



GC Communicate

*Roy Marshall
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Information
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Programme
Board member writes...*



People want high quality local services, focussed around the needs of their local communities, that are accessible in ways and at times that suit them. Putting the needs of people and their communities first, is at the heart of Communities and Local Government's (CLG) and its partners approach to transforming local government and local services.

That is why CLG as lead investor in Government Connect is a fully committed partner along with the DWP, DCSF and Local Government Association in making the roll-out of GCSX a success. With over 255 local authorities connected and more coming on line every week the opportunities to build on GC's success keep growing.

As Government's recently published Transformational Government 2008 Report highlights GC is playing an increasing role in supporting the public service reforms that are driving and embedding dramatic change across the public sector.

It is exciting to relate how in just 12 months, GCSX has become a real catalyst for change that is enabling the delivery of front-line public service innovation through flagship central/ local projects such as *Tell Us Once* and *Online Free School Meals*.

In this way, GC is bringing an added impetus to the existing work of central departments and local councils, on shared priorities such as the personalisation of local services, raising school standards; narrowing health inequalities; and creating stronger and safer communities.

Are you ready for your DTA?

The e-Transfer Project is intended to support the electronic transfer of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit claim data, using a small server (the Data Transfer Appliance – DTA) at local authority sites, connected to GCSX. The deployment of the servers is about to begin, and both business managers and IT Managers have several key contributions to make. This article provides a high level overview of the early stages.

Every LA has been asked to provide a nominated point of contact to assist with the implementation of e-Transfer – usually the Business Manager. Once connected to the DTA, the DWP e-Transfer project will get in touch with the named contact to arrange for e-enablement of the service and for up to five staff to support the transfers.

IT Managers are key to completing and returning the pro-formas, preparing space and power for the servers, updating their GCSX firewall rule-set, scheduling a date for installation, and supporting the installation visit.

Pro-formas – we are collecting information to help us plan the most efficient deployment and reduce the workload for authority staff and managers. Most authorities have already received and returned the forms, and we are contacting the remainder. Please do try to return the information as quickly as possible.

Server requirements – the server is a standard HP DL120 model. It requires 1U of rack space, a standard power connection, a 100mb Ethernet connection to your network, and a keyboard, mouse and screen. These last three don't have to be dedicated, i.e. can be shared through a switch, but are necessary for configuring the device.

GCSX firewall rule-set – the original rule-set was designed to prevent unused services. Hence it will need to be changed to allow the secure FTP (FTPS) software on the server. General details on the changes are provided in the take on guide. We intend to issue specific details for the most common firewalls soon. We ask that you make the changes *before* the server is delivered and installed.

Scheduling the server – our partners HP / EDS will be contacting authorities to arrange the delivery, installation and local configuration of the server.

Installation support - before HP arrive, authorities should have prepared the necessary space and updated the firewall rules. We will also send (via secure email*) specific configuration details unique to each Authority. On the day of the install, the HP engineer will physically install the server and assist with the local configuration of the server. More details on the installation process and the role of the authority and HP/EDS can be found on our take on guide.

Sites that successfully complete the installation will be passed to the e-Transfers team to begin the change in business processes. Sites that experience difficulties will be managed by a dedicated troubleshooting team.

We will shortly issue more detailed advice, in the meantime configuration details are available in the take-on guide: (http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/documents/LAFTS_Take_on_Guide_v1.pdf).

* Every authority is expected to have set up their secure mail accounts, specifically gsi@localauthority.gcsx.gov.uk. If you already have a GCSX connection, but do not have this account, please let us know via GCtech.team@dpw.gsi.gov.uk.

Tower Hamlets join the GCSX network ...

Tower Hamlets was switched on to the Government Connect Secure eXtranet (GCSX) on 23 February 2009, after submitting its first assessment return in May last year. The journey has been an instructive and crucial one.

There were a number of drivers behind signing up for the secure network. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has of course stated that access to CIS would be switched off by 1st April unless routed through a secure network.



It is also essential for client data to be secured to the highest possible standard, an issue which the local authority has always made one of its highest priorities. "We do have a general commitment to ensuring that data is secure" says ICT Head, Jim Roberts. "We take the whole issue of security very seriously indeed. Subscribing to GCSX is a very good indication that we are doing the right thing.

Improved processes around GCSX should also in future speed up certain business processes, which in turn will hopefully release savings opportunities."

Tower Hamlets is looking forward to enjoying such benefits now that it's linked into the network. These will include: an improved administration and delivery benefits; secure email will reduce the risk of misplaced sensitive data; and a secure ftp route for data exchange with central government departments.

The council was one of a number of local authority areas that adopted the new In and Out of Work (IOW) processes in February. IOW is a project rolling out nationally, providing customers with a single point of contact (Jobcentre Plus) to access their benefits and credits as they move in and out of work. In the past, customers had to supply information separately to Jobcentre Plus for Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support; HM Revenue and Customs for Tax Credits and local authorities for Housing and Council Tax Benefit. Through the GCSX network, information can be shared electronically and securely.

"We were very excited and keen to get involved" says Steve Hill, Tower Hill's Benefits Service Manager. "The idea of just one organisation collecting the evidence so that customers only have to go to one place, rather than several, is a highly appealing one. This will make a huge difference for our customers in terms of access to benefits and turnaround."

What advice would he give to other local authorities on the way to becoming Code of Connection compliant? "Speak with the Government Connect advisers. Many issues can be overcome by ensuring that the Code of Connection wording is in line with their requirements."



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@dwp.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

GC Approved CoCos

Code of Connection Approved by GC	In month	total
<i>Achieved in May</i>	5	255
<i>Predicted in June</i>	18	273
<i>Predicted in July</i>	15	288
<i>Predicted in August</i>	15	303
<i>Predicted in September</i>	72	375

Figures as on 29 May 2009

Please note: Following the Local Government Review (LGR) which came into effect on 1 April 2009, Parliament approved the move to unitary local government in Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Durham, Northumberland, Shropshire and Wiltshire between February and March 2008. A total of 44 local councils have been reduced to just nine. As a result the total number of local authorities in England and Wales has been reduced from 410 to 375.

Watch the short Government Connect film



request by email at:
gc.info@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Contact GC:

CoCo Support: 0845 838 2945
gctech.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

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General enquiries: gc.info@dwp.gsi.gov.uk