



SSRO

Single Source
Regulations Office

Guidance on DefCARS functionality

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance document is issued by the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO) and explains the functionality of the Defence Contract Analysis and Reporting System (DefCARS).

DefCARS design and development

- 1.2 DefCARS is the central system managed by the SSRO for the capture, storage and analysis of all electronic data reported by contractors and suppliers in accordance with the Act and the Regulations. It is agreed with the MOD that submission of reports via the DefCARS system is how contractors and suppliers are to meet the requirement to electronically submit their reports to the SSRO and the MOD. The current system is a web-based tool, which was launched on 15 March 2017 and replaced an earlier system that had been in operation from the commencement of the Regulations.
- 1.3 DefCARS is intended to provide a user-friendly web interface and facilitate both compliance with reporting obligations and discharge of the SSRO's functions. It differs from the original system, which relied upon submission of Excel-based templates via a portal. This guidance identifies relevant features of DefCARS and gives assistance with submitting reports through the system.
- 1.4 All data submitted via the original system has been securely migrated to DefCARS. The onus is on contractors and suppliers to check that previous contract information is correctly recorded in DefCARS.
- 1.5 The security of data within DefCARS is one of the SSRO's key priorities. Guidance relating to information security and system administration is available to users via 'onboarding' email correspondence with the SSRO helpdesk and via the guidance links in the system. It can be found in the appendices to the version of this document within DefCARS but will not be available on the SSRO's website.
- 1.6 DefCARS is designed to allow contractors to input data in an efficient way. For instance, certain data required across multiple reports will only need to be entered once, certain data is auto-populated from one report to another¹ and validation checks (warnings and errors) will provide the submitter with assistance when reviewing data entered.
- 1.7 The system has been designed to facilitate any future changes to the regulatory framework, and will allow the introduction of better analysis and reports to inform contract negotiations involving the MOD and contractors. The SSRO will also regularly review the functionality of the system, and where necessary, implement upgrades and improvements through system updates.

Personal data

- 1.8 The General Data Protection Regulation came into force on 25 May 2018. The SSRO has reviewed how it manages personal data across the organisation, and in particular in relation to personal data included in the information processed by DefCARS. The SSRO has published a Personal Information Charter which sets out the principles we will apply to personal data.
- 1.9 One of these principles is to limit the information which includes personal data, and is held within DefCARS, to only that which is necessary. In order to help us, the SSRO would encourage anyone submitting statutory reports through DefCARS to limit the personal data content in those reports to that which is specifically required by the Single Source Contract Regulations. Supporting information should not normally include personal data. The SSRO will provide further guidance on the management of personal data in future revisions to its reporting and DefCARS user guidance.

Review of the guidance

- 1.10 The SSRO engages on its reporting guidance and DefCARS through its Reporting and IT sub-group. The sub-group meets quarterly and has representation from industry, ADS Group and the MOD.
- 1.11 The SSRO will prioritise the future development of its reporting guidance and DefCARS taking into account the feedback received from the Reporting and IT sub-group. The SSRO will aim to issue updates at appropriate intervals, clearly explaining what has changed from version to version. Contractors will need to familiarise themselves with these changes and have regard to the guidance in place at the time of reporting.

2. General system functionality

- 2.1 This section sets out guidance in relation to the general system functionality in DefCARS, covering user navigation, data formats, auto-population and validation. References are made to report types throughout the section, which are further explained in the separate reporting guidance on contract and supplier reports.

Contractor home page

Exhibit 1 – Contractor home page

The screenshot displays the DefCARS Contractor home page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Administration', and 'Logout' links. Below this is a 'Viewing Contracts' section on the left, which includes instructions and links for finding reports and viewing guidance. The main area features a calendar for the year 2017, with months from January to December. The calendar shows submission dates for various contracts. Below the calendar, there is a list of six contracts, each with a 'Contractor name' field and a 'Contract' field. The 'Contract 2' and 'Contract 6' rows show 'Reports Due: 5' and 'Calendar Reports: 3' respectively, indicating upcoming report submission dates.

