

GCF Update – July 2019

GCF - What is happening?

The procurement arrangements for your GCF Core Services changed in March 2019.

What does this mean?

GCF Core Services are needed to find and reach other services on PSN. GCF Core services are provided by Vodafone, and Crown Commercial Service has agreed to sign a single contract with Vodafone for these services. You will still be liable to pay for the use of these services, and you will be billed directly by Vodafone as before.

What are these services, so I can check if I use them?

The GCF core services are:-

- **Email Relay** - a service that passes email between different organisations on PSN.
- **Email Filtering** - a service that filters email messages and helps protect organisations from malware (including targeted attacks and phishing) and spam. NB/ This is being provided to GCF users who bundled this service with email relay in their previous VodafoneGCF contract.
- **Domain Name Server (DNS)** - an electronic address book that allows users to find Public Services Network services.
- **Peer-to-Peer** - allowing direct access between PSN and other government networks thus supporting citizen critical services.

If you access any of the following systems within your organisation, then you will be using the PSN and are very likely to need GCF Core services:

- Housing Benefit, Local Council Tax reduction, Local Welfare, Adult Social Care Financial Assessments, Discretionary Housing Payment (CIS, LACI, DTA, LAID, ATLAS, ETD)
- Home Office and Police services, such as the Police National Computer (PNC)
- Tell Us Once (TUO)
- Health and Social Care services and Patient records (NHS Digital)
- Financial links to the Bank of England and Her Majesty's Treasury
- Pan-Government Recruitment (Lumesse Stepstone)
- HM Passport Data Validation Service (DVA)
- UK Security Vetting of staff (DBS, NSV)
- Home Office and Police services to transmit information about citizens (PNC)
- Joint Asset Recovery Database (JARD)
- Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS)
- Magistrates Court Case Management System from MoJ (LIBRA)
- Individual Electoral Registration (IER)
- ePayfact, MyCSP, LoCTA
- Cabinet Office/ Sopra Steria's finance, procurement, HR and payroll services for DWP, HSE, DFE, ONR, CO, DEFRA, DECC, FSA, EA and MOJ (SSCL)

You should check with your IT department if you are unsure if you use or access any of these systems.

How has this service been delivered?

The existing GCF Core service was a bundled service from Vodafone, and ended on the 31st March 2019. GCF Core services excludes PSN connectivity, which can be procured from a range of suppliers.

What happened after the 31st of March 2019?

If you had a GCF Core service and want to keep the service, then you should have had no break in service.

If you have informed Vodafone or CCS that you do not want a GCF Core service, or an element of the service, then this service will be ceased.

If you have not informed anyone either-way, then you will still receive the GCF Core services that you had prior to the 31st of March 2019. These services will continue until September 2020

What happens post September 2020?

By September 2020, you will have migrated to a new service or ceased using GCF Core services altogether

So what is the plan and Government strategy for GCF and PSN?

Government policy is to disaggregate complex IT contracts such as the GCF into its component items, to deliver cost savings, contractual flexibility and better security.

The Government's disaggregation approach to the GCF Core service is:

- **Stage 1** - to disaggregate the Connectivity, the TESTA gateway (that allows exchange of data with EU countries), and the Directory service (a contacts database) from GCF Core Services - all organisations buy these items separately not via the GCF Core Services contracts. In addition, organisations can also remove some or all of the following services; Email Relay, Peer to Peer and DNS depending upon their readiness to exit the PSN. There is technical guidance [online](#) that helps you understand if you can do this. You will need to sign up to the PSN team contact centre to read this article, but it's free.
- **Stage 2** - For organisations that still require GCF Core services, to extend the existing services for 12 months with Vodafone (with the option to extend up to a further 12 months).
- **Stage 3** - To procure an alternative DNS and Email Relay and a migration service to allow customers to move from the existing GCF Core Services to the new service. It will be procured to go live in 2020. CCS is leading the contractual activity.
- **Stage 4** - To migrate organisations to the new DNS and Email Relay - this will take up to 12 months.
- **Stage 5** - To cease the DNS and Email Relay, when they are no longer needed for PSN.

To enable this migration to take place, a single government entity needs to own and contract for the GCF agreement with Vodafone. CCS are the only entity within government who can do this easily.

Proposed GCF Contract with Vodafone

The existing contracts are call offs via CCS frameworks G-Cloud and Network Services (RM1045). Users' specific service requirements have been identified through their responses to a GCF service continuity questionnaire, and collated by Vodafone - in order to ensure that citizen services are not disrupted.

What happens if I have not been contacted?

Now is the time to get involved -please contact CCS on the details below:-

- info@crownccommercial.gov.uk
- 0345 410 2222
- We also share regular news and updates on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

What happens next?

- Your GCF service is continuing - unless you have otherwise told CCS or Vodafone that you want it ceased.
- You will be billed at the same rate that you were billed last year.
- The service will last until September 2020
- The contract will be held centrally by CCS on behalf of Government. There is no contract that you need to sign. **BUT you will have to pay Vodafone for the service.**
- Billing is quarterly in arrears. The next billing run is in July - for April to June service.

OK, so that covers the next 12 months, then what happens?

CCS will, over the next 12 months, procure the replacement services (DNS and Email Relay). These will be contracted as CCS single source frameworks for organisations to call off against. They will be for the remaining lifetime of the PSN. The procurement will follow CCS standard procurement governance.

What happens when the new replacement service is in place?

You will be contacted throughout the process, and when the new service is in place, you will be offered a choice of what you would like to do. The choices are:

- Take the new GCF replacement services - in part or in whole.
 - There are 3 potential services - DNS, Email Relay (that will support your .gsi and gsx addresses and will be compulsory) and a migration support service
- Cease your GCF and PSN service, and make alternative arrangements

In both cases, all other GCF services will have to be re-procured separately. There are a number of routes to do this, and CCS has a number of options such as our G-Cloud and Technology Products procurement frameworks. If you would like help, a CCS account manager can help you.

What if I want to know more?

Please contact us at CCS to find out about our fortnightly user group.

Who is the sponsor for this in government?

This is sponsored by the Government Chief Commercial Officer, and the Government Digital Service (GDS).