threats (figures from November 2020). Of these, we might expect to find 1.4 million “spam” messages, 150,000 “phishing” messages, and about 1,000 malware messages (including viruses). Unfortunately, not every virus or spam email will be identified and blocked. The good news is that there are some simple steps you can take to reduce the threat:

- If you are not expecting the email, do not reply to it.
- If you are at all suspicious, do not divulge your details or any sensitive information.
- Avoid opening potential scam emails.
- Don't open unexpected attachments or click on strange links in emails, even if the email appears to be from someone you know. Check the style and content; if it isn't consistent with previous emails, it could be a scam.
- Do not reveal personal or other sensitive information in response to automatic email requests.
- Avoid sharing your business email address on the internet. These might be collected and used by automatic 'harvesting' software programs.
- Never use your MoJ email address to register for non-work related sites.

If you think you've received a scam email, or a virus, [report it immediately](#). Do not click on any link or forward it to anyone. Only delete it from your inbox when you have been told to do so.

Further reading from the NCSC

[Email security and anti-spoofing](#)

Other email problems

Auto-forward

Auto-forwarding is where you get your email system to send emails automatically to another account. This might seem very useful, especially if for some reason you can't access your normal business email account, for example while you are away on holiday.

But auto-forwarding is very risky.

You can't be certain that the forwarded emails are safe to send to the new account. For example, the new account might have weaker technical security, making it easier for a hacker to break in and read your email.

You might also be auto-forwarding emails sent to you from outside the MoJ; perhaps from another government department or commercial organisation.

When an email is sent to you, you are responsible for ensuring that everything in the email is handled correctly. This means looking after it to the standard required for that information. You mustn't send that information to another email address, where the required security standards might not be met.

Never use auto-forwarding to forward emails from your MoJ business email address to another non-MoJ email address. In particular, never forward email from your MoJ business email address to a personal email address.

Note: An external email service is any service that is outside the `gov.uk` domain.

There might be occasions when you have a genuine business need to auto-forward email to another email account, where the new address has the same or higher security standards. An example is forwarding from an MoJ business email address to another MoJ business email address. If you have business need for this, [ask](#) for help.

Chain letters

These are letters sent to several people who are asked to send copies to several others. They sometimes threaten that bad things will happen if the letter is not forwarded. Chain letters are a hoax.

Chain letters usually do not have the name and contact information of the original sender so it is impossible to check on their authenticity.

Legitimate warnings and solicitations will always have complete contact information from the person sending the message.

Newer chain letters may have a name and contact information but that person either does not exist or is not responsible for the hoax message.

Warnings without the name of the person sending the original notice, or warnings with names, addresses and phone numbers that do not actually exist, are probably hoaxes.

Don't circulate warnings yourself; real warnings about viruses and other network problems are issued for everyone by MoJ technical services.

Note: When in doubt, don't send it out.

Scams

Scams are "get rich quick" schemes. They make claims such as promising your bank account will soon be stuffed full of cash if follow the detailed instructions in the letter or email. In reality, it is an illegal plan for making money.

A typical scam includes the names and addresses of several individuals whom you may or may not know. You are instructed to send a certain amount of money to the person at the top of the list, and then remove that name and add yours to the bottom.

You are then supposed to mail copies of the letter or email to a few more individuals who will hopefully repeat the entire process. The letter promises that if they follow the same procedure, your name will gradually move to the top of the list and you'll receive money.

Other high-tech scams using IT also exist. They might be sent over the internet, or may require the copying and mailing of computer disks rather than paper. Regardless of the technology used to advance the scheme, the end result is still the same.

Scams are a bad investment. You certainly won't get rich. You will receive little or no money. The few pounds you may get will probably not be as much as you spend making and mailing copies of the letter if hard copy.

By their very nature, scams are harassing. Sending such mails using MoJ facilities is prohibited. The misuse of computer resources to harass other individuals or groups is unacceptable. Any person tempted to forward an email scam should familiarise themselves with the HR intranet pages, particularly the section regarding disciplinary action and electronic communications.

Note: Scams also clog up the system and reduce the efficiency of our servers.

How to recognise a scam

From the older printed letters, to the newer electronic kind, scams follow a similar pattern, with three recognisable parts:

- A hook: this to catch your interest and get you to read the rest of the letter. Hooks used to be "Make Money Fast" or "Get Rich" or similar statements related to making money for little or no work. Electronic chain letters also use the "free money" type of hooks, but have added hooks like "Danger!" and "Virus Alert" or "A Little Girl is dying". These tie into our fear for the survival of our computers or into our sympathy for some poor unfortunate person.
- A threat: when you are hooked, you read on to the threat. Most threats used to warn you about the terrible things that will happen if you do not maintain the chain. Others play on greed or sympathy to get you to pass the letter on. The threat often contains official or technical sounding language to get you to believe it is real.
- A request: some older chain letters ask you to send money to the top ten names on the letter and then pass it on. The electronic ones simply admonish you to "Distribute this letter to as many people as possible." They never mention clogging the internet or the fact that the message is a fake; they only want you to pass it on to others.

If it sounds too good to be true, then it is!

Bogus calls

There are a range of scams that can target you at home or at work. Callers usually say they are from IT Support, and tell you that they have detected a virus on your machine that needs to be removed. The bogus caller will then either:

- Direct you to a website, in the hope you will download malicious software.
- Try and obtain details from you about your computer, or the MoJ network.