- 2.2 When a defence contractor user logs into DefCARS a calendar (see Exhibit 1) will be visible on the home page. This calendar shows the submission dates listed in the latest submitted reporting plan for each contract that the user has access to. Reporting plan dates are required in the Contract Reporting Plan, which is submitted via a Contract Initiation Report (CIR) on DefCARS (see Section 4 of the reporting guidance on contract reports). Submission dates for supplier reports are not displayed as supplier reporting is dependent upon whether on-going contract conditions are met within a financial year (see Section 2 of the reporting guidance on supplier reports).
- 2.3 Users can navigate between years using the arrows at the top of the calendar. By clicking on a date the Contractor, Contract and Report Due Date (the submission date) are displayed. Clicking off a date will cause the list to disappear. Email notifications will alert contractors to forthcoming report submission dates and other key events, as set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – System generated email notifications

Message category	Event
Calendar	Submission date reminder
	Report overdue reminder
Compliance Issues (Administration User, Submitter and Editor permissions only)	Approve issues
	SSRO issues released
	MOD issues released
	Unresponded to issues (30 days)
	No current issues
Status (Administration User, Submitter and Editor permissions only)	SSRO status changed (Under review, Issues identified or No current issues)
	MOD status changed (Under review, Issues identified or MOD verification complete)
New potential or actual QDC or QSC added (Administration User only)	A new or potential QDC or QSC has been added to DefCARS (this is only where the contracting company already exists on DefCARS)
Potential QDC conversion	Potential QDC converted to an actual QDC

- 2.4 For submissions migrated from the original system, DefCARS presents dates in the calendar based on the reporting plan in the latest submitted Contract Notification Report (CNR) or Contract Reporting Plan (CRP). If contractors submitted an updated reporting plan in a Contract Pricing Statement (CPS), Quarterly Contract Report (QCR) or an Interim Contract Report (ICR) in the original system, these updated dates will not appear in the home page calendar and email notifications will not be received. Contractors can submit a corrected CNR or CRP with updated dates to populate the reporting calendar, if desired.
- 2.5 Below the calendar, users will also see a list of all the contracts that they have access to, submitted reports, and reports available for completion. The system will highlight the status (e.g. if a report is due or overdue) and any identified issues with each submitted report in this list. The contract list is sorted by default based on recent DefCARS activity in relation to that contract (e.g. drafting or submitting a report in DefCARS) but clicking any column header (Defence Contractor, MOD Contract Number, Contract Title and Date of Most Recent Submission) will re-sort the list in ascending order according to that column header. A second click of the column header will re-sort in descending order.
- 2.6 Each report submitted in the original system can be accessed in DefCARS via its accompanying 'View' icon. Users who have submitted a report in the original system will be able to access their original Excel report submission from the list of reports (contract and suppliers) on the home page. The original report will appear in the list of reports clearly labelled as a submission and will be accessible by clicking the blue link which includes the original file name and the report will then be downloaded. In the DefCARS format some information may appear differently because the structure of DefCARS reports has changed.

- 2.7 Any supporting information accompanying contract reports submitted in the original system will be accessible by clicking on the View icon for the report which has been migrated. The supporting information can be found in the Report Submission Admin page and the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up on the top right of each page.
- 2.8 Users can start new reports from the home page, where the user's permissions allow this. Once a report is submitted, it becomes read only. Users can submit a correction to a submitted report using the 'start correction' option on the home page. All data from the submitted report will be copied to a new version which can be edited or updated. A 'new submission' icon will appear for contracts logged on the system but where no information has yet been added.

System help and guidance

- 2.9 Users can access system help and this reporting guidance via a help bar on the left-hand side of the contractor home page, and the 'Get help with this page' links at the top of each page within reports. The links on each page take the user to the equivalent page within the guidance document.

Report Navigation

- 2.10 Each report can be navigated using the menu visible on the left-hand side of the screen or via the Next Page buttons at the bottom of each report page. Clicking on a Comment, Issue or Supporting File listed on the Report Home page will navigate a user directly to the relevant report page.

Guidance on how to have open two report pages at once

- 2.11 Users can open multiple DefCARS reports in a web browser by navigating to the reports page for each report, right clicking on the 'View' button and selecting 'Open link in new tab'. This will open the report in a new tab and allow the contractor to open the other report or multiple reports in other tabs.

Breadcrumb Trail

- 2.12 Each screen indicates the contract, report and page being viewed, in a sequence that we refer to as a 'breadcrumb trail'. For example, [Contract name] / draft S2 / ICR / Overview / DPS Inputs. Clicking on an element of the breadcrumb trail will redirect a user back to that DefCARS screen.

