



# **INFORMATION SYSTEMS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

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## Approval

Name	Position	Date	Signature
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This Policy replaces all previous versions and amendments to any previous document. It applies to all employees, agency temporary & contract workers of Cumbria County Council.

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## 1. Introduction

This document defines Cumbria County Council's policy for the acceptable use of its Information Systems ('IS') facilities. It relates to the use and monitoring of all of the Council's I.T. and communications systems. It includes telephones, mobile telephones, facsimile machines, computers (including laptops and personal organisers), portable data storage devices, email, the Internet, Intranet and Extranet and any information resources processed thereon.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, consultants and temporary or contract workers working for the Council, Partner Organisations delivering services on behalf of the Council and others who have been given access to internal Council systems in support of service delivery.

## 3. Acceptable Use

Acceptable use of the Council's 'IS' is defined as its use in support of the Council's statutory, political, business and service delivery activities, and those that do not come under the category of prohibited.

## 4. Prohibited Use

Examples of the prohibited use of the Council's 'IS' and references to the Council's Information and Computer Security handbook are shown in the table below:

No.	Example	Handbook Reference
1	Deliberately undertaking activities in contravention of applicable laws or regulations	Section 13
2	Introducing and/or transmitting into the Council's IS any software (including, but not limited to, computer viruses, Trojan horses and worms) designed to be destructive to the correct functioning of computer systems, software, networks and data storage, or attempting to circumvent any precautions taken or prescribed to prevent this	Section 6
3	Allowing the Council's IS to be damaged or	Section 5

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	contaminated by mishandling, food, drink, or smoking materials	
4	Installing any software on any of the Council's IS under any circumstances	Section 5
5	The intentional access, creation, storage or transmission of material which the Council may deem to be offensive, inappropriate, discriminatory, indecent or obscene	Section 6
6	The intentional access, creation, storage or transmission of material likely to bring the Council or its services into disrepute	Section 6
7	The intentional access, creation, storage or transmission of material capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images	Section 6
8	The intentional access, creation, storage or transmission of material (other than in the course of its operations where this aspect of the business has the explicit approval of the Council's official processes for dealing with extraordinary ethical issues) likely to cause offence, annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another or to send threatening, defamatory, discriminatory, abusive, obscene or otherwise offensive messages	Section 6
9	The creation, storage or transmission of material, including software, films, television programmes, music, electronic documents and books which infringe the copyright of another person except where explicit permission has been given and can be evidenced	Section 6
10	The creation or transmission of material that breaches confidentiality undertakings in a manner which interferes with those activities covered within the definition of Acceptable Use	Section 6
11	The intentional access, creation, storage or transmission of material for personal commercial gain	Section 6
12	Attempting to gain deliberate access to facilities or services which they are unauthorised to access	Section 9
13	Deliberately undertaking activities that would otherwise act against the aims and purposes of the Council as specified in its governing documents or in rules, regulations and procedures	Section 13
14	Deliberately undertaking activities that corrupt or destroy other users' data; disrupt the work of other users, or deny network resources to them; violate the privacy of other users; waste employee effort or networked resources	Section 7
15	Excessive use of the Internet on non work related matters	Section 9
16	Causing any of the Council's IS to be overloaded, impaired, disrupted, curtailed or denied	Section 7
17	Making commitments via email or the Internet on behalf	Section 6

	of the Council without full authority	
18	Falsifying e mails to make them appear to have originated from someone else	Section 6
19	Deliberately undertaking any activities detrimental to the reputation or business interests of the Council	Section 6
20	Deliberately contributing to News Groups, Chat Rooms or web sites that advocate illegal or undesirable activity or is in contravention of Cumbria County Council standards	Section 6
21	Copying any material to any portable device with the intention of unauthorized disclosure	Section 7
22	The intentional provision of access to unauthorized persons	Section 7

## 5. Protocol on Other Uses

Where 'IS' are to be used for purposes other than acceptable use as defined by this policy, that use must be authorised in advance by the Corporate IT Security Officer via the user's Line Manager.

## 6. Applicable Regulatory Framework

Users are bound by the Law of England and Wales when using the Council's 'IS'. In addition, when accessing computers abroad, the laws of that country apply. It is the user's responsibility to ensure his or her activities comply with these laws. The Council can assist in the provision of guidance to relevant domestic legislation.

The use of the Council's 'IS' is subject to all relevant Council regulations.

When making use of the Internet, the acceptable use policies of the Internet Service Providers apply.

## 7. Prevention of Misuse

The Council retains a right of access to all information held on its 'IS' for the purposes of investigating misuse including information held in folders that individuals have marked 'personal' or 'private'.

Monitoring may take place periodically within the guidelines set down by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA'). The Council retains the right under RIPA to access all information held on its IS to monitor or intercept

any system logs, web pages, e-mail messages, network account or any other data on any computer system owned or operated by the Council. This will be for the purpose of preventing, detecting or investigating crime or misuse, ascertaining compliance with regulatory standards and Council policies, or to ensure effective system operation.

In order to guard against abuse of the 'IS' facilities Internet use is constantly monitored, email is scanned for profanity and other inappropriate content and the use of corporate telephony may be subject to monitoring at any time, particularly when there is reason to believe that misuse is occurring. Telephone conversations will not be subject to interception. The Council's policy on the prevention of misuse is:

- to make all employees, consultants, temporary and contract workers, agency and partner organisations aware of this Acceptable Use Policy
- to educate employees, consultants, temporary and contract workers, agency and partner organisations in matters relating to acceptable use
- to take swift and effective action within existing disciplinary and/or legislative frameworks against anyone found to be misusing the Council's 'IS'.

## **8. Disciplinary Procedures**

Where misuse of the Council's 'IS' has been identified, the matter will be the subject of investigation in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure and/or legislative framework. Investigations will be carried out by the appropriate designated officer.

## **9. User Traceability**

In all cases where there is the potential for the Council's 'IS' to have been misused, arrangements will be in place to record the identity of the individual using the specific facility at any given time and any relevant materials. These records will be retained for the duration of the investigation and any procedures against an individual. They will also be made available to the appropriate authorities for the purposes of investigating complaints of misuse and retained for the appropriate duration as determined by the outcome. Where it is shown that there is no case to answer, the records shall be destroyed immediately.

## **10. Libel**

Libel is a civil wrong, which in proven cases may incur substantial compensation. It is very complicated and therefore one of the easiest laws to contravene through ignorance. Facts concerning individuals or organisations must be accurate and verifiable, and views or opinions must not portray their subjects in any way that could damage their reputation. Check with the Head of Legal Practice before publicly displaying any contentious material. Web pages, email messages and messages posted on discussion forums are regarded as published material.