In all genuine situations, the MoJ service desk will provide you with an incident reference number if there is a real problem with your machine.

If you receive a call from someone claiming to be from the service desk, always ensure you ask them for the incident reference number. Then disconnect the call, and call service desk yourself, directly. If the original call was genuine, when you provide the incident reference number, they will be able to help you.

In general:

- Treat all unsolicited calls as suspicious.
- If possible, note the details and incoming telephone number of the caller.
- Do not go to any external site if directed from an unsolicited call.
- Never give any information about your computer to the caller.
- Check if the call is genuine with your IT Service desk. [Report the call](#) as a security incident if it is not. Use a different phone from that used to take the original call.

Hoaxes

Hoax letters are designed to trick you into believing, or accepting as genuine, something false and often preposterous: the messages they contain are usually untrue.

Hoax messages try to get you to pass them on to everyone you know using several different methods of social engineering. Most of the hoax messages play on your need to help other people. Who wouldn't want to warn their friends about some terrible virus that is destroying people's systems? Or help this poor little girl who is about to die from cancer?.

Chain letters and hoax messages have the same purpose but use a slightly different method of coercing you into passing them on. Chain letters, like their printed ancestors, generally offer luck or money if you send them on (scams). They play on your fear of bad luck and the knowledge that it is easy for you to send them on. Scams play on people's greed and are illegal no matter what they say in the letter.

The risk and cost of hoaxes

The cost and risk associated with hoaxes may not seem to be that high. If, however, you consider the cost of everyone within the MoJ receiving one hoax message, spending two minutes reading it and another two minutes forwarding it on or discarding it, the cost can be significant.

Handling these messages may also make our mail servers slow down to a crawl or crash.

Spammers (bulk mailers of unsolicited mail) may harvest email addresses from hoaxes and chain letters. Many of these letters contain hundreds of legitimate addresses, which is what the spammers want. There are also rumours that spammers are deliberately starting hoaxes and chain letters to gather email addresses.

How to recognise a hoax

A request to "send this to everyone you know" (or some variant) should raise a red flag. The warning is probably a hoax. It's unlikely a real warning message from a credible source will tell you to send it to everyone you know.

If the warning uses technical language, most people, including technologically savvy individuals, tend to believe the warning is real.

There may be credibility by association. If the janitor at a large technological organisation sends a warning to someone outside of that organisation, people on the outside tend to believe the warning because the company should know about those things. Even though the person sending the warning may not have a clue what he is talking about, the prestige of the company backs the warning, making it appear real.

These make it very difficult to be certain a warning is a hoax. Check to see if the claims are real, and if the person sending out the warning is a real person. Ask yourself if they are someone who would know what they are talking about.

Type of hoaxes

Scam chains

Mail messages that appear to be from a legitimate company but that are scams and cons, for example [Advance fee scams](#).

Giveaways

Stories about giveaways by large companies. If you only send this on, some big company will send you a lot of money, clothes, a free vacation, etc., etc. You would have to wait forever for any of these to pay off.

Malicious warnings (virus hoaxes)

These are warnings about Trojans, viruses, and other malicious code, that have no basis in fact.

Virus hoaxes have flooded the internet with thousands of viruses worldwide. Paranoia in the internet community fuels such hoaxes. An example of this is the "[Good Times](#)" virus hoax, which started in 1994 and is still circulating the internet today. Instead of spreading from one computer to another by itself, Good Times relies on people to pass it along.

Sympathy letters and requests to help someone

Requests for help or sympathy for someone who has had a problem or accident.

Urban myths

Warnings and stories about bad things happening to people and animals that never really happened.

Inconsequential warnings

Out of date warnings and warnings about real things that are not really much of a problem.

True legends

Real stories and messages that are not hoaxes but are still making the rounds of the internet.

Traditional chain letters

Traditional chain letters that threaten bad luck if you don't send them on or request that you send money to the top "x" people on the list before sending it on.

Threat chains

Mail that threatens to hurt you, your computer, or someone else if you do not pass on the message.

Scare chains

Mail messages that warn you about terrible things that happen to people (especially women).

Jokes

Warning messages that it's hard to imagine anyone would believe.

Email and storing MoJ information

Data held by the MoJ should be managed in such a way that employees who require the data, for business reasons, can gain access to it. Managers should ensure that data is stored in an area that is easily accessible to those who require access. This includes MoJ information exchanged using email.

If you need further assistance or information about this process, [ask](#) for help.

Accessing emails or information in an absent employee's email account

Staff absences do occur and these can cause disruption to MoJ business where colleagues have no access to relevant departmental information. Staff are away for events such as annual leave, secondment or maternity leave, but they don't make provision for colleagues to access departmental information.

When an absence occurs, there is no right to be able to access another employee's account to obtain information. This is true, regardless of whether the absence is expected or unexpected, for example annual leave or illness.

Accessing another employee's account, without their permission, might contravene data protection legislation.

Data protection legislation protects personal information which relates to identifiable, living individuals held on computers. It specifies that appropriate security measures must be in place to protect against unauthorised access to, loss or destruction of personal data. If you breach this principle you could render the MoJ liable to enforcement action by the Information Commissioner.

