

# Information Security and Assurance

## What is it?

- Information Security and Assurance (ISA) are the processes and mechanisms needed to build a secure and reliable ICT infrastructure
- Allowing citizens and public servants to exchange data safely
- Shaping the culture that surrounds information handling means addressing information assurance from the outset and throughout the programme or project cycle
- Improved interconnectivity will enable authorised users to access information more readily across departments. However this depends on good information assurance practices across government, and by all those that handle information on behalf of government
- This will lead to improvements in public levels of confidence in Government handling citizen information.

## Why?

- The government is fully committed to using ICT to deliver innovative public services. Public services will interconnect across multiple organisations, to ensure citizens and businesses can seamlessly access the information they need
- Effective sharing and use of information is central to these services. From protecting the public from crime, improving healthcare, or tackling child poverty and terrorism, sharing and transferring data securely is paramount
- Rapid changes in technology means that information security and assurance must keep pace with the demands of a mobile and ever-changing workplace, as well as increasing demands from customers.
- Converged voice and data services will support flexible working, minimising businesses dependence on specific locations. This will allow citizens to exploit the full benefits of information, seamlessly and confidently from multiple sites.
- The UK's economic and social well-being is enhanced as government, businesses and citizens begin to access services online which in turn create cost savings
- The availability of security compliant products and services continue to strengthen national security, by protecting information and ICT at risk of compromise from fraud and other online threats
- Introducing good IA practice from the outset combats the cost of putting things right after an information security occurs – the BIS Information Security Breaches Survey

2008 stated that the average cost to a large organisation of a serious incident is from £1m - £2m



## How?

- Public sector organisations and key partners across the private sector are working together to deliver the right information assurance outcomes. We are working closely with Intellect, the ICT industry members group to address data handling among government ICT suppliers and delivery partners
- Through ongoing training and education we will achieve a recognised and widespread professionalism in information assurance. This will encompass those in risk ownership roles in the public sector, industry partners and government information assurance profession specialists
- Pace and agility must become the dominant characteristics of every aspect of information assurance, from design to delivery including meeting the demands of new data security standards. This includes evaluation of products and services, response to incidents and management of risk impact.
- The IA aspects of our approach to delivering Government ICT will also help the UK achieve its goals and objectives in securing Cyberspace as outlined in the Cyber Security Strategy. Maintaining confidence in secure ICT systems is at the heart of this work, ISA continue to work closely with the Office of Cyber Security in this regard.

## How do we measure performance?

Departments report on data handling in their published annual resource accounts. The Cabinet Office produces an annual report for Parliament on information risk. The report highlights areas of progress and improvements. Such as:

- Enhanced data security training for civil servants
- Spot checks on data handling procedures are carried out by the Information Commissioner's Office within government departments
- Privacy Impact Assessments are conducted on new government ICT-enabled projects and programmes
- Encrypted removable media and storage devices have been made available across government, to prevent unauthorised data access.

## **Contact**

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