Ministry of Defence
Defence Business Services Secretariat
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Ref: FOI2021/01740   Email: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

█████████████████████

9 March 2021

Dear ████████████

Thank you for your email of 12 February 2021 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

> *"You have advised that it is MOD policy for the MODNET user accounts (including email) of individuals who have left the department to be 'retired' after 30 days, and that the data held within these is then deleted and is non-recoverable. Can you confirm please whether the policy allows for any exceptions to this rule, so that specific MODNET accounts and the associated data can be retained for a longer period? Just as examples, where the individuals concerned may have been closely involved in disciplinary or fraud cases, relating to either themselves or to others?"*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

The JSP 441 – Information, Knowledge, Digital and Data in Defence does not detail an exact process to follow should there be investigation/disciplinary action relating to the account holder or others. However, I can advise that under these circumstances user accounts may be suspended (pending investigation) rather than deleted. Relevant documents are to be filed as records and work in progress may be moved to collaborative work areas on the relevant system the account is held. Closure and deletion of MODNET user accounts is the responsibility of the line manager and is completed in line with that system SyOps. The JSP 441 – Information, Knowledge, Digital and Data in Defence can be found on the Gov.UK website at the following link - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jsp-441-defence-records-management-policy-and-procedures--2/defence-information-knowledge-digital-and-data-policy-commitments

Additionally, the enclosed Defence Instructions and Notices (DIN), 'MODNET – the Closure and Management of MODNET Accounts, and the Handling of Information' may also be helpful to you.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at https://ico.org.uk/.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Business Services (Secretariat)

Defence Instructions and Notices (Not to be communicated to anyone outside HM Service without authority)	
Title:	MODNET - the Closure and Management of MODNET Accounts, and the Handling of Information
Audience:	All MODNET users, Information Managers and iHub staff
Applies:	Immediately
Expires:	1 year after publication
Replaces:	2016DIN05-002
Reference:	**2020DIN05-009**
Released:	**June 2020**
Status:	**Current**
Channel:	05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice
Content:	Policy, instructions and guidance on closing MODNET accounts and roles
Sponsor:	ISS Information Steward
Contact:	██████████████████████
Keywords:	Information infrastructure
Local Keywords:	MODNET
Annexes:	N/A
Related Info:	JSP 441 – Information, Knowledge, Digital and Data in Defence 2016DIN05-002 Defence Information Infrastructure (Future) DII(F), the Closure of User Accounts and Roles, and the Handling of Information
Classification:	OFFICIAL

Introduction

1.   This DIN:

- Explains why and when MODNET user accounts need to be closed;
- Gives instructions and guidance on the key housekeeping activities units need to carry out before closing an account, to make sure that the related personal and job-related information is dealt with properly;
- Gives instructions and guidance on how to close a MODNET user account; and
- Gives guidance on dormant account management i.e. the Suspend and Re-enable services for accounts made Moribund through lack of use.

Background

2.   Users of MODNET will have an account which gives them a mailbox and storage area (One Drive). The MOD incurs cost for each account, user licence and for each mailbox and storage area. Therefore, when accounts are no longer required, we need to close them, ensuring that we retain any significant Defence information in the right shared area (e.g. SharePoint).

3.   User accounts should be closed using the MODNET Catalogue's "Delete a User Account MNET" service. Once a user account has been closed using this service the user

will not be able to log in, the account will be deleted from the Global Address List, the mailbox and storage area content will be deleted.[1]

4.   User accounts that are not required for an extended period of time should be Suspended from use (using the "Suspend a MODNET User Account MNET" catalogue service) and then Re-enabled upon return to work (using the "Re-Enable a Moribund MODNET Account MNET" catalogue service). This meets security requirements outlined in JSP440.

Instructions and Advice for Account users

5.   If your account is no longer required, you must make sure that all work-related information items are reviewed and then managed and protected accordingly. If you need help with this, seek advice from your local Information Manager or Information Support Officer. You should:

- − Review all the items.
- − Move items to be retained into shared storage e.g. SharePoint.
- − Declare records as necessary (see JSP 441 and the MODNET Learning hub for instructions and guidance).
- − Delete unwanted material.

6.   You will also need to review all the items of information that relate to you personally within the mailbox and file store before the account is closed, and then take copies of them or delete as necessary. Neither MOD nor ATLAS will take any steps to preserve or archive the information held in your mailbox or One Drive once the account has been submitted for deletion. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no recovery mechanism available to recover a user's account, or mailbox and storage area content.[1] You will then need to inform your Expert User that your account needs to be closed via the Service Catalogue.

