

Cyber Security, Data Protection and using your ECC laptop

May 2026

Agenda

1 Digital

2 Data Protection

3 Freedom of Information

4 Artificial Intelligence

5 Cyber Security

6 The ECC Security
Operations Centre

7 Using your ECC
laptop/Connecting to ECC

8 Surgery

Essex Digital Service

Nathan Pierce
Director of Digital

15th May 2026

What is 'Digital' in local government?

It's how we deliver better, cheaper services

In local government, 'digital' goes beyond the technology foundations that support our workforce.

It is about redesigning how services work so residents get what they need faster, more simply and at lower cost to the taxpayer.

In the past, councils digitised existing processes

- Word replaced typewriters, Paper forms became PDFs, emails replaced letters etc

Modern digital goes further - we redesign the service from the resident's point of view

This means:

- Fewer forms and handoffs
- Faster decisions
- Less manual processing
- More self-service where appropriate

DDaT = Digital, Data and Technology



Our Digital Estate

All the systems, platforms and data that run council services

This includes:

- **Service systems** - eg social care, education, highways
- **Corporate platforms** - eg finance, HR, Microsoft
- **Resident channels** - eg websites, forms, online services
- **Data & infrastructure** - eg laptops, networks, cloud services, data platforms
- **AI & Innovation** – eg copilot, automation, IOT

Why it matters?

- Every service depends on it
- It holds all of our data
- It drives most council activity
- It has significant cost implications

All of which is underpinned by our cyber security

The risk if unmanaged:	The opportunity if controlled:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too many systems doing the same job• Expensive, locked-in contracts• Inefficient, manual processes• Higher cyber risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer, shared platforms• Lower costs and stronger buying power• Simpler services for residents• Better data for decisions

