



# Congleton Town Council

Historic Market Town

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# ICT AND CYBER SECURITY POLICY

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**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ICT AND CYBER SECURITY POLICY**

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## Introduction

- Congleton Town Council has a duty to ensure the proper security and privacy of its computer systems and data. All users have some responsibility for protecting these assets.
- The Chief Officer is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy but may delegate that responsibility to another officer.
- Line managers have a responsibility to ensure that staff they supervise comply with this policy.
- The Council has a duty laid down in the Data Protection Act 2018, to ensure the proper security and privacy of its computer systems and data. All users have, to varying degrees, some responsibility for protecting these assets. Users also have a personal responsibility for ensuring that they and, where appropriate, the staff they supervise or have control over, comply fully with this policy – See also the Council’s Information and Data Protection Policy.

### 1. Who does the policy apply to/ General Principles

- All staff, Councillors and volunteers using CTC equipment.

- All employees, members and other users should be aware of the increasingly sophisticated scams and risks posed to cybersecurity and when in any doubt should seek guidance from the Chief Officer. As a general rule, users will never be asked to share passwords by email and users should be aware of odd language used in emails which may indicate a fraudulent email.
- All employees, members and other users of council IT equipment must be familiar with and abide by the regulations set out in the council's 'Data Protection & Retention Policy'.
- All council devices will have up-to-date antivirus software installed and this must not be switched off for any reason without the authorisation of the Chief Officer.
- All users are reminded that deliberate unauthorised use, alteration, or interference with computer systems, software or data is a breach of this policy and in some circumstances may be a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- All software installed on council devices must be fully licensed and no software should be installed without authorisation from the Chief Officer.

## 2. What communications, IT equipment and other areas does the policy cover

- Computers and Laptops
- Remote Access Connections
- Mobile Phones and Tablets
- Emails and Email Servers
- Portable Devices
- Internet Access
- Website and Social Media
- Passwords
- Viruses
- Software
- Cyber Security
- Training

## 3. Who is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy?

- CO Reviewing
- Line Management for Monitoring of staff.

## 4. Related policies

- Data Protection Policy
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- Equality and Inclusion Policy

## 5. Passwords and Password Protection

All council computers and systems must be password-protected to prevent unauthorised access.

- Where possible, two-factor authentication should be utilised.
- Users should ensure that unattended devices are password-protected.
- Where users have unique access permissions and/or accounts for systems, these must not be shared with other users.
- Different passwords should be used for different devices and accounts.
- Passwords should be routinely changed.
- Passwords should not be written down or left in unsecure locations.
- Passwords must not be inserted into email messages or any other form of communication, or saved onto a shared computer.
- Additional Information:
  - The National Cyber Security Centre Website provides information on passwords.

## 6. Training

Employees and Councillors should be provided with regular cybersecurity training as is appropriate for their role and level of systems access.

## 7. Misuse of I.T.

Misuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Creation or transmission of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or other material or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material.
- Creation of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience, or needless anxiety.
- Creation or transmission of defamatory material
- Transmission of material which in any way infringes the copyright of another person.
- Transmission of unsolicited commercial advertising material to networks belonging to other organisations
- Deliberate actions or activities with any of the following characteristics:
  - i. Wasting staff effort or networked resources
  - ii. Corrupting or destroying another users' data.
  - iii. Violating the privacy of other users.
  - iv. Disrupting the work of other users.
- Other misuse of the networked resources by the deliberate introduction of viruses/malware
- Playing games during working hours
- Altering the set-up or operating parameters of any computer equipment without authority.
- Unauthorised access, use, destruction, modification and/or distribution of council information, systems or data is prohibited.
- Any personal IT equipment must not be connected to any Council IT equipment.

## 8. Security and Virus Controls

- Consideration must be given to the secure location of equipment and documentation to help safeguard the Council's ICT assets. Portable equipment must be locked away when not in use and must not be removed from the premises without permission.
- Only persons authorised by the Chief Officer may use Council computer systems. The authority given to use a system must be sufficient but not excessive and users must be notified that the authority given to them must not be exceeded.
- Operating procedures are required to control use of ICT equipment.
- Security incidents relating to any aspect of this policy must be reported to the Chief Officer immediately.
- Avoid using public wi-fi connections that are not secure.