Data formats

- 2.13 DefCARS facilitates the collection of data in a standardised format for analysis purposes. Therefore, some data is required in certain specified formats which are set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Data formats

Data type	Guidance
Dates	All dates must be in the format dd/mm/yyyy. Dates can either be entered by selecting the relevant date from a calendar view or can be typed in.
Percentages	Percentages are to be entered excluding the percentage sign and as, for example, “10.5”. If the user enters “0.105” instead, the system will recognise this as 0.105%, and if the user enters “ten and a half per cent”, the system will not convert words to the relevant figure.
Monetary values	Generally, data is required in units of £ million (e.g. contract prices) or £ (e.g. cost recovery rates). Users should refer to the system and this guidance for the units required.
Decimal places	This guidance will specify the number of decimal places required and in most cases three decimal places are needed. An indication of what is required is shown throughout this user guidance. DefCARS can accept up to six decimal places. If a value which has more than six decimal places is pasted into a data field, the system will truncate the value at six decimal places, and will not round it.
Numerical values	The system can accept values with up to ten integers. The system does not currently allow comma separators to be used when entering data. DefCARS will allow values which include comma separators to be pasted into data fields, however the commas will be removed from the formatting once pasted.
Text	There are differing character limits on each field. The system will indicate if the character limit for a field is exceeded.

Auto-population

- 2.14 Some information within DefCARS will be auto-populated to reduce the data entry required to complete reports. Where the same fields appear within a report, the system will populate these throughout that report. The system will also auto-populate consistent fields from one report to another. For example:
- The first QCR will be auto-populated from the latest submitted CIR. Any subsequent QCRs will then be auto-populated from the latest submitted QCR.
 - The first ICR (Lower or Higher Value) will be auto-populated from the latest submitted CIR. Any subsequent ICRs will then be auto-populated from the latest submitted ICR.
 - The first Contract Completion Report (CCR) will auto-populate from the latest ICR (of either type) if available and not auto-populate from a QCR. If no ICR is available, then it will populate from the latest CIR.
 - If a draft Qualifying Business Unit Cost Analysis Report (QBUCAR) report is created within 15 months of the ‘Last day of the most recently completed Business Unit Relevant Accounting Period’ in a previously submitted report, the system will pre-populate all ‘prior year estimates’ in the draft report, using the ‘current year estimates’ from the previous QBUCAR.

- 2.15 Contractors and suppliers should check auto-populated data and update where appropriate so that the data complies with the reporting obligations set out in the Regulations for the specific report that they are submitting.
- 2.16 DefCARS will not auto-populate data from any CPSs, CNRs and CRPs submitted in the original system.

Copy and Paste functionality

- 2.17 Some reports have additional functionality for contractors to copy and paste data more than one field at a time into DefCARS to ease data entry. This functionality can be found in the following reports, and contractors should refer to the guidance within the pop-up prompt displayed when the copy and paste button is selected, which sets out the process and parameters for successfully importing data:
- DPS Input Values – CIR, ICR and CCR
 - Actual Forecast DPS Input Values – ICR and CCR
 - Analysis of Cost by Supplier Breakdown – QCR
 - Actual Forecast Analysis of Cost – QCR
 - Cost Recovery Rates – CIR, ICR and CCR
 - Actual Forecast Cost Recovery Rates – ICR and CCR
 - Milestones – CIR, QCR, ICR and CCR
 - Sub-contracts – CIR, ICR and CCR
 - Payments – CIR, ICR and CCR
 - Variance, Events and Circumstances - QCR, ICR and CCR
 - Key Deliverables - CIR, QCR, ICR and CCR
 - Last Year Prior Year Estimates – QBUCAR
 - Last Year Actuals – QBUCAR
 - This Year Estimates – QBUCAR

Data validation

- 2.18 The system's validation function does not provide contractors and suppliers with confirmation that their report is compliant with the Act and the Regulations. The validation checks in DefCARS however aim to assist users for example by ensuring data in reports are in the correct format, that totals sum correctly and that fields which are repeated within reports match. The validation checks in DefCARS support the compliance methodology applied by the SSRO to report submissions.
- 2.19 Users can validate the data input on each report in two ways. Firstly, on each report page, users can save the page and then click on the 'Validate' button. Alternatively, users can validate the whole report by clicking on the 'Review Validation Warnings' button in the left-hand navigation bar. If a page passes the automated validation checks, a green tick will appear next to the page name in the navigation bar.