Avoiding the problem

If you know you're going to be away for any significant amount of time, you can make life easier for everyone, including yourself, by following these simple steps:

1. Make provision for someone to have access to your work email account during your absence. If you don't know how to do this, [contact your IT Helpdesk](#).
2. Create a "handover" package, containing information about the tasks that will, or might, need attention during your absence.
3. Make sure the package has contact details for everyone who might need to help progress or update the status of the tasks.
4. Create an "Out Of Office" notification in your email system; include clear details of who to contact in your absence.

Authorised access to user email accounts

You must not access the email accounts of any other users, unless you are authorised to do so as required by your role. Access is authorised on a case by case basis only, and will typically be aligned to the following circumstances:

- During a criminal investigation by a law enforcement agency.
- During an employee investigation relating to misconduct or a security incident, for example IT misuse.
- Upon the death or unexpected exit of an employee, for example for the retrieval of key information and closing down an account.

Ideally, access will have been organised in advance of an absence. But this is not always the case; sometimes there are unexpected or unusual circumstances. Gaining access in such situations will require substantial escalation to [management and Data Privacy and Security teams](#).

Contacts for getting help

In practice, all sorts of things can go wrong with email from time-to-time. Don't be afraid to [report a problem or ask for help](#); you'll be creating a better and safer work environment.

For general assistance on MoJ security matters, email security@justice.gov.uk.

For Cyber Security assistance or consulting, email CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Suppliers to the MoJ should primarily contact your usual MoJ points of contact.

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk and servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk email addresses are no longer being monitored.

Note: Use of the Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk Slack channel ([#digitalservicedesk](#)) is being withdrawn, and should be avoided.

HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

General Apps Guidance

Overview

When working from home, you still need to communicate with Ministry of Justice (MoJ) colleagues. You'll also need to work with people outside the MoJ. There are various tools you might use, besides the standard email and telephone tools. This document tells you about the tools you can, and cannot, use for business purposes. This guidance applies to all staff and contractors who work for the MoJ.

Some ALBs, Agencies, or other large groups within the MoJ might have their own, specific guidance regarding how to use certain Video and Messaging apps for different purposes.

Access to tools

You can access tools that are provided through your MoJ provided devices by downloading from:

- The Software Centre application on your device (for Dom1 equipment).
- The Self Service application on your Mac (for Digital Service Desk (DSD) managed MacBook laptops).

Currently, access to the tools mentioned in this document is not available from Quantum devices.

For other MoJ provided devices, seek help from your Line Manager in the first instance.

Corporate, work and personal accounts

- A corporate account is for making official MoJ statements and providing official views. Only a small number of authorised people can use it.
- A work account is your normal MoJ account, that you use every day for business as usual. Only you have access to your work account.
- A personal account is your own personal account on gmail, hotmail, yahoo, and so on. You should never use a personal account for business purposes.

Some of the applications listed make a distinction between general use with a work account, and use with a corporate account. Using a tool with a corporate account means you are providing views or statements on behalf of the MoJ. Never use a personal account for business purposes with any tool.

Remember that if you are authorised to use a corporate account, you are speaking and acting for the whole of the MoJ. When working with a personal account, you are speaking and acting as an MoJ employee and a civil servant.

Always follow all [MoJ policies and guidelines](#) regarding public information, including social media. To access this information you'll need to be connected to the MoJ Intranet.

In particular, follow the [Civil Service Code of Conduct](#).

Using video conference tools safely

The NCSC has excellent guidance on [using video conferencing services safely](#).

Key things to remember *before* a call include:

- Make sure your video conferencing account (or the device or app you are using for video conferencing) is protected with a strong password.
- Test the service before making (or joining) your first call.
- Understand what features are available, for example recording the call or sharing files or screen information.

Key things to remember for *every* call include:

- Do not make the calls public, for example always require a password to join the call.
- Know who is joining the call, in particular check that everyone is known and expected to be present, and that people who have dialled in have identified themselves clearly and sufficiently.
- Consider your surroundings, for example checking what can be seen behind you (forgetting to check information on a whiteboard or noticeboard is an easy mistake).

MoJ Policy and guidance

OFFICIAL and OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE Information

OFFICIAL information is the majority of information that is created or processed by the public sector. This includes routine business operations and services, some of which could have damaging consequences if lost, stolen or published in the media, but are not subject to a heightened threat profile.

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE is not a classification. SENSITIVE is a handling caveat for a small subset of information marked OFFICIAL that requires special handling by staff. You should apply the handling caveat where you wish to control access to that information, whether in a document, email, or other form.

Privacy and personal information (Data Protection)

Some communications tools expect to have a copy of your contacts list. The list is uploaded to the tool server in order to let the tool to function correctly. Think carefully about whether this is reasonable to do. Make sure that sharing your contacts list does not impact any one else's privacy in a negative way.

Data protection legislation makes you responsible for personal information you work with. You must keep it safe and secure. In particular, you must follow data protection obligations. These include the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Complying with personal information requirements can be complex. Don't hesitate to ask for advice:

- Email: privacy@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #securityprivacyteam
- Intranet: <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-information/protecting-information/>

Information Management

Many of the tools are only used for your day-to-day communication with colleagues. The information you work with is typically [classified](#) at OFFICIAL.

Think about the MoJ information you work with when using these tools. What would happen if you lost your mobile device, or it's stolen? Suppose the voice or video call was overheard in a cafe, or read from your screen on a crowded train. Could there be damaging consequences? If the answer is 'No', then it's probably OK to use the tool to communicate that information with colleagues.

