Suffolk County Council

The end of GCSx
A guide for SCC partner organisations

*The Government has announced that the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) infrastructure, which includes all GCSx mailboxes, will be ceasing from April 2019. This guide explains what the Council is doing to prepare for this, as well as setting out what you as an organisation can do to ensure a smooth transition. A point to note is that **GCSx connections were only ever secure if both the sender AND recipient both had GCSx mailboxes**. The new solution being put in place by SCC ensures both ends of an email connection are secure.*

Government indicates the end of GCSx from March 2019

The Government announced in 2016[1] that the GCSx mailbox setup is being ceased in March 2019. This is due to the cost involved, as well as the fact that more secure options now exist to share secure emails between organisations.

Replacing GCSx with TLS (Transport Layer Security)

The Government has recommended that the GCSx mailboxes be replaced with a series of secure TLS connections between individual organisations (TLS connections are in effect secure email "tunnels" between two organisations)

This means that if a TLS connection is set up between Suffolk County Council (SCC) and your organisation, none of your staff will need to request one-time passcodes for every secure email from SCC. Similarly, staff at your organisation can send secure email as normal from their accounts – TLS guarantees that the email can't be tampered with en route.

How is SCC tackling the issue?

SCC has set up a project to cease all GCSx mailboxes across the Council ahead of the March 2019 deadline. The GCSx mailboxes at SCC will be replaced with secure TLS connections.

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[1] See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/securing-government-email for more details

What to do if your organisation uses GCSx mailboxes to communicate with Suffolk County Council

If your organisation has GCSx mailboxes and uses these to communicate securely with SCC, it's likely our project team will have contacted someone in your organisation so that we can set up a secure TLS connection with you.

If you're unsure whether SCC has been in contact with your organisation, or whether a TLS connection already exists between SCC and yourselves, please either contact the person in your organisation that provides your email service, or alternatively contact information.management@suffolk.gov.uk .

For each GCSx mailbox at the Council, once the relevant TLS connections have been set up, the GCSx mailbox will be ceased and all emails will subsequently be sent from a standard **@suffolk.gov.uk** email account. Emails from this account will be secure, as TLS will ensure that the email cannot be tampered with en route between our two organisations.

What to do if your organisation doesn't have GCSx mailboxes and has been sending/ receiving email to/from SCC GCSx mailboxes

As mentioned in the introduction at the top of this document, GCSx email is only secure if the sending mailbox AND the receiving mailbox are BOTH GCSx – if only one of the mailboxes is GCSx, the connection will not be secure.

SCC will be ceasing its GCSx mailboxes and replacing them with standard **@suffolk.gov.uk** mailboxes. If your organisation doesn't have a TLS connection set up with Suffolk County Council, secure emails will still be able to be sent to your organisation using OME, the Council's standard secure email system. When you receive a secure email sent using OME, the recipient will need to request a one-time passcode in order to decrypt the email.

If your organisation finds the one-time passcode system inconvenient for your staff, SCC can help set up a secure TLS connection with yourselves. To request a TLS connection, please email information.management@suffolk.gov.uk . If you can also enclose the contact details of an IT person that supplies your email services, that will help us get the TLS connection set up quicker.