- 2.20 The system will highlight any validation 'errors' and 'warnings' to the user. Validation errors are displayed in red and require action before the report can be submitted in DefCARS. Validation warnings are displayed in yellow and highlight issues with the data inputted. These are shown in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2 - Validation errors and warnings







Saving reports


- 2.21 Most pages have a save button at the bottom of them. Where they do not, entered content is saved as it is completed.
- 2.22 It is not possible for multiple users to update the same report at the same time, although progress in a report can be saved and a different user can then log in and continue with the same report. This is to prevent users from overwriting information by other users who may be completing the report at the same time.

Uploading Comments, Issues and Supporting Information in reports

- 2.23 Each page in DefCARS has a pop-up window accessible from the top right of the page which allows users to add comments and supporting information to a report and respond to issues. A screen shot of this pop-up is shown in Exhibit 3. When the pop-up is clicked the functionality becomes visible, which contractors and suppliers may use to provide additional information to meet the reporting obligations set out in the Regulations and to explain or supplement the data entered into the fields on the page.

Exhibit 3 - Comments, issues and supporting information pop-up

Comments, Issues & Supporting Information:    



Issue Log ▼


Issue ID	Relevant Field	Description	Issue Status	Response
423	Relevant field	Issue description	Active	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px;">H 0</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px;">2</div> </div>

Comments - add a supporting comment to your data ▼

[Show/hide new comment](#)

By	Relevant Field	Comment	Added On	Approved Date
SSRO	Relevant field	New comment	12/07/2018	12/07/2018

Supporting files - add a supporting file to your data ▼

 Upload a new file

Note: This section is to provide supporting information to your report. To add a file in relation to an issue please click on an individual issue in the Issue Log.

File	Relevant Field	Uploaded On	Approved Date	
Test data.xlsx	Relevant field	12/07/2018 15:22		<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #28a745; border-radius: 50%;"></div> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #dc3545; border-radius: 50%;"></div> </div>

Adding Comments and Supporting Files

- 2.24 To add a new comment, the system user can click on the pop-up, select any data entry field from the drop down menu (all fields on the page are listed) and click the 'Show/hide new comment' link. Comments can also be added without making a link to a data entry field. After typing a new comment in the box that is presented, the user must make sure they select 'Add new comment'.
- 2.25 Comments and supporting files that are added to a contract report, via the Comments and Supporting Information functions, will not transfer to any new report created for that contract. For example, comments and files in QCR1 will not transfer to QCR2 as the latter is a new report. If comments and files remain relevant, they will need to be uploaded again to the subsequent report. If the contractor is correcting a report, all data including comments and supporting files is transferred.
- 2.26 To provide supporting files, the user can select a data entry field from the drop-down menu as above and click on the 'Upload a new file' icon. In a new window, the user will be asked to confirm that the data to be uploaded is classed as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE-COMMERCIAL or lower. Users should browse for the document and select 'Upload'.

2.27 The file types below can be uploaded onto the system. There is a maximum file size of 100MB which should not cause problems for contractors. The SSRO would prefer Excel documents are submitted in this form rather than as converted pdf documents as this makes analysis more difficult.

- .doc
- .docx
- .txt
- .pdf
- .ppt
- .pptx
- .csv
- .xls
- .xlsx
- .xlt
- .xltx
- .xlm
- .xlsm
- .ods
- .mdb
- .accdb
- .jpg
- .png
- .gif
- .bmp
- .zip or .7z (containing one of the above types)²





2.28 General comments and supporting files can be added against a report. The same permission rules also apply. Editors can draft general comments and add supporting files but to submit them as part of a report will require approval by an Administration User or a Submitter. Comments or supporting files will not be visible to the MOD or SSRO unless they are individually approved by an Administration User or Submitter. There is no functionality to enable an approver to edit comments. Therefore, to amend a comment before approval, the comment text should be copied into a new comment window, edited and then approved. The previous comment will still be visible but can then be rejected by an Administration User or Submitter to delete it.

Compliance Issues

2.29 Compliance issues can be raised on reports by the SSRO and MOD after a contractor has submitted their report. DefCARS functionality which supports compliance activities is explained later in this section. Issues which are attached to an individual page in a report will be displayed in the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up. The icons shown in Table 3 will show in the pop-up to indicate the number of comments, issues or supporting files which have been added to a page.

² Archived files in this format are supported, but must contain one of the other accepted file types e.g. .xlsx, .ppt, .doc. When an archived file is uploaded, a file handler process will extract and check the file type contained within, then proceed to process it as normal if it is a supported file. This could be useful when uploading potentially large files to reduce the upload time.

