



Department  
of Health &  
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(By email only to [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED])

24 August 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

**Update on actions taken by the Department of Health and Social Care (The Department) following the publication of the revised Non-Corporate Communication Channels (NCCC's) guidance from Cabinet Office.**

1. Further to the Departments letter to you of 27 January 2023, and your subsequent reply on 15 February 2023, we write to provide you with a final update on the actions the Department has taken in light of the revised Cabinet Office guidance on the use of NCCCs, which was published on 30 March 2023.

2. As you are aware, the Department was awaiting the Cabinet Office refreshed guidance on the use of NCCCs to further address elements of the ICO's Reprimand and FOIA Practice Recommendation, including updates to our policies to ensure alignment with the refreshed guidance and taking the opportunity to clarify the controls that Departments officials are expected to follow to secure personal data.
3. The Department has now reviewed its policies and procedures in line with the revised Cabinet Office guidance and have made, where applicable, revisions to ensure it provides officials with the information they need to make informed decisions on the use of NCCCs and the processes to follow should the need to do so arise.
4. The Department conducted a customer engagement programme, meeting with Cabinet Office colleagues, Private Office, ICO colleagues and The Government Legal Department to discuss the Department's approach and proposed strategy for managing the use of NCCCs.
5. For the vast majority of Department officials, this is not likely to be of direct relevance, however, for those who may have cause to use an NCCC, the Department is clear that staff:
  - are expected to use a corporate, departmental communication channel and device to conduct official government business, unless there are strong reasons for not doing so;
  - must be prepared to explain why the use of an NCCC for official government business was necessary;
  - are required to exercise professional judgment appropriate to the circumstances, including in regard to the codes of conduct and legal obligations which are applicable to the individual and the post held within the Department; and,
  - should ensure they follow the Managing NCCC information guidance and process.
6. The Department has a systematic approach to sharing and communicating the revised guidance which includes:
  - The creation of a dedicated NCCC intranet page.
  - Signposting to the new Freedom of Information guidance relating to the use of NCCCs.
  - Headline internal news articles, highlighting the changes to existing policies and procedures.
  - Easy-to-follow step by step guides which set out the action to be taken should an NCCC be used including how and when to export and transfer significant government information to a corporate system.
  - An online form for staff to record their use of NCCCs in exceptional circumstances.
  - The Department uses television screens in its offices as a means of communication and an announcement on NCCCs is running on these screens across its estate.

- Intranet articles have been published, with a selection of scenarios to raise awareness.
  - A series of 'Lunch and Learn' awareness sessions have been organised. The first took place on 3 July 2023.
  - A bespoke note to Information Asset Owners explaining the changes and their role should an NCCC be used.
7. The majority of these communications have already been published on our headline internal news feed and a dedicated internal webpage has been created to host these communications going forward.
  8. This revised approach has been fully endorsed and supported by the Department's Executive Team.
  9. We hope this provides assurance that the Department has taken the necessary steps to consider the revised Cabinet Office guidance, to review Departmental policies accordingly and to make the required revisions to ensure that Officials are aware of the new Cabinet Office guidance and how this has been reflected in updated Departmental policies.

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