CJSM - Secure email services

Ordinary email is insecure so to increase security, Government Lawyers will communicate with Panel Counsel via Criminal Justice System eMail (CJSM).

What is CJSM?

CJSM is a relatively secure email system that gives, Government Departments, Counsel and in theory some practitioners the confidence to send and exchange information classified at OFFICIAL (including information carrying the OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE marking¹). Information classified under the old system of government protective markings can be sent via CJSM if it is classified up to and including 'RESTRICTED'.

The overall CJSM programme is managed by Criminal Justice IT (CJIT), part of the Office of the Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR). CJSM does not provide "secure email" in the sense in which the phrase is normally used. The messages themselves are neither signed nor encrypted. It isn't altogether concerned with end-to-end security in any case; rather, with providing a level of security for messages conveyed between organisations (via the Internet) equivalent to that provided within the existing GSC/PSN. Files or documents downloaded from email system to PC's will not be protected. Some form of encryption must be applied to PC's in order to manage the risk of unauthorised access.

Impact on Counsel

This secure email system should be used by Counsel who are likely to exchange information with the GLS. If a Government lawyer writes to Counsel using CJSM then they should respond using CJSM. This secure email system will be similar to "Hotmail" in appearance and operability. Counsel will all have an additional email address e.g. abrown@5essexcourt.co.uk.cjsm.net which will be accessible via a web browser (Internet Explorer). There is no charge for CJSM.

Where Chambers have their own server the CJSM address will simply have cjsm.net added to the usual address. It is a bit more complicated where they do not. The address will be different e.g. john.smith@11kbwldn.cjsm.net.

Counsel in Chambers without a server will also have to go online to check all emails and correspondence. In such cases Counsel may wish to ask instructing solicitors to warn that an email is coming on the CJSM so that he/she knows to check.

When e-mailing Government lawyers, Counsel should add cjsm.net to the office address e.g. jane.smith@tsol.gsi.gov.uk.cjsm.net. There is of course no point in Government lawyers e-mailing Counsel at Chambers using CJSM for Chambers just to forward the email to Counsel's home address. The protection of CJSM is lost. It is possible for Counsel to have a separate CJSM account for use outside Chambers but this is only likely to be possible if there is a regular need for Counsel to work on government documents outside Chambers. If you think that this may apply in your case please contact your instructing solicitor, who in turn may wish to contact Diane Macfarlane (020 7210 3440).

Counsel are asked to note that they must not access CJSM using the website from overseas. This prohibition is contained in the CJSM terms and condition's. The Legal Aid Agency, recently issued a reminder message to criminal practitioners which discusses this in more detail and may be of interest. It can be viewed on the GOV.UK portal at the following address:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/crime-news-do-not-use-criminal-justice-secure-email-when-overseas.

Simon Harker TSol February 2015

¹ More information on the Government Security Classification Policy is contained in the document " Handling of Protectively Marked Material A Guide on Security Markings for Counsel" This is available on the GOV.UK website at the following address: www.gov.uk/attorney-generals-panel-counsel-practical-information#security-of-papers-email-and-data