Table 3 – Icons

Area	Icon	Explanation
Field specific issues		In this example two issues are displayed.
Page level issues		In this example there is an issue related to a page rather than a field.
Comments		In this example no comments have been added.
Supporting Files		In this example no supporting files have been added.

Report Home page

- 2.30 The Report Home page will display summary lists added to reports via the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up. The following sections will be displayed in the Report Home page:
- Comments: This table will set out each comment that has been raised against the report along with the page and relevant field (if any) that the comment has been tagged against.
 - Current Issues: This table will set out all open issues in relation to the report, providing a description of the issue along with the page and relevant field (if any) that the issue has been logged against. If an issue has been closed it will not remain on this page but will remain in the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up in the relevant report page.
 - File Uploads: This table will list each file that has been uploaded to support the report along with the page and relevant field that the file has been tagged against and whether the upload is linked to an issue.
- 2.31 Clicking on a line in one of the summary tables will navigate the user to the relevant report page.

Downloading and printing reports

- 2.32 The Submission page of each report provides the contractor with the facility to view, download and print its reports in Excel format. This functionality is available to the contractor before and after submission to the SSRO and the MOD, provided that the user has had the Download Report and Print permission enabled by their Administration User.

Submission and re-submission

- 2.33 The SSRO or the MOD can only see reports once a contractor has submitted them. Once the contractor is satisfied that the report is ready for submission, it can save and submit the report via the Submission page. If there are remaining validation errors in the report, DefCARS will not allow submission. If there are remaining validation warnings in the report, DefCARS will alert the submitter to review these before confirming that they wish to submit. Unresolved validation warnings may result in an increased number of issues from the SSRO or the MOD to the contractor.

- 2.34 Once the report has been submitted, it can no longer be edited so the contractors should make every effort to ensure that they are content before submitting. Contractors are however able to make corrections or other amendments to the report once it has been submitted. In the case of the CIR, as well as a correction, there is the option to select 'On-Demand Report' where the contractor needs to submit a new Contract Pricing Statement or Contract Reporting Plan.
- 2.35 To make a correction or amendment, the contractor should navigate to the Contractor Home Page. The contractor will see an icon labelled 'Start Correction' against each report migrated from the original system and submitted in DefCARS. This will open a new draft of the report populated with the information from the previously submitted report. This information can be edited by the contractor, saved and submitted via the Submission page. It would be helpful for the SSRO and MOD, if contractors attach comments to highlight the fields that have been edited in the correction report, and provide any additional information to explain why the amendments have been made.
- 2.36 The Contractor Home Page will display the original submission as 'S1' (if it is the first submission of its report type, 'S2' if the second and so on), and the corrected report as 'S1C1' (if it is the first correction of 'S1', 'S1C2' if the second and so on). The 'S' refers to the submission number for that type of report and the 'C' refers to the correction number for that specific report number. Active issues (see next section) will be carried forward in correction reports until they are resolved.

Compliance activities

- 2.37 The SSRO and MOD raise issues in DefCARS about compliance by contractors with reporting requirements, which contractors may respond to on the system. This user guidance explains how contractors can review and respond to issues raised by the SSRO or the MOD within the system. This functionality supports a three-way dialogue about reports between the contractor, the SSRO and the MOD and enables issues with reports to be resolved in a timely and transparent way.
- 2.38 The DefCARS homepage shows the number of reports relating to a contract which have current open issues. All current open issues in a report will subsequently be carried forward in future correction reports (they are not carried forward into a new report submission) and the number of 'reports with open issues' counter will reflect this (see paragraph 2.46). The number of current open issues and the current SSRO/MOD review status relating to each individual report is also shown (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4 – Report Issues