Essex Digital Service



Nathan Pierce
Director of Digital

Emma Toublic,
Assistant Director
Operations and
Platform



Vicki James,
Assistant Director
Architecture and
Design



Laura Czapiewski,
Assistant Director
Product
Management and
Delivery



Mary Umoh,
Assistant Director
Cyber and Security



Treesa Carter, Digital
Innovation Lead

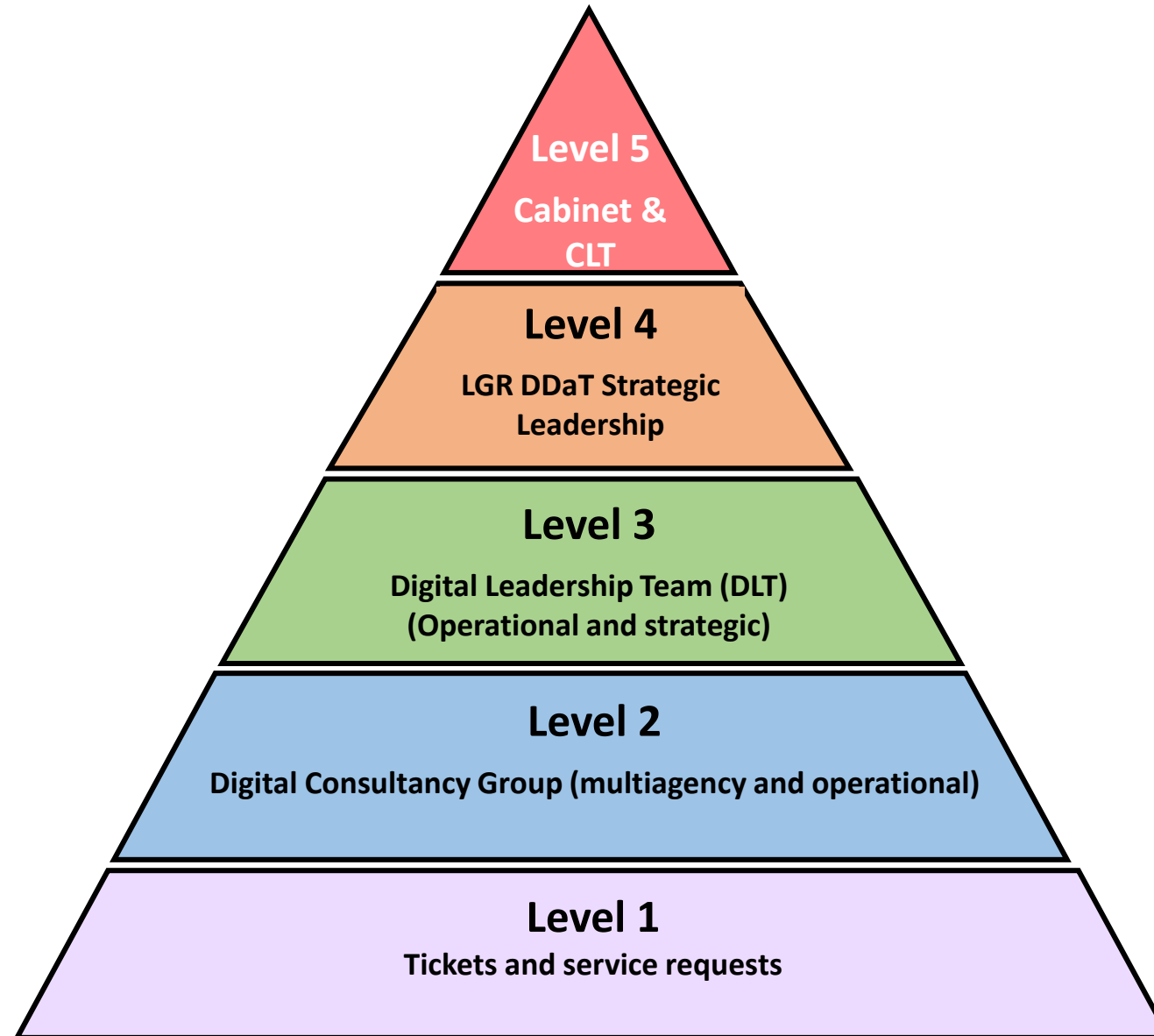


We have three simple outcome-led priorities:

1. Establishing modern, stable and secure technology foundations
2. Modernising services around user needs
3. Ensuring digital readiness for LGR



Where are decisions made?



The result of a good digital service?

- Better resident experience
- Lower cost to deliver the service
- Reduced demand on frontline teams

