



ICT Equipment Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

Gloucestershire County Council (the council) accepts that ICT equipment is essential to enabling it to meet its aims and objectives. It is a requirement that your use of the council's ICT equipment is legal and appropriate for delivering the council's responsibilities and does not create unnecessary risk. The council will ensure that all users have access to appropriate ICT equipment. **It is a requirement that all users read and accept this policy.**

The council's ICT equipment is made available to users for council business purposes. Limited personal use is permitted provided that such use is strictly in accordance with this policy. All Information Management and Security policies can be found at [Information Management and Security Policies](#).

2.0 Risk Management

The council recognises that there are risks associated with use of ICT equipment.

This policy aims to ensure appropriate access to, and use of, the council's ICT equipment, which will help to mitigate the following risks:

- Harm to individuals
- Damage to the council's reputation
- Potential legal action and/or fines against the council or individual(s)
- Inappropriate use of council resources
- Viruses and other malicious software
- Service disruption

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all users of the council's ICT end user devices. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Desktops and laptops,
- Mobile devices, e.g., mobile phones and tablets,
- Portable media devices, e.g., memory sticks, external hard drives, DVDs,
- Any other ICT equipment provided by GCC

All users are expected to comply with this policy at all times when using the council's ICT equipment, whether accessed locally or remotely. Breach of this policy may be

dealt with under the council's [Disciplinary and Dismissals Procedure](#) and in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

4.0 Responsibilities

The Assistant Director of Digital & ICT has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making any recommendations for change to minimise risks to the council's operations lies with the Senior Information Risk Owner. If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, you should seek advice from by raising a ticket via [ServiceNow](#).

The council will:

- Ensure that corporate end user devices are protected using approved encryption software, security controls and anti-malware software.
- Promote the use of our SharePoint for secure cloud-based sharing services (removable media devices, such as USB sticks, should only be used to store council data by exception and on approval of DICT).
- Apply port security to end user devices to ensure that USB sticks are encrypted before use.
- Ensure software is available to encrypt content on removable media devices.

All employees have a responsibility to comply with this policy, ensure that all users understand the standards of behaviour expected of them, and to act when behaviour falls below these requirements.

Budget Managers are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring budget holders understand their responsibilities in approving requests for end user devices in their area, and the payment of any charges incurred.

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that any costs associated with using ICT equipment are correctly assigned and that the cost code associated with the device is accurate.
- Ensuring that when a member of staff leaves, the appropriate leavers procedure as per the [Joiner Mover Leaver Policy](#) is adhered to so that end user devices are promptly returned to DICT and all relevant records/contracts are updated.
- Raising concerns around excessive use of corporate devices with DICT over and above any inclusive allowances. Staff found to be using their devices inappropriately may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

All employees and anyone who delivers services on the council's behalf e.g. contractors, partners, agents or other third parties with access to the council's

information assets have a responsibility to comply with this policy which can be found at [Information Management and Security Policies](#).

All users of ICT equipment should be aware that the council's systems are routinely monitored, and where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the council's [Disciplinary and Dismissals Procedure](#). The council reserves the right to restrict or prevent access to a device and/or account if this monitoring highlights a concern/threat.

5.0 User Responsibility

Use of all ICT equipment must be consistent with the council's [Code of Conduct for Employees](#). All users are responsible for using the council's ICT equipment appropriately and in accordance with the statements in this policy.

It is the user's responsibility to:

- Ensure they read, understand, and agree to this policy.
- Use the council's ICT equipment in accordance with the terms of this policy and in a way that will not harm the council's reputation.
- Recognise that the council's ICT equipment is provided for business use and must be protected from unreasonable and excessive personal use. This can include but is not limited to online shopping, banking, gaming or streaming; the running of a separate business or charity; and/or accessing websites that could trigger a security alert or pose a security risk.
- Report any misuse of the council's ICT equipment by following the council's [security breach reporting procedure](#).