Defence Contractor	MOD Contract Number	Contract Title	Date of most recent submission	Reports Due	Reports With Open Issues																				
Contractor 1	Contract Reference	Contract Title	21/03/2019 15:47:25	1	1																				
<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>CIR On-demand report 1</p> <p>S1 Start date: 21/03/2019 Submitted date: 21/03/2019 Start Correction View Open Issues: 1</p> <p>Report status: Issues checked by SSRO Under review by MOD</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;">GCR</td><td style="width: 20px;">▼</td><td style="width: 80%;"></td><td style="width: 20px; text-align: right;">New Submission</td></tr> <tr> <td>ICRL</td><td>▼</td><td></td><td style="text-align: right;">New Submission</td></tr> <tr> <td>ICRH</td><td>▼</td><td></td><td style="text-align: right;">New Submission</td></tr> <tr> <td>CCR</td><td>▼</td><td></td><td style="text-align: right;">New Submission</td></tr> <tr> <td>CCS</td><td>▼</td><td></td><td style="text-align: right;">New Submission</td></tr> </table> </div>						GCR	▼		New Submission	ICRL	▼		New Submission	ICRH	▼		New Submission	CCR	▼		New Submission	CCS	▼		New Submission
GCR	▼		New Submission																						
ICRL	▼		New Submission																						
ICRH	▼		New Submission																						
CCR	▼		New Submission																						
CCS	▼		New Submission																						

Identifying and reviewing issues

- 2.39 By selecting the view icon (see Exhibit 4) the user will be taken to the Report Home page for that report where the individual issues will be listed (see Exhibit 5). The Report Home page will display two blue status boxes which indicate the overall stage the report is at in the SSRO and the MOD review process (stages are explained in paragraph 2.56). The page will also show both current open issues and current resolved issues. These issues will have separate headings with current open issues under a red heading and current resolved issues under an amber heading (see Exhibit 5). There is a column display on the 'Current open issues' table and 'Current resolved issues' table, labelled 'Issue forwarded to the MOD, issue priority'. This column indicates the level of priority (High, Medium or Low) given to this issue by the SSRO. The user can also download the report to see a summary of current open and current resolved issues as shown on the Report Home page.

Exhibit 5 – Report Home Page Issues List

Current Open Issues									
Page	Relevant Field	Description	Issue Status	Date issue raised	Date of most recent activity	Draft Changes Requiring Approval?	Has been forwarded to MOD?	If forwarded to MOD, issue priority	Raised by Organisation
Profit	EPR Value User Input	The EPR selected is not the baseline for the year the contract became a QDC.	Active	13/06/2020	12/06/2020	✖	✔	High	SSRO


- 2.40 There are three ways to view the details associated with an issue:
- Issues which appear in the issues list on the Report Home page are 'clickable' and will take the user to the relevant report page and, where pop-ups are enabled in a user's browser, a pop-up window will appear which contains all the information relating to that issue (see Exhibit 7).
 - Where pop-ups are not enabled in a user's browser, clicking on an issue on the Report Home page will take the user to the page where the issue has been raised. If the issue relates to a particular field an issues icon  will appear in the relevant field (see Exhibit 6). This icon can be clicked to open a window showing all the details relating to an issue (see Exhibit 7). If the issue has been raised at page level, there will be no issue icon next to any field. The 'Comments, Issues and Supporting Information' pop-up on the relevant page will indicate how many issues, comments and supporting files have been added. The issue information can be accessed through the 'Comments, Issues and Supporting Information' pop-up as explained in (c).
 - Every issue on a page can also be accessed by clicking the 'Comments, Issues and Supporting Information' pop-up at the top right-hand corner of the page (see Exhibit 3). Clicking this pop-up opens a new window (see Exhibit 7) which contains the Issue Log for that page where all the issues relating to the page will be visible along with any comments and supporting files relating to the data entered on that page. The two icons on the right-hand side of the issue in the 'Response' column (see Exhibit 7) indicate whether any comments have been raised against the issue or whether there are any supporting files attached. Users should note that this is the same window as that shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 6 – Issues Icon on Individual Fields

Contract Profit Rate

Value

Statutory Guidance on Allowable Costs in force at the time of agreement

VERSION 1.0 26 JANUARY 2015 ▼ ▲

Exhibit 7 – Issues, Comments and Support files window

Issue Log ▼

Issue ID	Relevant Field	Description	Issue Status	Response
1182	Statutory Guidance on Allowable Costs	Description 4	Active	
1181	BPR Value Selection	Description 3	Active	

Comments - add a supporting comment to your data ▼

Show/hide new comment

By	Relevant Field	Comment	Added On	Approved Date

Supporting files - add a supporting file to your data ▼

Note: This section is to provide supporting information to your report. To add a file in relation to an issue please click on an individual issue in the Issue Log.

File	Relevant Field	Uploaded On	Approved Date

- 2.41 When a contractor opens an issue on the issue log another window will open (see Exhibit 8) which will display all the details associated with the issue such as:
- a. a description of the issue;
 - b. whether the issue is linked to an automated validation rule in DefCARS;
 - c. the issue 'category' (whether it is a reporting or pricing issue);
 - d. the status (e.g. open or resolved);
 - e. the person who raised the issue;
 - f. when the issue was released; and
 - g. the person who released the issue.