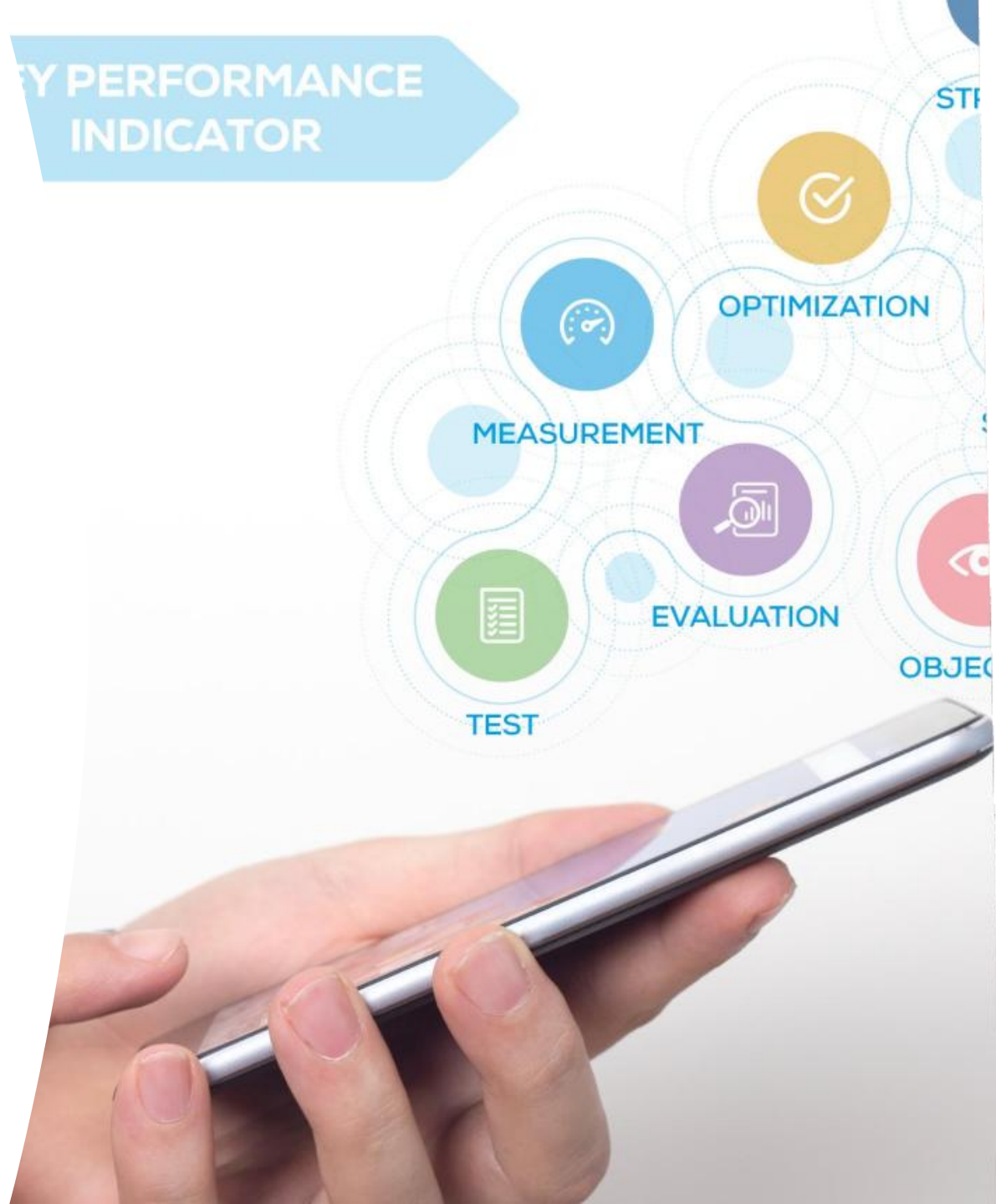
Private sector comparison

- Banks → no longer need branches for most transactions
- Retail → Amazon removed friction from buying
- Local government → we are making services simple and efficient

Digital is the best tool you have to reduce costs while improving a service, not a trade-off between the two.

However, not always a silver bullet. It takes time and investment

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR



Data Protection and Cyber Security

Why do we need to talk about these things?

The public

- Want us to respect their privacy and handle their information safely. They may not trust us as much as you and we may hope.

As a councillor

- You have three roles, all of which need you to play your part in keeping things safe and legal.

You will be given access to some ECC personal information – ECC is accountable for meeting data protection requirements

The public will give you their personal data for casework etc

As a member of a political party you will want to contact people with political messages and political campaigning

Hostile actors would like to

- access our information
- Hold us to ransom

People today have heightened expectations about privacy and what people do with their information

What is Data Protection?

Rules
about
handling
personal
data

- **Everything is processing:**
 - **Receiving**
 - **Storing**
 - **Printing**
 - **Using**
 - **Reporting**
 - **Deleting**

What is personal data?

- Any information relating to an identifiable natural person (i.e. not a company)
- Don't need to have the name in the data if they are identifiable in any way at all. Personal data includes
 - Name
 - Location data, address
 - Health
 - Work
 - Finance
 - Culture
 - Demographic
 - Activity



'Special category personal data'

- **This information has extra rules applying to it.**
- **These are things that people are likely to be more concerned about.**
- **As a Councillor you will come across this information.**

Race or ethnicity

Political opinions

Religious or philosophical beliefs

Membership of a trade union

Health information

Sex life or sexual orientation

Biometric data

Data controllers

This is the legal term for the person or organisation who decides how data is processed.

Sometimes there are joint data controllers – each data controller can make decisions about what happens.

It's important because the GDPR obligations apply to data controllers.

It's also important to know this because as a councillor YOU are sometimes be a data controller in your own right.

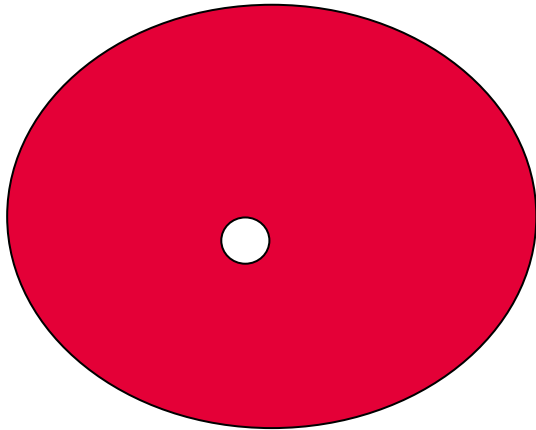
We can HELP you with your obligations when you are a data controller, but ECC is not accountable.

You can HELP us comply with GDPR obligations when we are data controller, but you are not personally legally accountable.