Where BYOD equipment is used to access council systems, users must ensure that these are used in accordance with the council's BYOD policy.

6.0 Related policies

- [Code of Conduct for Employees](#)
- [Internet and Digital Communications Policy](#)
- [Information Protection and Handling Policy](#)
- [Information/IT Access Policy](#)
- [Information Security Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Software Management Policy](#)
- [Social Media Information and Standards](#)
- [Password Policy](#)
- [M365 Acceptable Usage Policy](#)
- [BYOD Policy](#)

The above policies are available at [Information Management and Security Policies](#)

7.0 Things You Must Do

When using the council's ICT equipment, you must:

a. Security controls and use of your account details

- ✓ Promptly respond to any requests from DICT to carry out remedial action to your corporate device if it fails to update.
- ✓ Keep your corporate device(s) in a secure location when not in use. Carry and store your device(s) in a suitable padded bag to reduce the chance of accidental damage.
- ✓ Immediately report any suspected or observed security breach through the council's [security breach reporting procedure](#).

b. Encryption

- ✓ Use council approved security software to encrypt personal, special category or other sensitive information in transit (email) and on any removable media.
- ✓ Ensure compliance with the council's Password Policy at all times.
- ✓ Contact ServiceNow if you encounter any issues with the device's encryption software, for this to be resolved.

8.0 Things you Must Not Do

When using the council's ICT equipment, you must NOT:

a. Security controls and use of your account details:

- ✗ Disable, defeat or circumvent any security measure that the council has put in place to protect its information assets, physical assets or reputation.
- ✗ Keep hard copies of encryption passwords and logon credentials with your device or share them with your colleagues. All passwords should be stored on the approved password manager as per the Password policy.
- ✗ Use ICT equipment for anything other than official council business and not for generating, transmitting or delivering any content that is contrary to council policies.
- ✗ Leave ICT equipment unattended at any time when outside council premises including, but not limited to, in a car, briefcase or handbag. If it is absolutely necessary to temporarily store your device(s) in a car, it should be locked out of sight in the boot or other compartment, **but it is much safer to take it with you.**
- ✗ Leave your laptop unattended and logged on during working hours. It should be locked when away from the workstation.

- ✘ Leave your laptop signed on out of work hours. If not in use, it should be logged out and shut down.
- ✘ Use ICT equipment not procured through DICT to store, use or transfer any council information.
- ✘ Use GCC mobile devices for any personal phone calls.

b. Access:

- ✘ Allow your ICT equipment to be used by work colleagues, family members, friends or visitors – all staff are personally accountable for anything accessed via their user ID.
- ✘ Use any damaged or faulty ICT equipment.
- ✘ Transfer data using portable media, unless authorised.

c. Copyright:

- ✘ Download or install any unauthorised accessories or software programs as per the council's Software Management Policy, including software that allows the device to be remotely controlled or that helps diagnose or resolve issues (e.g. network sniffers and password crackers).

d. Information and content:

- ✘ Send personal or special category information to a non-GCC email account or transfer it to removable media (including encrypted USB drives) for the purposes of remote working.
- ✘ Process any council information on a non-GCC device.
- ✘ Send personal, special category or other business-related data via any internet service(s) not supplied by the council without relevant written permission.

9.0 Procurement of ICT equipment

All ICT equipment, including portable media devices such as USB memory sticks and cameras must be requested via [ServiceNow](#). All ICT equipment will be recorded on the ICT Asset Register. Equipment must display a GCC asset tag and will remain the property of GCC at all times. Devices may be updated, replaced or removed as appropriate according to users' ongoing requirements or council policy.

10.0 Approved GCC Remote Working Solutions

The Council's remote access gateway solution enables access to the council network and the same information and systems you would normally access from council premises. In addition, council M365 applications can be accessed on-premise or remotely.