### **Virus Controls**

- Viruses are undesirable pieces of computer code that can corrupt systems, equipment, and data. They are a serious, increasing threat to the computer systems of the Council.
- If a virus is suspected, the equipment should be switched off and isolated and the Council's support contractor should be contacted.
- Viruses are easily transmitted via email and internet downloads. In particular, users must:
  - not transmit by email any file attachment which they know to be infected with a virus.
  - not download data or programs of any nature from unknown sources
  - not forward virus warning
  - contact the Councils IT providers of any scam emails that arrive.
- All computer and servers will have loaded and operate the Council's standard virus detection software for scanning.
- No software should be located onto the Council's equipment without the permission of the Chief Officer.

## 9. Computer use

- Laptops and Computers must be shut down at the end of every day and kept in a secure, locked cabinet.
- Laptops and Computers must be logged out when a member of staff is away from their desk.
- For computers in public areas, these must be secure and out of reach of the public and logged out when away from the desk.

## 10. Use of E-mail

Only emails set up with congleton-tc.gov.uk may be used for Council business. This is in line with Proper Practices in accordance with the Data and Digital Compliance section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

E-mails sent or received form part of official records of the Council, they are not private property. E-mails may be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, as part of legal proceedings (e.g. tribunals) and as part of disciplinary proceedings.

Employees are responsible for all actions relating to their e-mail accounts/username and must ensure that no other person has access to their account without the permission or knowledge of the Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer.

When using the Council's e-mail, employees **must**:-

- Correctly maintain their own e-mail folders and delete all unwanted mail on a regular basis.
- Not use e-mail for the creation, retention, or distribution of disruptive or offensive messages, images, materials, or software that includes offensive or abusive comments about ethnicity, nationality, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, appearance, religious beliefs and practices, political beliefs, or social background. Employees who receive e-mails with this content must report the matter to their line manager.
- Not send e-mail messages that might be considered by the recipients as bullying, harassing, abusive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory and libellous or containing illegal or offensive material or foul language
- Not upload, download, use, retain, distribute, or disseminate any images text materials or software which might reasonably be considered indecent, obscene, pornographic, or illegal.
- Not engage in any activity that is outside the scope of normal work related duties.
- Not send chain-letters or joke e-mails
- Personal use of the Council's e-mail is NOT permitted without the prior permission of your line manager and should be restricted to the employees break periods if permitted.

## 11. Use of the Internet

Use of the internet by employees is encouraged where such use is consistent with their work and with the goals and objectives of the Council in mind reasonable personal use is permissible.

Employees **must not**:-

- Participate in any online activity that would bring the Council into disrepute.
- Visit, view, or download any material from an internet site which contains illegal or inappropriate material. This includes, but is not limited to, pornography (including child pornography) obscene matter, race hate material, gambling, and illegal drugs.
- Knowingly introduce any form of computer virus into the Council's computer network
- Download commercial software or any copyright material belonging to third parties unless agreed.
- Use the internet for personal financial gain.
- Use gambling or online auction sites or social networking sites, unless it is for the purpose of carrying out their duties for marketing.
- Abuse of these procedures could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

## 12. Cyber Security

Implementing effective ICT security measures is a key part of safety controls and risk management of running the Council. Following the ICT Policy procedures will help to keep awareness of cyber security and protection.

- Training and awareness courses should be made available to all Staff and Councillors.
- Current and up-to-date information should be shared with all Staff and Councillors.
- Cyber Security must be included as part of the Councils Risk Management Policy.
- Training and awareness of Scams, Scam emails and threats to be made available to all officers and councillors.

### Additional Information

National Cyber Security Centre: Toolkit for Public Bodies:

- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/public-sector>
- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/board-toolkit/toolkits-toolbox>