You have a duty of confidentiality and a responsibility to safeguard any HMG information or data that you access. This is [Principle 2](#) of the Government Security Classifications. The MoJ trusts you to work with OFFICIAL information. You're trusted to make a reasoned judgement about whether it's safe to use an approved tool, or whether you should use a different MoJ-provided work tool.

Remember that it is impossible to delete information after it's released in public.

For more information about MoJ IT Security, look on the MoJ Intranet [here](#).

Storage and data retention

Laws and regulations make the MoJ and its employees responsible for managing information. Some examples include:

- Freedom of Information Act.
- Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation.
- Public Records Acts.

When we receive a request for information, we need to know where we hold all the relevant information. Storing business information on appropriate MoJ systems helps us, because:

- We can provide evidence about decisions.
- We understand the information held, and where to find it.
- We can transfer records to The National Archives.

Always store MoJ information in MoJ systems. If you use a tool for work tasks, make sure the key information is stored in an appropriate MoJ system. Guidance on what you must keep is available on the Intranet [here](#). At regular and convenient intervals, transfer the information to an appropriate MoJ system. Do the same when you finish the work. Don't forget to remove any redundant information from a tool by clearing or deleting data if it has been preserved in an MoJ system.

Many tools let you export your data. You can then store it on an appropriate MoJ system. Sometimes it's easier to copy and paste text into a new document. Make sure that only the correct people have access to the information. This is important after staff or organisational changes, for example.

For more guidance, read the [Information Management](#) section on the Intranet. There is also help on [responding to requests for information](#).

Acceptable Use

You must use communications tools for business purposes in an acceptable way.

Be sensible when using communications tools for MoJ business purposes:

- Be extra careful with sensitive and personal information in tools.
- Try to avoid using the same tool for business and personal use - you can get confused who you're talking with.
- If the message you're about to send might cause problems, upset, offence, or embarrassment, it's not acceptable.
- Context is important - a message you might think is funny could be upsetting to someone else.
- If something goes wrong, report it.

The bottom line is:

If there is doubt, there is no doubt - ask for help!

Approved tools

Tool name	Tool type	Conditions/ constraints on use	Accessing /installing tool	Audience
Apple Facetime	Communication tool: Video	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Smartphone App	Internal/ External
Apple iMessage	Text messaging	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Smartphone App	Internal/ External
Google Meet (was Google Hangouts)	Communication tool: Video and/or voice	MoJ use approved	Digital Service Desk controlled Mac - Self service, Web browser.	Internal/ External

Tool name	Tool type	Conditions/ constraints on use	Accessing /installing tool	Audience
Microsoft Teams	Communication and collaboration tool: Video and/or voice	MoJ use approved	Dom1 Software centre, Digital Service Desk controlled Mac - Self service, Web browser.	Internal/ External
Miro	Collaboration tool: Whiteboarding	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Web browser.	Internal/ External
Skype for Business	Communication tool: Video and/or voice	MoJ use approved	Dom1 Software centre, Digital Service Desk controlled Mac - Self service, Web browser.	Internal/ External
Slack	Text messaging, Voice/ Video calls, etc.	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Digital Service Desk controlled Mac - Self service, Web browser.	Internal/ External
Slido	Q&A tool during presentations	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Web browser.	Internal
Twitter	Text Messaging, Video transmission	Approved for MoJ Corporate account. Using a personal account to comment on work related issues is encouraged, as long as you follow the Civil Service Code of Conduct .	Web browser, Windows 10 App, Smartphone App.	Internal/ External
WhatsApp	Text messaging, Voice/ Video calls	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Dedicated app on device, also web browser.	Internal/ External
Yammer	Text messaging	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Dedicated app on device	Internal
YouTube	Video sharing tool: Video, streaming and chat	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Web browser based use.	Internal/ External
Zoom	Communication tool: Video, voice and chat	Avoid personal or sensitive data	Web browser based use	External meetings

NHS Track and Trace

The official [NHS Covid-19](#) app was designed by the NHS. Both NCSC and Cabinet Office have been involved in the security of the system. The app provides contact tracing, local area alerts and venue check-in. It enables you to protect yourself and your loved ones. Installation is optional, but recommended.

After installing the app, you'll receive an alert if you have been in close contact with other people who have tested positive for coronavirus. You can then take action to avoid passing the virus on, for example by self-isolating.

From a security perspective, it is safe for you to use the app on your personal or MoJ issued devices. There are no extra risks for colleagues with security clearance, such as SC and DV.

If you wish to install the app, start at the [NHS site](#).

Note: The NHS app may not work on some older MoJ devices. Installation might not be possible, for example on Quantum smartphones.

You might have both a personal and an MoJ issued device. Think about which device makes most sense to use with the app. It's best to install on the device that you carry with you and use most of the time. You could install on all your devices if you prefer.

To reduce the likelihood of false alerts on the app, turn off the app's Bluetooth mode. Do this when:

- You are working in environments with protective Covid measures in-place, for example plexiglass separators.
- You need to leave your personal or work device in a locker, for example during a sports activity or to work in a secure MoJ facility.

Other tools

Some tools, such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, are approved for specific corporate accounts to use, for corporate communications messages. General use of these tools for work purposes is not permitted.

If you wish to use a tool that is not listed above, please consult our [Guidance for using Open Internet Tools](#) and [speak to us for help](#).

Requesting that an app be approved for use

If there is an application or service that is not currently approved, but which you would like to use, you can request a security review.