Remote access to systems and data is provided in a controlled way to minimise risk. All information is created, stored, and processed on council managed servers, not the local hard drive of the machine being used for access. Where permitted, limited data may be cached temporarily on the accessing device; this is acceptable only where the caching solution is approved, managed, and supported by DICT.

Before allowing access, the remote access software and M365 system will check to ensure the connecting device is authorised, and its software is up to date. If the connecting device fails these tests, access will be denied.

All remote access must be done in accordance with the remote working policy.

A council-owned, encrypted laptop may be used as a standalone device where access to the network is not available. Personal or special category (sensitive personal) information relating to individuals in receipt of support/services from the council must be added to their individual record (e.g., on Liquid Logic) in a timely manner, preferably on the same day but no later than 3 days after the event.

BYOD cannot be used to access the council's remote access gateway but can be used to access M365 applications in accordance with the BYOD policy.

11.0 Third Party External Access to the Council's network

External access to the council's network for partners, contractors, agents or other third parties must be approved and implemented by DICT. Where non-council equipment is used, this must be an organisationally owned PC/laptop with up-to-date anti-virus software and supported operating system. Access will only be permitted from within the European Economic Area or a country with an approved adequacy agreement in place.

Third parties must confirm that a regular patching process (no less than monthly) is in place within their organisation and is being followed. Failure to comply with this process, leading to the introduction of malicious code onto GCC systems, will result in the right to use the system being removed immediately and legal action may be taken.

Third parties must confirm that disk encryption is in place on the corporate end user device which is being used to access the GCC network. They must also have a clear

process in place for dealing with lost or stolen devices, which ensures that all information on the device can be wiped remotely.

12. Restricted Use of Portable Media

Portable media includes, but is not restricted to the following:

- USB Memory Sticks (also known as pen drives or flash drives)
- CDs
- DVDs
- Optical Disks
- External Hard Drives
- Digital Cameras
- Audio Tapes (including Dictaphones and Answering Machines)

It is the council's policy to minimise storing [personal or special category information](#) directly onto portable media. There are a number of council approved solutions to this, please contact DICT to discuss the options available to you.

Users should be aware that the council may, as and when required, and without the permission of the relevant user, audit/log the transfer of data files to and from all portable media devices and council-owned ICT equipment.

13.0 Transferring data using portable media

Anyone using portable media to transfer data must ensure that they are authorised to do so (bulk transfers of data require the appropriate [Information Asset Owner's](#) and DICT approval), and take care to physically protect the portable media and stored data from loss, theft or damage. They must consider the most appropriate way to transport the device and be able to demonstrate that they took reasonable care to avoid damage or loss.

Up-to-date virus and malware checking software must be in place when portable media devices containing [personal or special category information](#) are connected to another device i.e. both the device from which the data is taken and the device to which the data is being uploaded.

Data stored on portable media may not be included in the council's backup process; therefore, there is a greater risk that the information will become unavailable through loss or malfunction of equipment. Source data should remain on the council's network at all times, and any business-critical data created or originating on portable media should be transferred to the council's network as soon as possible.

Portable media devices should not routinely be used for archiving or storing records as an alternative to other storage equipment. Where this is necessary it should be approved by the Information Asset Owner following completion of a risk assessment.

14.0 Recording of Electronic Communications on Case Files

Where council mobile devices are used for electronic communication with service users, all council policies for record keeping still apply, regardless of whether communications are sent or received. These communications include, but are not limited to:

- Phone calls
- Emails
- Voicemails
- Text messages
- Messages sent via social media e.g., Facebook
- Messages sent via an instant messaging service e.g., WhatsApp

This means that any such communication should be recorded as professional contact within the relevant records. The record should include the message (as accurately as possible to reflect its content), date and time, and details of the sender and recipient (e.g., mobile number). Messages or other correspondence should then be deleted from the mobile device to maintain confidentiality.