Exhibit 8 – Issue fields

Relevant Field	<input type="text"/>
Issue Description:	<input type="text"/>
Linked to validation rule:	<input type="text"/>
Issue Category:	<input type="text"/>
Category:	<input type="text"/>
Raised by:	<input type="text"/>
Status:	<input type="text"/>
Notices Issued:	<input type="text"/>
Release Date:	<input type="text"/>
Released By:	<input type="text"/>

Responding to an issue

- 2.42 Contractors will be able to review issues raised in a report and provide a response in DefCARS. The response can be provided in the same submission. If the contractor wishes to correct a report to address a compliance issue they may do this via a correction report. Paragraph 2.35 explains how to make corrections to reports.
- 2.43 Contractors will be able to add their response to the MOD or SSRO issue by clicking show/hide new comment in the Comments Log, entering a comment in the box and clicking the 'add new comment' button (see Exhibit 9). Paragraph 2.47 explains how responses are approved.
- 2.44 If a contractor wishes to provide a correction report in response to any issue raised by the SSRO or the MOD, the contractor can provide a comment against an individual issue (via the show/hide new comment button in the issues pop-up window) to highlight that the data has been updated, or where they consider a comment would be useful in providing further clarification to the SSRO/MOD.

- 2.45 All comments on an issue, whether made by the contractor, SSRO or MOD will be included in a list in the Comments Log which appears below the issue details once they have been added, with the most recent comment shown first. The comments log enables the contractor to see a full audit trail of the information relating to each issue.
- 2.46 All current open issues in a report will subsequently be carried forward in future correction reports, this includes current resolved issues which will be shown under the 'current resolved issues' heading. Any new issues raised in subsequent correction reports will not be retrospectively applied and therefore will not be visible in earlier reports.

Exhibit 9 – Responding to an Issue



Comments Log

[Show/hide new comment](#)




Comment:



- 2.47 Contractor users with Administration User, Submitter or Editor permissions can draft responses in DefCARS to issues raised by the SSRO or MOD. Exhibit 12 details the different actions a user can undertake based on their permission level. DefCARS requires all draft responses to be approved by an Administration User or Submitter. Responses to issues which have been drafted by an Editor, or by an Administration User or Submitter and not yet approved, will be indicated with a tick in the 'Draft changes requiring approval' column of the issues list in the Report Home page (see Exhibit 5). Individual draft responses can also be seen in the comments log where the approval date will show as N/A. Administration Users and Submitters can draft responses but will need to approve their own responses (see next paragraph). All responses will remain in draft and can still be deleted without being visible to the SSRO or MOD until they have been approved.
- 2.48 To seek approval for a draft response an Editor will need to click on the 'Notify Approver' button which is located at the bottom of the Report Home page (see Exhibit 11). Clicking this button will send an email notification to the Administration User and Submitter, informing them that responses require approval. If the Editor is making draft responses on several issues at the same time, they may wish to consider only clicking on the 'Notify Approver' button after all responses are drafted.

- 2.49 Once an Administration User or Submitter wishes to approve a response they will need to access each individual issue from the Report Home page. The draft response will be visible in the Comments Log and to the right of the draft comment there will be a green tick and a red cross icon. To approve the draft response, click the green tick button. A pop-up window will appear, the user should click the 'Approve Response' button (see Exhibit 10).
- 2.50 Once approved the response will be visible to the SSRO and MOD. In order to make the SSRO and MOD aware that the contractor has responded the Administration User or Submitter will need to select 'Notify Externally' on the Report Home page. This will send an email to notify the SSRO and MOD.
- 2.51 To reject a draft response, approved users will need to click the red cross button to the right-hand side of the draft comment in the Comment Log. A new window will appear, and the user will need to click the 'Reject Response' button. Rejected comments will remain visible to contractor users in the Comment Log but will not be visible to the MOD or the SSRO. Up to that point of approval, comments can be edited by Editor, Administrator or Submitter users, using the 'edit' button.