Begin the request by filling in the [Request a Security Review of a third-party service](#) form, as best you can. The more information you provide, the better. But don't worry if you have to leave some bits of the form blank.

When you submit the form, it is passed to the security team. The app is reviewed, to check things like how safe it is to use, and whether there are any Data Privacy implications. The security team will respond to you with an answer as quickly as possible.

Note: You should submit the request, and wait for a formal “approval” response, *before* you install or use the app on MoJ equipment or information.

If you have any questions about the process, contact the security team: security@justice.gov.uk.

Other information

Government policy and guidance

[GDS Social Media Playbook](#)

NCSC

[Video conferencing services: using them securely](#)

[Secure communications principles](#)

[Using third-party applications](#)

Secure Data Transfer Guide

Introduction

This guide outlines the security procedures and advice for Ministry of Justice (MoJ) staff wanting to send or receive data securely from external sources.

This is important to the MoJ, because personal and sensitive data is regularly transmitted between departments. Legislation such as GDPR, and industry standards such as PCI DSS, affect the MoJ's responsibility to secure this data. It is also important to recognise the damage that leaked sensitive data could cause to the vulnerable people the MoJ works to protect.

Who is this for?

This policy is aimed at three audiences:

1. **Technical users:** these are in-house MoJ Digital and Technology staff who are responsible for implementing controls during technical design, development, system integration, and operation. This includes DevOps, Software Developers, Technical Architects, and Service Owners. It also includes Incident Managers from the Event, Problem, Incident, CSI, and Knowledge (EPICK) Team.

2. **Service Providers:** defined as any other MoJ business group, agency, contractor, IT supplier, or partner who in any way designs, develops, or supplies services (including processing, transmitting, storing data) for, or on behalf of, the MoJ.
3. **General users:** all other staff working for the MoJ.

The phrase “all MoJ users” refers to General users, Technical users, and Service Providers as defined previously.

Transfer Considerations

Anyone handling personal or sensitive data must seek consent from their line manager to authorise data transfer.

Before any data transfers are requested, consider the following:

- Is it strictly necessary for the effective running of the MoJ, and the care of the people it serves, that the data (regardless of whether the data is sensitive or not) is transferred?
- What is the nature of the information, its sensitivity, confidentiality, or possible value?
- What is the size of the data being transferred?
- What damage or distress might be caused to individuals as a result of any loss or unmanaged sharing during transfer?
- What implications would any loss or unmanaged sharing have for the MoJ?
- What information is actually necessary for the identified purpose? For example, is the intention to send an entire document or spreadsheet, when only one section, or specific spreadsheet columns, are required?
- Has the identity and authorisation of the information recipient been established?

Any transfer technique used **SHALL**:

- Encrypt the data over the network (in transit), using sufficient and appropriate encryption (currently TLS 1.2 or greater).
- Require strong authentication to ensure that both the sender and recipient are who they claim to be.

These considerations apply when transmitting any data over a wireless communication network (for example wifi), or when the data will or might pass through an untrusted network.

If the MoJ is the controller of the data being transferred, the security storage requirements at the destination **SHALL** be considered to ensure that they comply fully with the relevant regulation, such as PCI DSS or GDPR.

If it's not clear who the data controller is, ask the [Data Privacy Team](#) for help.

When dealing with third parties, consider whether any data sharing agreements or contracts are in place that apply to the transfer of that data. Check whether there are any stipulations in place regarding the method of transfer that can or should be used.

If personal data is being transferred to a third party, then the privacy team **SHALL** be informed, to decide if a Data Protection Impact Assessment is required.

Data Transfer

Normally, files **SHOULD NOT** be transferred by email. Normally, files **SHOULD** be transferred by secure network links using appropriate protocols such as `https`, `ssh`, or `sftp`. For large files, such as those over 5MB, transfer using a secure protocol is a practical necessity, as many recipients will not accept emails with attachments greater than 5MB.

Data Transfer by Secure link

The MoJ's preferred method of data sharing is to use Microsoft Teams via Sharepoint. Teams has been authorised to hold OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information. It is configured to provide greater granular protection through tools such as Azure Information Protection (AIP). Where possible, data **SHOULD** be transferred using Teams.

Due to the diverse nature of the MoJ's architecture, using Teams might not always be possible. Those in the MoJ Digital and Technology team who do not have access to Microsoft Teams **MAY** use Google Workspace to transfer data.

For more details on the actual process for a transfer, contact the [Cyber Assistance Team](#).

Data Transfer by email

Where it is not possible to use Microsoft Teams or Google Workspace, **AND** the data to be transferred is less than 20MB, email **CAN** be used, **BUT** the following requirements **SHALL** be met:

- Email communication **SHOULD NOT** be used to transfer unencrypted sensitive or personal data. Employees **SHOULD** note that emails are not designed to attach and transfer large amounts of data. The MoJ's email system does not support file attachments that exceed a total of 20MB.
- You **SHOULD** consider an alternative secure method of transferring sensitive data wherever possible and practicable. If no suitable alternative is available, then apply an extra level of security. Do this by using encryption to apply a strong password to the sensitive data you wish to send. All passwords **SHALL** be transferred using an alternative method of communication to get to the recipient. Examples includes post, a telephone call to an agreed number, or by SMS text message.
- Email messages **SHALL** contain clear instructions of the recipient's responsibilities, and instructions on what to do if they are not the correct recipient.
- Information sent **SHALL**, where practical, be enclosed in an encrypted attachment.
- Care **SHALL** be taken as to what information is placed in the subject line of the email, or in the accompanying message. Filenames or subject lines **SHALL NOT** reveal the contents of attachments. Filenames or subject lines **SHALL NOT** disclose any sensitive personal data.
- Emails **SHALL** only be sent from your work email address, as provided by the MoJ. This is to ensure that the correct privacy and security information is displayed.