Staff should remember that all contact with service users must be regarded as professional contact. Judgement must be exercised when responding to communications using mobile devices, regardless of the format in which it is received.

15.0 Returning/disposal of ICT equipment

Any ICT equipment no longer needed by a user should be returned to DICT within 30 days. If the user is leaving the council permanently then this must be in line with the Leavers procedures, and for contracts, temporary or agency staff a [Non-SAP Leavers Form](#) must be completed. Further information can be found within the [Procedure for Return of Council ICT Equipment](#).

15.1 Disposing or returning GCC supplied ICT equipment

- Staff leaving the council will not be permitted to transfer their council mobile number to a personal device. If the device has not been returned within one month of the employee leaving or becoming declassified as an essential user, the council will report to the police that the device has been stolen.
- If staff are not going to use their council supplied ICT equipment for more than 30 days (e.g., due to holiday, sick leave, maternity leave, etc.) or are

suspended from work for whatever reason, they must inform their line manager who must notify DICT using the appropriate form on ServiceNow [Notify ICT of Maternity or Long-term Sick Leave - Service Portal](#).

15.2 Disposing of Portable Media Devices

- The contents of any reusable media that is no longer required by the council must be erased.
- Portable media devices that have been used to hold council data must be disposed of securely via DICT. Users are responsible for secure delivery of the portable media to DICT for destruction.

16.0 Exceptions

16.1 Memory Sticks:

- Portable media should not be used without DICT approval. Forced encryption is in place for all USB memory sticks used with GCC laptops. Any deviation from this requires an authorised business case which clearly demonstrates that the risks associated with disabling this control are outweighed by the business benefits, and that appropriate actions have been taken to minimise these risks. Further information about port security can be requested via [Cyber Security Enquiry - Service Portal](#)

16.2 Calls to International or Premium Rate Numbers:

- Managers who have authorised calls to Premium Rate and/or international numbers must be aware of the costs that they are incurring.
- Managers who have authorised calls to Premium Rate numbers must ensure that they review this on at least a quarterly basis.

17.0 Policy Compliance

Security breaches that result from a deliberate or negligent disregard of any security policy requirements may, in the council's absolute discretion, result in disciplinary action being taken against that employee. In the event that breaches arise from the deliberate or negligent disregard of the council's security policy requirements by a user who is not a direct employee of the council, the council shall take such punitive action against that user and/or their employer as the council in its absolute discretion deems appropriate.

The council may, in its absolute discretion refer the matter of any breach of its security policy requirements to the police for investigation and (if appropriate) the instigation of criminal proceedings, if in the reasonable opinion of the council such a breach has or is likely to lead to the commissioning of a criminal offence.

18.0 Document Control

18.1 Document information

Owner:	Assistant Director: Digital & ICT
Author:	Peter Moore, Senior Information Security Adviser
Reviewer:	ICT & IMS Policy Group
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18.2 Version History

Version	Version date	Summary of Changes
1.0	October 2018	Incorporated Laptop, Mobile Device Portable Media and remote Working Policies into new ICT Equipment Policy, major update of generic content, updated hyperlinks and references to DPA1998 to GDPR and DPA 2018
1.1	March 2019	Review of section 8 – ‘Things you must not do’
1.2	September 2021	Minor changes for accessibility purposes including change of policy owner.
2.0	March 2022	Major review and change of policy owner. Approved by Information Board 22 March 2018
2.1	January 2023	Accessibility review and updates to formatting. Broken links fixed.
2.2	June 2024	Broken links fixed as a result of migrating StaffNet onto SP.
2.3	April 2025	ICT & IMS Policy Group review, added M365 Acceptable Use Policy within 6.0 Related Policies
2.4	March 2026	ICT & IMS Policy Group review, added reference to BYOD policy, wording review of section 11, added links to related policies and checked other links.
2.5	April 2026	Re worded section 15.1 and overall review

18.3 Review

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 3 years.

18.4 Contact Us

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