Instructions and advice for Information Managers (IMgr), Information Support Officers (ISO) and iHubs

7.   Deciding when to close a user's account. A user account should be closed when it is no longer needed – for example, when a person leaves the MOD.
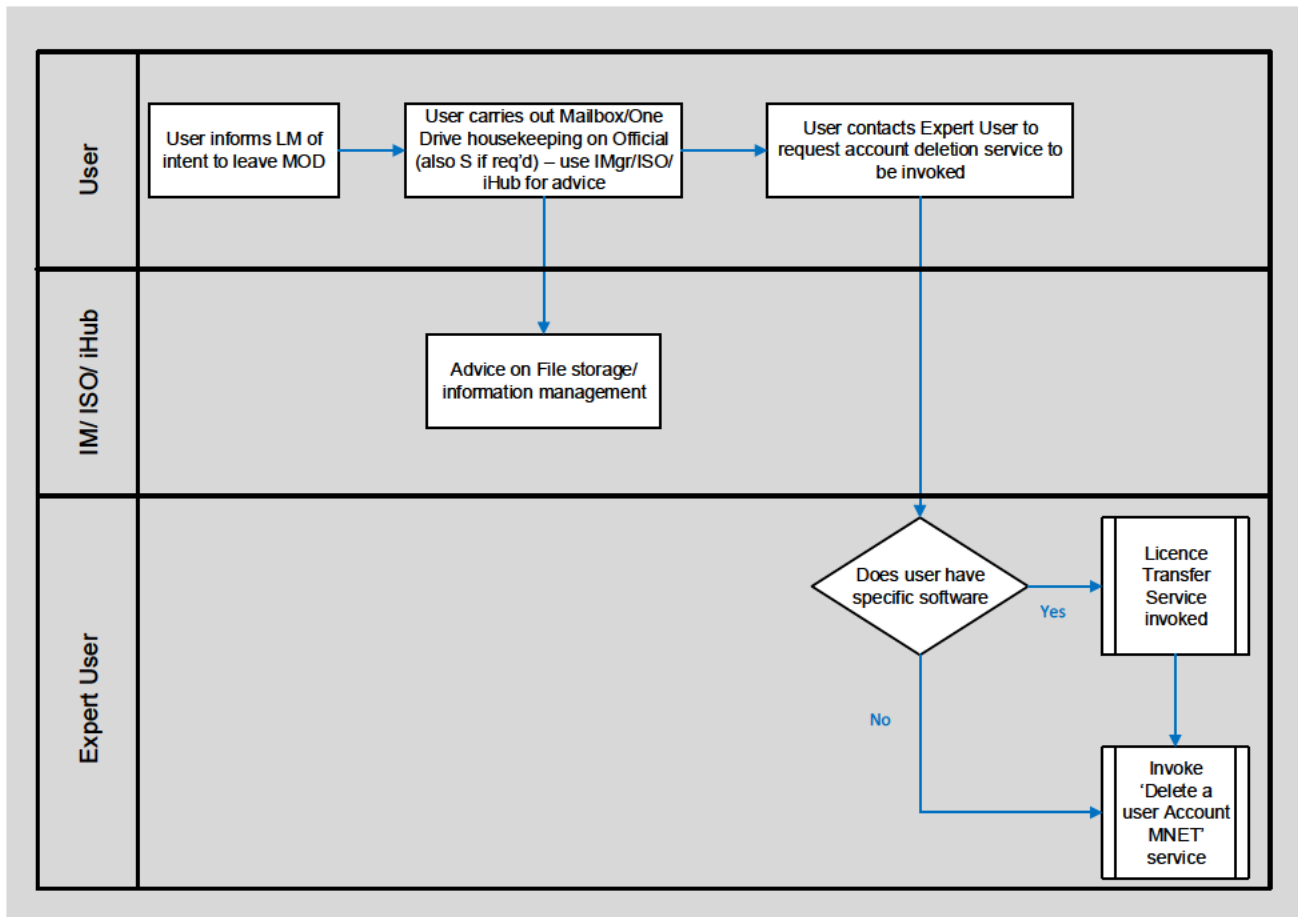
8.   Preparing to close a user's account. A user should make sure that there is no work-related information associated with their account. Assuming the user was assigned to a job and that the job is to be retained, the job must be dissociated from the user's account.

9.   Requesting that a user's account be closed. To close a user account, users are to task the relevant Expert User using the procedure set out in the MODNET "Delete a User Account MNET" service. A request to close a user account automatically authorises the deletion of the account's mailbox and One Drive. Before Expert Users close user accounts, they should verify if the account's user had additional software allocated to them, and, using the MODNET Service Catalogue license surrender and transfer service, arrange for the licences to be transferred as necessary.

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[1] Mailbox and storage are recoverable via a SPOC call for a period of approximately 30 days after deletion. After this the account and data are irretrievably deleted.

10. Simplified Work Flow showing steps for Closure of MODNET account.

User	User informs LM of intent to leave MOD → User carries out Mailbox/One Drive housekeeping on Official (also S if req'd) – use IMgr/ISO/iHub for advice → User contacts Expert User to request account deletion service to be invoked
IM/ ISO/ iHub	Advice on File storage/ information management
Expert User	Does user have specific software — Yes → Licence Transfer Service invoked → Invoke 'Delete a user Account MNET' service; No → Invoke 'Delete a user Account MNET' service

11. <u>Requesting a user account be suspended for Deployed, Long Term Sick or Maternity leave</u>. For circumstances where users are out of office for an extended period of time – to avoid a user's account being deleted after 11 months inactivity – the Expert User can request the account is Suspended for the duration of absence and then Re-enabled upon the users' return to work.