CJSM email

- The Criminal Justice Secure email Service (CJSM) is provided for criminal justice agencies and practitioners to communicate with each other.
- As a general rule, it **SHALL** only be used for purposes relating to the criminal justice service.

Microsoft 365 Encrypted email

- This facility is available for standard individual and generic MoJ email accounts
- This method **CAN** be used to send or receive files classified as **OFFICIAL**. It is normally used with external partners, agencies, or individuals who cannot be contacted using CJSM email.
- The attached files on a single email **CAN NOT** exceed 25MB.

Removable storage devices

The MoJ strongly discourages the use of removable storage devices such as USB devices for data transfer. However, if all other options are not possible, then removable storage devices **MAY** be used with caution.

Any data being transferred by removable media such as a USB memory stick **SHALL** be encrypted. Encrypted portable storage devices **SHALL** be password protected with a strong password. All passwords **SHALL** be transferred using an alternative method of communication to get to the recipient. Examples includes post, a telephone call to an agreed number, or by SMS text message.

If you think you have no other option for copying or moving data, and have to use removable media, contact the [Operational Security Team](#).

Ownership of any removable media used **SHALL** be established. The removable media **SHALL** be returned to the owner on completion of the transfer. The transferred data **SHALL** be securely erased from the storage device after transfer.

Clear instructions of the recipient's responsibilities, and instructions on what to do if they are not the intended recipient, **SHALL** accompany the removable media.

Any accompanying message or filename **SHALL NOT** reveal the contents of the encrypted file. The sender **SHALL** check, at an appropriate time, that the transfer has been successful, and obtain a receipt. An email confirming receipt is acceptable.

Report any issues to your line manager and in the case of missing or corrupt data to the [Operational Security Team](#) immediately.

Data transfers by post or courier

Data transfers using physical media such as memory cards or USB devices **SHALL** only be sent using secure post. Royal Mail First or Second class **SHALL NOT** be used. Royal Mail Special Delivery or Recorded Delivery **CAN** be used. For non-Royal Mail services, a secure courier service **SHALL** be used, with a signature obtained upon delivery. The recipient **SHALL** be clearly stated on the parcel. The physical media **SHALL** be securely packaged so that it is not damaged in transit.

The recipient **SHOULD** be told in advance that the data is being sent, so that they know when to expect the data. The recipient **SHALL** confirm safe receipt as soon as the data arrives. The sender responsible for sending the data is also responsible for confirming the data has arrived safely.

Hand Delivery and Collection

Hand delivery or collection of data **MAY** be used where removable media is used. When arranging for an individual to collect information, the identity of the individual **SHALL** be established, to confirm who they claim to be. An appropriate form of identification **SHALL** be provided before handing over any documentation.

Telephone or Mobile Phone

Phone calls might be monitored, overheard, or intercepted. This might happen deliberately or accidentally. Take care to protect calls, as follows:

- Transferred information **SHALL** be kept to a minimum.
- Personal or Confidential information **SHALL NOT** be transferred over the telephone, unless the identity and authorisation of the receiver has been appropriately confirmed.

Residual risks with encrypted data transfer

All users **SHOULD** recognise that even if a system uses encrypted data transfer, there are still occasions where data might be affected by unauthorised access. Be aware of these residual risks. Line Managers **SHOULD** include consideration of these risks in employee awareness training. Examples include:

- Some data relating to the communication might still be exposed in an unencrypted form. An example is metadata.
- Data transfer processes that rely on Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) **SHALL** implement strict certificate checking to maintain trust in end-points.

Incidents and contact details

Note: If you work for an agency or ALB, refer to your local incident reporting guidance.

For help with incidents, including theft and loss, contact:

DOM1/Quantum - Technology Service Desk

Tel: 0800 917 5148

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk email address is no longer being monitored.

Digital and Technology - Digital Service Desk

- Email: servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #digitalservicedesk

HMPPS Information and security

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

For non-technology incidents, contact the MoJ Group Security Team: mojgroupsecurity@justice.gov.uk

Contact the Privacy Team for information on Data Protection Impact Assessments: privacy@justice.gov.uk

If you are not sure who to contact, ask the Operational Security Team:

- Email: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk
- Slack: #security

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Web Browsing

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) provides access to the Intranet and Internet for business use. The access helps you to do your job effectively and efficiently.

MoJ security policies governs your use of these facilities.

Reasonable personal use is allowed, if:

- Your line manager agrees.
- It does not interfere with the performance of your duties.

You and your manager are responsible for ensuring that you use these systems responsibly.

If you connect to a website that contains unsuitable, illegal or offensive material:

- Disconnect from the site immediately.
- Inform your [Service Desk](#).

The Department monitors the use of electronic communications and web-browsing activity. If your email use or web browsing seems unacceptable, your manager can request detailed activity reports.

