



GC Communicate

Just a few weeks to go ...

18 months ago local authorities working with the DWP, DCSF, and DCLG, and with the support of the LGA and SOCITM, set out to implement the Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSX) with the aim of having every local authority connected by the end of the project.

Since then remarkable progress has been made and the objective is being met with only a few local authorities to complete. In this, the final issue of Communicate before the project moves into business as usual operation, I would like to congratulate all local authorities and extend my thanks to every local authority officer, member or other stakeholder who made this possible. This is a remarkable achievement and provides a network bridge between local authorities and central government that will create many more opportunities for better, more secure, timely and innovative, services. Local authorities are now ideally positioned to take advantage of and use GCSX in ways that are beneficial and helpful to them and the citizens they serve.

You will see in this edition that, while about to complete the implementation, DWP are working with the IDeA and local authorities to maximise the benefits of the network with the Benefits Realisation fund. DWP is also establishing business as usual processes to support local authorities with a new service desk and security re-assessment service as well as a brief explanation on the next significant step for local authorities which will be the introduction of the new Code of Connection (4.1).

Once again, my thanks for all of your support.



*Kenny Robertson,
Director of CIT
Transformational
Government, DWP*

Authorities set to realise services over GCSX

With the GCSX network rolled out and live across almost all local authorities across England and Wales, there are a growing number of services and data transfers becoming available which are enabling improved information sharing. Here are just a few examples where significant progress has been made.

Local authorities with a GCSX connection can now use a GCSX email account to exchange sensitive data, including patient identifiable data, with health sector staff who have a NHS.net email address (e.g. PCT staff and GPs).

As both GCSX and the Police National Network (PNN) are both connected to the wider Government Secure Intranet (GSI), data can be transferred securely between local authorities and the Police.

GC Mail can be used now to replace the existing less efficient and less secure methods of exchanging data between local authorities and the Police. Information relating to crime statistics, community safety, child protection, youth offending and emergency planning could all be better shared.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) are currently piloting secure local authority access to HM Court Records, held on the Libra case management system, via GCSX. These pilots are to run from September through to November.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has implemented a GCSX connection in order to provide connectivity between Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the YJB Service for secure accommodation placement for youth offenders. The YJB service

involves the transfer of data between YJB and YOTs via structured messaging. YJB are also working with Government Connect to enable secure local authority access to their main Case Management System as well as the eAsset database which provides information on youth offender secure accommodation across the country.



GCSX connectivity enables secure information sharing between local authorities, police and trading standards providers. Access to both the Joint Asset Recovery Database (JARD) and Money Web will soon be available to Trading Standards officers from their local authority desktops and will enable local authorities to participate in the Home Office incentive scheme. Through this they can claim their share of the estimated £200+ million of criminal assets documented within these databases.

DWP, HMRC and local authorities are implementing new processes that provide a more joined up service to certain people moving in and out of work. National rollout of the streamlined processes began in autumn 2008 and is scheduled to complete by early 2010.

The eTransfer Project has successfully piloted the secure electronic exchange of Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit claim data using an electronic Local Authority Input Document (eLAID), with 10 local authorities and JobCentre Plus. It now intends to roll out the process nationally.

How will changes to the GSi Code of Connection affect your authority?

The GSi community is revising the Code of Connection that controls access to the GCSX circuits provided by Government Connect. Currently local authorities are being assessed to Code of Connection version 3.2, the new version is 4.1. Compared with version 3.2 the main Code of Connection version 4.1 areas of change are:

- Mobile working - full implementation of compliant service
- Firewall specification (EAL 4)
- Execution of unauthorised software
- Requirement for IT Healthchecks (CHECK / CREST)
- Labelling e-mails with protective markings

Government Connect regards Code of Connection 4.1 as a positive development towards improved information assurance and supports ongoing developments in this area. However, as you might expect Government Connect is also keen to ensure that any changes introduced to local authorities are

both manageable and relevant to the evolving view of risk.

The GSi is governed by the Managed Telecommunications Executive (MTE) and GCSX users are represented at this forum by the Government Connect Programme Director. On 6 August MTE agreed Code of Connection 4.1 would be introduced, but its introduction for GCSX users, whilst inevitable, would follow a separate path to be determined by a working group of Cabinet Office, CESG and Government Connect officials. This working group will take into account the change in perception of threats that has led to Code of Connection 4.1, developments towards acceptance of mobile / home working using non-authority owned equipment and the broader business context e.g., significant recent council investments and Council tax levels having been set.

Government Connect are sure that the working group established by MTE will strike the right balance for local government to ensure Code of Connection 4.1 is introduced and interpreted appropriately and sensitively. You may have seen recent Buying Solutions notices and communications concerning Code of Connection 4.1, please be assured that there is no immediate impact on GCSX users; until further notice all GCSX Code of Connection assessments and re-assessments will be with reference to version 3.2. Further information will be available when an agreeable position as described above has been established.

Government Connect - The Next Steps

Government Connect will move from a project to business as usual footing in DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) from 1st October 2009.

As part of that transition the GC Service Desk, that has been run as an interim measure by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC), will be provided out of the Department's Housing Benefit Strategy Division and will sit alongside the current Local Authority Support Team (LAST). This DWP Desk will 'go live' on Thursday the 1st October. The transition of the service desk will, for local authorities, be seamless. Authorities should continue to raise incidents and requests for change through their nominated local authority IT single points of contact (IT service desk), or in the case of the four Aggregated Gateways via their own Aggregated Service Desks, to the same 0800 505 3375 telephone number, following the existing guidance in annex i of the operation support guide.

The Department has been working closely with GC, Cable & Wireless, TMBC and Buying Solutions to build on the valuable experiences from the running of the existing Tameside Desk and therefore to make this transition as smooth as possible and we look forward to providing robust support to local authorities' GCSX connectivity.

Sylvia Haslehurst, DWP Housing Benefit Strategy Division, GC Service Desk Senior Manager

GC Approved CoCos

Figures as on 1 September 2009

| Code of Connection Approved by | In month | total |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------|
| <i>Achieved in August</i> | 20 | 320 |
| <i>Predicted in September</i> | 55 | 375 |

Contact GC:

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

Service Desk: 0800 505 3375 /
it.servicedesk@tameside.gov.uk

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