12. <u>Simplified Work Flow showing steps for Suspension of MODNET account</u>.
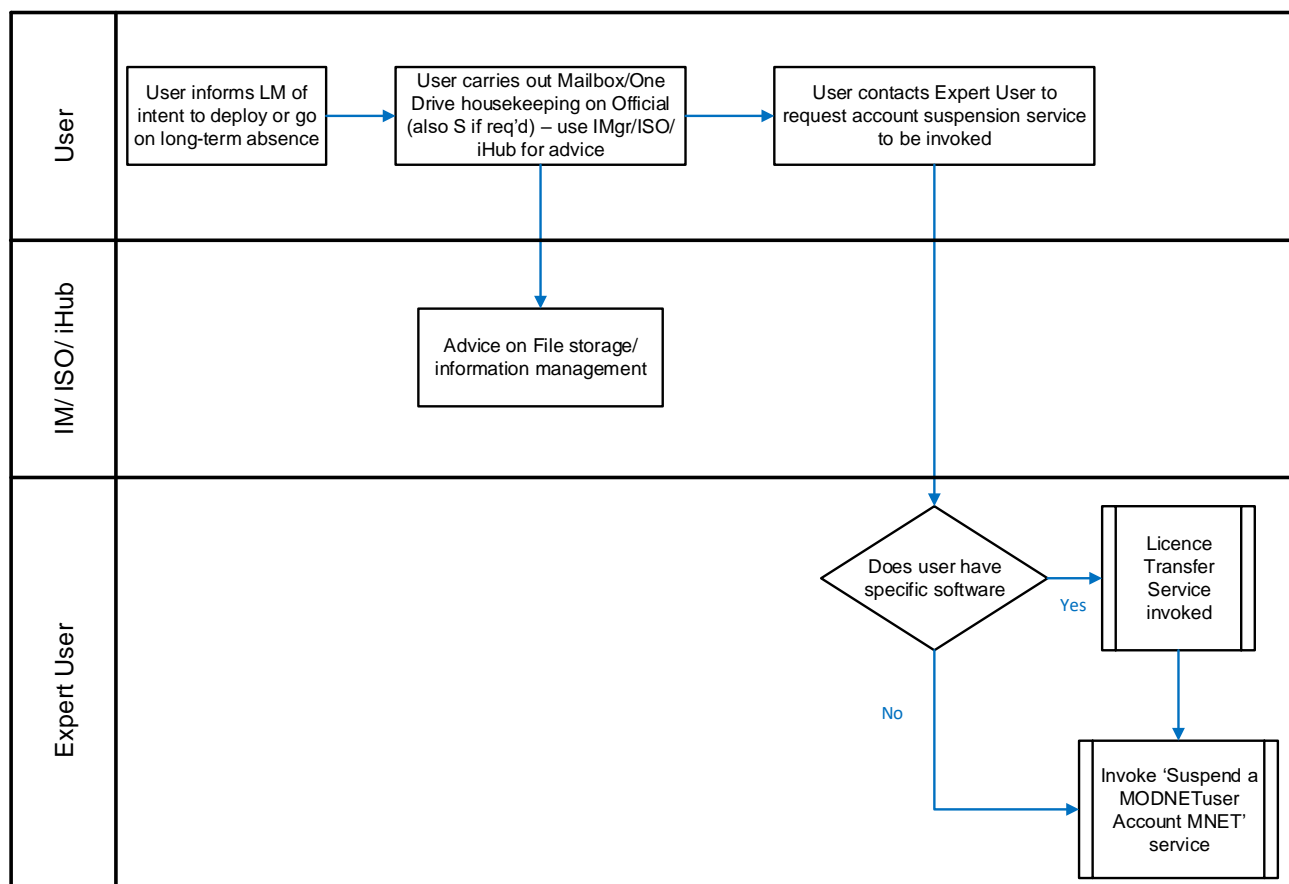
Advice on dormant (Moribund) user accounts

13.   A dormant account, also known as a "moribund" account, is one that has not been accessed by a user for the previous 60 days.[2] Or a newly created account that has never been accessed in the preceding 30 days.

14.   To avoid a user account being classed as "moribund" the account should be closed using either:

−   for leavers, the "Delete a User Account MNET" Catalogue Service.

−   for users on Long Term Absence or Deployment, the "Suspend a MODNET User Account MNET" Catalogue Service.

There is a Catalogue Service available – "Re-Enable a Moribund MODNET Account MNET" – to restore the User Account.

15.   Unless the above is taken, after a further 9 months, ATLAS is authorised to perform the steps to close the account and associated mailbox and file store.

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[2] During normal operations the moribund time frame is 60 days, however, during contingent operations the moribund period may be amended to meet the relevant circumstances.