What websites you can access

The MoJ's approach to website access is continually reviewed and updated. By default, we try to allow access to as much as possible of the internet for all users. Inevitably, there are some restrictions, for the following reasons:

Cyber Security

- The site is an unacceptable security risk for MoJ systems or users. For example, sites known to host malware are blocked.

Technical

- The site causes technical issues which interfere with business activities. For example, a video site uses too much network capacity.

Business Policy

- Only a specific individual or group of users can access the site. For example, social media sites are blocked for systems or users in frontline roles.

The list of websites included in each of the categories is as small as possible. But if you cannot access a site that you think should be OK, you can [request a review](#). Similarly, if you can access a site that you think should be blocked, [request a review](#).

What to do if you are blocked from a website that you think should be OK

Log an incident with your [Service Desk](#).

Provide the following details:

- The address of the website.
- The time you visited the site.
- The details of any block message that you received.

The Service Desk will investigate the reason why you cannot access the website.

If there was a system error or fault, remedial action will restore access.

If the block is due to an access rule, Operational Security reviews whether to change the rule.

What to do if you are able to access a website that you think should be blocked

Log an incident with your [Service Desk](#).

Provide the following details:

- The address of the website.
- The time you visited the site.
- The reason why you think the site should be blocked.

Other help

- HMPPS Prison - All requests should be directed to the Service Desk via a local or area IT Manager.
- HMPPS Probation - Log an incident with your [Service Desk](#).
- All other teams, contact the Operational Security Team: OperationalSecurityTeam@justice.gov.uk

General enquiries, including theft and loss

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

Note: The previous itservicedesk@justice.gov.uk and servicedesk@digital.justice.gov.uk email addresses are no longer being monitored.

Note: Use of the Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk Slack channel ([#digitalservicedesk](#)) is being withdrawn, and should be avoided.

HMPPS Information & security:

- Email: informationmgmtsecurity@justice.gov.uk
- Tel: 0203 334 0324

Web browsing security policy profiles

There are two policy profiles, one for the [Judiciary](#), and one for [all other staff](#).

Each profile identifies categories of content that are normally blocked. Content that is not in a blocked category will normally be available to a profile.

Judiciary

All activity is logged. By default, no reporting takes place. However, reporting is permitted following appropriate judicial sanction.

The following categories of content are normally blocked for the Judicial profile:

- Advanced Malware Command and Control
- Advanced Malware Payloads
- Botnets
- Compromised Websites
- Custom-Encrypted Uploads
- Dynamic DNS
- Elevated Exposure
- Emerging Exploits
- Extended Protection
- Files Containing Passwords
- Keyloggers
- Malicious Embedded iFrame
- Malicious Embedded Link

- Malicious Websites
- Mobile Malware
- Newly Registered Websites
- Phishing and Other Frauds
- Potentially Exploited Documents
- Potentially Unwanted Software
- Security
- Sex
- Spyware
- Suspicious Content
- Suspicious Embedded Link
- Unauthorised Mobile Marketplaces
- User-Defined list

All other staff

Limited restrictions are in place to block web access. All activity is logged. Reporting is enabled for all activity.

The following categories of content are blocked for this profile:

- Adult Content
- Adult Material
- Advanced Malware Command and Control
- Advanced Malware Payloads
- Application and Software Download
- Botnets
- Compromised Websites
- Custom-Encrypted Uploads
- Dynamic DNS
- Elevated Exposure
- Emerging Exploits
- Extended Protection
- Files Containing Passwords
- Keyloggers
- Malicious Embedded iFrame
- Malicious Embedded Link
- Malicious Websites
- Mobile Malware
- Newly Registered Websites
- Phishing and Other Frauds
- Potentially Exploited Documents
- Potentially Unwanted Software
- Security
- Sex
- Spyware
- Suspicious Content
- Suspicious Embedded Link
- Unauthorised Mobile Marketplaces
- User-Defined list

Information security incident management

Management of information security incidents and improvements

Lost devices or other IT security incidents

This guidance applies to all staff and contractors who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Related information

[Laptops](#) on page 80

What to do if your device is lost, stolen, or compromised

If MoJ data or information is lost or compromised, you should always [report it as a data incident](#).

Note: You can help reduce problems by making sure that devices used for MoJ tasks are always shut down before leaving Government premises. Locking a laptop, or 'putting it to sleep' is not completely secure. A lost or stolen laptop can be accessed more easily if it is only locked or sleeping. A shut down makes sure that all security measures are in place, such as full disk encryption.

If you think your device is lost, stolen, 'hacked', or in some way compromised, you must:

1. Contact your Technology Service Desk. The analyst will ask the relevant questions and note responses on the ticket.

Technology Service Desk - including DOM1/Quantum, and Digital & Technology Digital Service Desk. Use one of the following two methods for contacting service desk:

- Tel: 0800 917 5148
- [MoJ Service Portal](#)

2. Tell your line manager as soon as possible.
3. For a lost or stolen device, contact the Police and make sure you get the incident reference number.

Summary

Find out more about how to [report a security incident](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Compliance

Compliance with legal and contractual requirements

Data security and privacy

Data Security and Privacy

We believe that our technology must keep data safe and protect user privacy.

Our digital projects contain important information. Serious data breaches might result if we fail to:

- protect information

- handle it correctly at all times
- dispose of it safely when it is no longer required

Breaches might cause:

- harm to individuals
- financial loss to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- a loss of confidence in us as an organisation

For personal data, the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and UK Data Protection Act (2018) apply. These make the consequences of data breaches very clear.