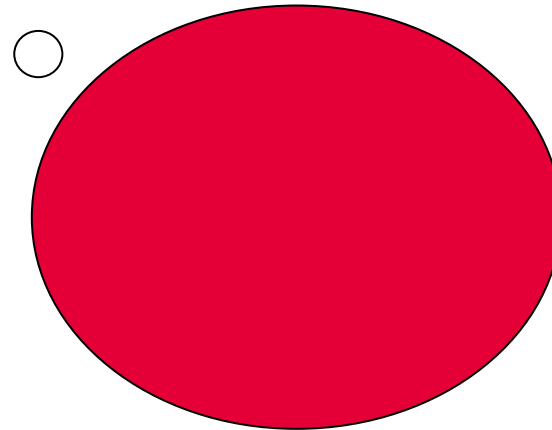
When are you a Data Controller?

ECC Business – including
doing your job as a
Councillor within ECC.
ECC is data controller



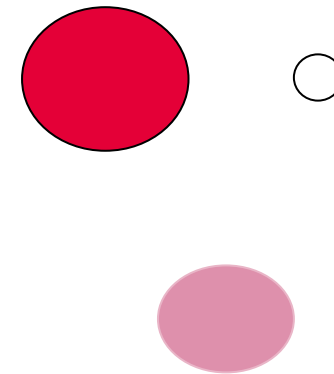
Raising matters for
residents and dealing
with their enquiries –

You are data controller



Political business -
Party political
campaigning activity

You and/or your party
are data controller



ECC



Member



Political party

The main rules

Processing must be fair, lawful and transparent

Any personal information collected must be collected for a specified, explicit and lawful purpose and only used for that purpose

The 'Goldilocks' rule (have the 'just right' amount of information)

Only retain data for only as long as necessary

Keep data secure

What a data controller does with personal information - and why – should be documented.

A data controller must allow people to assert their rights as a data subject.

Fair, Lawful and Transparent

The data controller must have one of these justifications for ALL the processing they do.

Data controllers must inform the individual about what they are doing with their information called 'a fair processing notice'.

For personal information	Extra rules for special category personal information
Necessary to comply with a legal obligation	
Necessary to protect the vital interests of the individual	Necessary to establish or defend legal rights
Necessary for performance of public task of official authority	Necessary for reasons of substantial public interest, proportionate to aim pursued, with suitable protection for the individual
Consent (but consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn)	Explicit consent (can be withdrawn)

What's wrong with relying on consent?

- **Need to be able to prove that consent was given**
- **Should be separate from other agreements**
- **Consent can be withdrawn at any time – must be as easy to withdraw consent as give it.**
- **Consent must be freely given**

According to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (UK Regulator)) shouldn't be a pre-condition of provision of a service.



Do members need consent from constituents before asking the council to share information about that constituent?

- You do need to comply with the rules when dealing with residents' correspondence.
- Part of your role is to deal with enquiries from the public
- If a resident contacts you about their case you don't need consent and can just deal with it.
- If a resident contacts you about someone else's case (e.g. concern about a neighbour) you would need that neighbour's consent for information to be shared with others. **BUT YOU SHOULD STILL PASS ON CONCERNS**

GOT CONSENT?



Fair processing notice – all data controllers (i.e. you) must have one.

- Identity of data controller
- Purpose for which information is held
- Legal grounds for processing
- Who information will be shared with
- Period that information will be retained
- Information about the individual's rights
- The fact that a complaint can be made to the ICO
- Whether information will be sent outside the EEA
- Source of information (if not the individual)



Other GDPR rules



- **Personal information you gather must be adequate and not excessive**
- **Personal information must be accurate and kept up to date where necessary**
- **Must erase or rectify inaccurate personal data if possible**

Individuals' rights

1. Right to **see** the information held
2. Right to request **deletion**
3. Right to **object** to processing
4. Right to ask for processing to be **restricted**
5. Right to ask for information to be **rectified**

We recommend coming to speak to us if you receive any of these requests.



Right to see the information held

Known as a **Subject Access Request (SAR)**

Normally no fee can be charged

- A fee can be charged only if manifestly unfounded or excessive.

