



GC Communicate

DWP Data Access Policy effective today...

The DWP Data Access Policy, announced in July 2008, came into effect on 1st April 2009. Every local authority in England and Wales is now live on GCSx or has a planned Go Live date backed by a committed plan and an agreed exemption to the policy. This is a huge step forward for the local authority community and creates a solid foundation for service transformation and improvement. The Government Connect Programme Board is grateful to everybody involved in achieving this important milestone, including SOCITM, the LGA, IDeA and every council employee who has supported the project.

We have not quite achieved everything we set out to do by March 31st. 202 local authorities were Code of Connection approved by GC at 31st March. We agreed exemptions with 105 shortly after announcing the policy and therefore were targeting 305 by 31st March. Clearly a number of authorities have underestimated the effort needed to become compliant or hit unexpected issues. Based on progress to date we are expecting another 45 to be compliant by the end of April and all local authorities to be operational by September.

The concentration of authorities going live late in March and early April has created some problems for us, particularly in scheduling the "Go Live" services. Scheduling difficulties are now easing and we appreciate your support and cooperation. We urge all authorities not yet live to confirm with Government Connect the date of their onsite configuration services and to keep to their commitments. This will help us to provide a better service and to concentrate more efforts on benefits realisation activities.

I am conscious that local government reorganisation has now come into effect. The total number of Councils in England and Wales has now reduced from 410 to 387 and 9 new Unitary authorities as well. We extend our best wishes to these new authorities on their path to better and more efficient public services.

Philip Littleavon, Programme Director

Going Live: The South Hams Experience!

South Hams District Council went live using GCSx in February, amongst the earliest of the authorities. "I'm extremely pleased with the dedication of my team here at South Hams. The process has had its challenges but, with the support of the Government Connect team, we've made it" said Pauleen Blampied, South Hams Head of ICT.

"With GCSx in place, we now have a more secure mechanism to access DWP systems and will also be able to take advantage of the security and efficiencies that GC Mail offers" says Robin Barlow, ICT Support Manager.

Having transitioned through the Code of Connection (CoCo) process, the South Hams team offers the following advice for other authorities:

The submission process:

Take the Devon approach and collaborate with neighbouring councils. This will not only help you share ideas but may also give you the critical mass to allow the GC Tech team to support you with the controls as a group.

Be very precise in your responses – many of the comments from the GC team are about lack of commitment. The GC team need to know you WILL be doing something by x date, not that you may/should/could be do something when 'you have time'/ resources etc.

If you have a valid business case, the GC Team may consider well reasoned arguments for not committing to an individual control.



*Pauleen Blampied, Head of ICT
Centre: Simon Landfear, ICT Infrastructure Analyst
End: Robin Barlow, ICT Support Manager*

The pre-reconnection (GC link) test:

Fill in the pre-connection checklist *in advance* of the CoCo acceptance date.

Engage your technical staff/resources whilst completing the pre-connection checklist, rather than just give it a cursory glance.

When agreeing an appointment date push for an early test date. C&W need little more than 24 hours notice to activate a link.

Ensure you have the right technical staff available on the test day, and carry out as much pre-configuration of the firewalls, mail systems, routing of emails, and DNS as you can. This is important as you will only have one working day to undertake your tests.

Don't hesitate to engage with the Government Connect Implementation team if you have any queries or feel the process isn't working for you.

The progress on E-Transfers

Government Connect (GC) is currently running pilots with a number of local authorities on the electronic transfer of local authority Input Documents (LAIDs).

E-Transfer, a system being developed in collaboration with the DWP Housing Benefits Information Flows team, is the electronic transfer of LAIDs from Job Centre plus offices to be followed by LAIDs from The Pensions Disability and Carers Service later this year. This service uses the DWP Generic File Transfer Service (GFTS) and runs over GCSx.

Local authorities will receive a fully managed Data Transfer Appliance (DTA) from DWP which will be the local authority file server for this service. GC is continuing to pilot DTAs to ensure they are reliable for local authority use. These pilots are expected to complete during April 2009 after which the GC & Housing Benefits team will evaluate the outcomes from a technical and business perspective. Subject to the acceptance of the pilot phase, national roll out is

provisionally scheduled to begin in May 2009.

Delays have occurred primarily due to the need to configure the GFTS system, the DTA and various firewalls to enable the service to run reliably. We have learnt important lessons from the pilots which will help ensure a reliable and robust national roll out.

In due course local authorities will be invited to agree installation dates for E-Transfers. This will be based on having a working GCSx connection available and the capacity of the programme team to roll out. It should be noted that we will require you to ensure that your network specialist is on hand during installation to handle firewall and other network configuration issues.



Please refer to www.govconnect.gov.uk/filetransfer for updated documentation including the Take on Guide which is now available for download.

What do you need to do next?

Authorities not yet live:

- Monitor your compliance and configuration schedule and keep to the agreed actions
- Prepare for your free configuration visit and ensure that you have the technical help at hand on the day
- Should your authority's circumstances change please keep in touch with the support team: gctech.team@dpw.gsi.gov.uk
- Monitor the Government Connect website & newsletters for updated information

Authorities that are now live:

If you are already live with GCSx and have any operational problems, please refer to annex i of the [operational support guide](#) or contact the service desk at 0800 505 3375 / it.servicedesk@tameside.gov.uk



Do not turn off your GC Router!!!

For those authorities that are not yet live but almost compliant, we will continue to proactively monitor the network so that there are no problems when we activate them for operational use. In preparation for your configuration visit please ensure that you do not turn your GC router off even if you are not currently using it. We will send an engineer to your site to run a series of tests before you go live and we may even deactivate the circuit, but please do not power it off! Unless asked to reset it by Cable and Wireless, please leave your router turned on.

GC Approved CoCos

Code of Connection Approved by GC	In month	total
March	164	202
Predicted in April	45	247
Predicted in May	25	272
Predicted in June	24	296
Predicted in July	25	321
Predicted in August	13	334
Predicted in September	76	410

Figures as on 31 March 2009

CESG Event

IA09 is the government's premier event for senior decision makers involved in information risk management across government and the wider public sector. Chaired by Iain Lobban, Director, GCHQ, the event takes place at QEII Conference Centre, Westminster on 6-7 July 2009. Register by 17 April for a £200 early bird discount. For more information see www.ia09.org.uk

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