Exhibit 10 – Approving draft responses

By	Relevant Field	Comment	Added On	Approved Date	
Defence Contractor	Comment	Comment to be approved.	13/11/2019	N/A	  



Approve Issue Response ? ×

By

Recipient(s)

Fields and Values set

Date Added

Exhibit 11 – Notifying approver button



- 2.52 Issues that have been forwarded by the SSRO to the MOD, in accordance with its compliance methodology, will be indicated in the 'Has been forwarded to the MOD?' column of the issues list on the Report Home Page with a tick (see Exhibit 5). The contractor is still able to create correction reports and raise comments against these issues after they have been forwarded to the MOD.
- 2.53 The SSRO will refer unresolved reporting and pricing issues to the MOD in line with its compliance methodology. In doing so, the SSRO will note whether the issue is high, medium or low priority for the MOD to consider, based on its potential impact on operation of the regulatory framework. We will categorise issues based on the MOD's responses as explained in the compliance methodology.

Exhibit 12 – Contractor permissions relating to compliance activities

Key:
▲ enabled functionality
▼ disabled functionality

User Type	Compliance Activity	
	Respond to issues/queries	Approve responses to issues/queries
Contract Administrator	▲	▲
Contractor Submitter	▲	▲
Contractor Editor	▲	▼
Contractor Reviewer	▼	▼

Changes to report status

- 2.54 The MOD and the SSRO can set the status of the report independently to reflect the overall stage the report is at in their respective review processes. Once a report has been submitted there are three different stages in the review process that will be shown by the status boxes on the Report Home page.
- 2.55 On submission of a report, the status will change from 'Draft' to 'Under review by SSRO' and 'Under review by MOD'. If issues are raised by the SSRO or the MOD, the status will change to 'Issues identified by the SSRO' or 'Issues identified by the MOD' respectively. When the MOD/SSRO is satisfied that an issue it has raised has been fully addressed, it will mark respective issues as resolved. Resolved issues will move from 'Current Open Issues' on the Report Home page to 'Current Resolved Issues'.

- 2.56 When there are no issues to be addressed in a report (either because the issues raised in a report have been addressed, or because there are no issues to raise on the report) the SSRO and MOD can set their own status of the report to 'No Current Issues identified by the SSRO' or 'MOD verification complete' respectively. The current status of a report will be visible on the Report Home Page.

Email notifications

- 2.57 DefCARS will communicate changes to the status of a report to all parties associated with a contract via an automatic email notification. Where issues have been raised in a report by either the MOD or the SSRO, an automatic email notification will be sent out entitled 'Feedback Available'. The feedback will not be listed in the email. To access and respond to the feedback the user must login to DefCARS and open the specified report. The email will detail:
- a. which organisation has completed its review;
 - b. the contract name;
 - c. the type of report;
 - d. the submission number which the feedback relates to. If feedback was provided on the first correction of submission 1, the email would detail the submission number as 'S1C1'; and
 - e. the date and time the review was completed.
- 2.58 Where the MOD sets its status to 'MOD Verification Complete', DefCARS will automatically generate a 'MOD Report Status Change' email. The email will detail (a) – (e) as above and the status 'MOD Verification Complete'. Where the SSRO sets its status to 'No Current Issues Identified by the SSRO', an 'SSRO Status Change' email will be automatically generated. The email will detail (a) – (e) as above and the status: 'No Current Issues on report'.
- 2.59 Where issues have remained open for over 30 days since initial release, DefCARS will send automated email notifications to all parties associated with the contract as a reminder to review any open issues and/or responses to issues and to action these accordingly. This email notification will continue to be sent every 30 days until the issue is resolved.

Appendix 1 – DefCARS release features

The following table summarises the key system improvements between the last version of guidance published (24 June 2020) and the current version (11 November 2020).

Month	DefCARS improvements
January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bug fixes only
February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including a link to the DefCARS Security Operating Procedures (SyOps) and Shared Service Security Policy (SSSP) on the home page
March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No update
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to align with the updated compliance methodology • Changes to improve on-demand reporting by asking users to identify the type of report they are submitting • Reflect updated pricing rates and guidance for 2020/21
May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No update
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation 22 fields added to the Contract Costs Statement • Changes to 'Date this report is due' field • Changes to the 'Variance, events and circumstances' page • Editing 'Other' and 'Specialist Equipment' descriptions in the DPS • Warning for 'Other' cost recovery rates • Breadcrumb trail to improve report navigation • Currency drop down, Yes/No field and annual profile total for 'Payments' page
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of templates for On-demand CRP and CPS reports • Introduction of V6 of contract report validation rules • Updates to the look and feel of excel report downloads • Additional copy and paste functionality