To follow the data regulation/legislation, we **must** ensure that:

- we protect data to the best of our organisation's capabilities
- we collect data only for described, lawful purposes
- we use data only for the described, lawful purposes

Why are security and privacy important?

Breaches can have an adverse effect the relationship between citizen and government.

Not only do we have a duty to protect citizens data, but the penalties for violations are also severe. Under the GDPR, serious infringements can result in fines of up to €20M.

We must apply appropriate security and privacy protection to all the information we hold and process, at all times.

We should treat all data as sensitive unless proven otherwise.

All our work must follow this ethos.

When this applies

This principle applies to **all** MoJ technology projects and business activities.

While GDPR applies only to personal information, all MoJ projects and tasks must have excellent data security and privacy characteristics. If they handle personal data, they must do so correctly. Projects must follow MoJ guidelines unless exceptional and approved circumstances apply.

The [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#) - the UK's independent regulatory office for data protection - has published [guidance on how to determine what is personal data](#).

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA, formerly commonly known as a Privacy Impact Assessment or PIA) is required for all projects. There are some [exceptions described by the ICO](#).

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.

Risk Assessment Process

Risk Reviews

Information and the supporting processes, systems and networks are important and valuable Ministry of Justice (MoJ) assets. They are central to enabling the MoJ to perform its functions and provide services to the public, the legal professions, and other government departments and organisations.

Confidentiality, integrity and availability of information is essential to maintain the MoJ's ability to provide efficient and effective services, maintain compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and maintain its and the Government's reputation.

The MoJ and its information systems and networks are faced with security threats from a wide range of sources, including computer-assisted fraud, sabotage, vandalism, fire and flood. Sources of damage such as computer viruses, computer hacking and denial of service attacks have become more common, more ambitious and increasingly sophisticated.

The MoJ's dependence on its information systems and services means that there is always a possibility of technology-enabled security threats. Connections between the MoJ's computer networks and public and other private networks, and sharing of information resources, further increase the difficulty of achieving and maintaining control.

It is essential that the MoJ identify its information security requirements. There are three main sources of these requirements.

- The legal, statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements that the MoJ, its partners, contractors and service providers have to satisfy.
- The principles, objectives and requirements for information processing that the MoJ and Government have developed to support their operations, for example the protective marking system and government baseline security standards.
- Assessed risks to the MoJ. Through risk assessment, threats to assets are identified, the potential business impacts of these threats are estimated, and the vulnerability to and likelihood of occurrence of the threats are evaluated.

Assessing information security risk

Security requirements are identified by a methodical assessment of security risks. Expenditure on security controls needs to be balanced against the business harm likely to result from security failures. Risk assessment is systematic consideration of:

- The business harm (the 'impact') which is likely to result from a security failure, taking into account the potential consequences of a loss of confidentiality, integrity or availability of the information and other assets.
- The realistic likelihood of such a failure occurring in the light of the threats to and vulnerabilities of the system, and the controls currently implemented.

Managing information security risks

The results of the risk assessment are identified risks and risk severities. These help guide and determine the appropriate management action, and priorities for managing information security risks. Risks with a high severity level would justify the expenditure of more resources to control them than risks with a low severity level.

Risk Management involves identification, selection and implementation of justified security and contingency 'countermeasures' to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Countermeasures can act in different ways such as:

- Reducing the likelihood of attacks or incidents occurring.
- Reducing the system's vulnerability.
- Reducing the impact of an attack or incident should it occur.
- Detecting the occurrence of attacks or incidents.
- Facilitating recovery from an attack or incident.

Risk management requires a judgement about what is an acceptable level of risk. Although this is a business decision, it does require a thorough understanding of the nature of the risk and the effectiveness of the countermeasures implemented to manage the risk. For some systems or scenarios, specialist advice might be needed.

When taking risk management decisions, consideration must be given to the full implications of the decisions taken. Failure to implement some countermeasures might breach legal or regulatory requirements. This is unlikely to be an acceptable risk management decision. Failure to meet other countermeasures might breach Government information security standards; as a consequence it might not be possible to link the MoJ system with other systems. This might limit the usefulness of the MoJ system.

Consideration must also be given to what are tolerable financial losses, political sensitivities and adverse publicity. The cumulative effect of accepting high levels of risk should also be taken into account.

Information security in projects

Information security controls are considerably cheaper and more effective if incorporated at the system requirements specification and design stage. Information risk assessments must be part of the project process.

Ongoing information security risk management

Effective risk management does not end once a risk assessment has been done and the required countermeasures implemented. Checks need to be carried out to ensure that the countermeasures are being applied effectively. It is also important to carry out periodic reviews of security risks and implemented controls to:

- Take account of changes to business requirements and priorities.
- Consider new threats and vulnerabilities.
- Confirm that controls remain effective and appropriate.

The role of security in risk assessment and risk management

The MoJ security team can provide help in all areas of security risk management for systems. Examples include:

- Advice on risk assessments.
- Help with carrying out risk assessments.
- Assist with the risk management decision process.
- Help with creating and managing documentation compliant with MoJ standards.
- Assisting with mandatory Government risk assessments.
- Advice on compliance checking.

Contact details

For any further questions relating to security, contact: security@justice.gov.uk, or for security advice, contact the Cyber Assistance Team CyberConsultancy@digital.justice.gov.uk.