One calendar month to respond for non-complex and three for complex requests

Normally supplied electronically

Request is valid if made orally

- Don't provide information about third parties (unless they have consented or it is reasonable to)



Right to object to processing

- **Applies If you rely on 'public task' as basis for processing**
- **Individual can object 'on grounds relating to their particular situation'**
- **If individual objects then processing must stop**

unless controller demonstrates compelling legitimate grounds for processing which override interests, rights and freedoms of the individual; or

for the establishment exercise or defence of legal claims

- **Also applies to direct marketing**



Right to request deletion

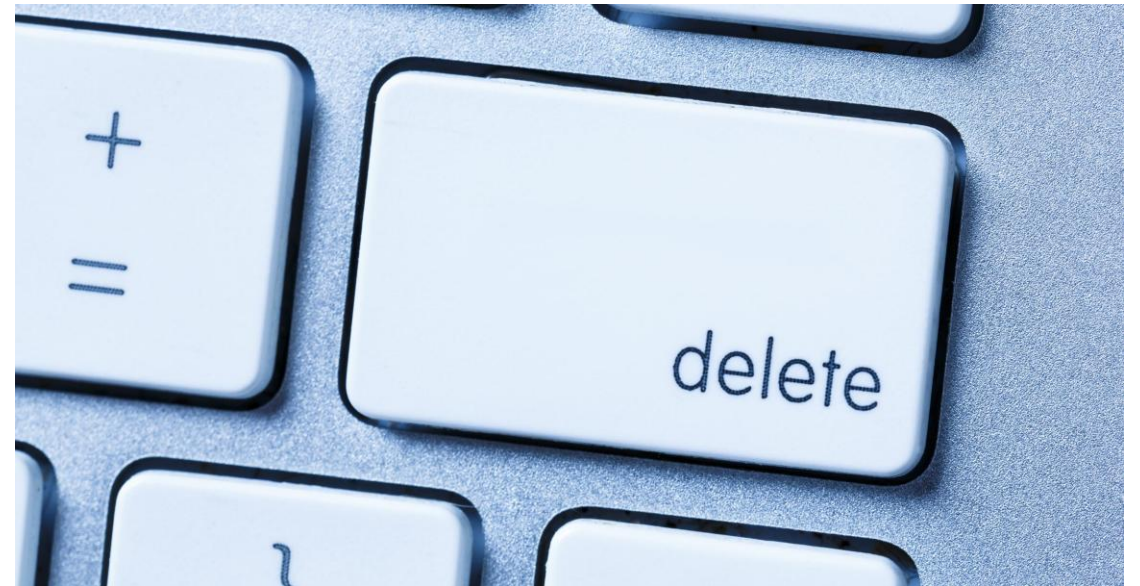
- Sometimes called ‘the right to be forgotten’
- Not a universal right!
- Does not apply at all if

we are required by law to keep the information for a public task

We need it for establishment exercise or defence of legal claims

Only applies if any of these apply:

- It's no longer necessary to have the information (should have deleted already!)
- We are relying on consent and consent is withdrawn
- Individual has objected to processing and none of the grounds applied
- Personal information have been unlawfully processed



Right to ask for processing to be restricted

Can request a temporary freeze on use of data whilst

- accuracy is being checked
- Objection is being considered

Can be requested where data has been processed unlawfully

Right to ask for information to be rectified

If data is inaccurate or incomplete

May include providing a supplementary statement

Direct Marketing

Must be based on explicit consent

Consent must be recorded

Consent must explicitly cover methods of communication

Text ? Email? Phone?

You cannot just add people to mailing list without consent or pass details to party

Consent to send divisional newsletters does not necessarily allow consent for election material

Unless you have consent for this you cannot pass your data to another candidate (e.g. if you're not standing again)

Leaflet drops to all households are not direct marketing

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- It's unlawful to make decisions about people only relying only on automatic means
- Uploading people's information to AI chatbots allows retention - they may learn from it. It probably will be stored
- **Don't upload**
 - Personal data
 - Confidential information
 - Contracts
 - Residents information
- **Microsoft Copilot is the exception**
- We have a contractual relationship with Microsoft
- Copilot doesn't store uploaded material in its large language model
- **ONLY use Copilot – don't use any other AI (Chat GPT, Gemini etc.)**



**Microsoft
Copilot**

Freedom of information

- **Applies to ECC, not individual members – but some information about members is held by ECC**
- **Applies to papers, emails, files, WhatsApp, Teams**
- **Isn't a right to have questions answered**
- **There are exemptions, but many exemptions only apply if a 'public interest' test is met**
 - More than 18 hours
 - Personal data
 - Information which is going to be published
 - Prejudice commercial interests
 - Prejudice effective conduct of public affairs
- **We recommend councillors use Member Enquiries rather than FOI.**



FOI process

Logged centrally

Response due 'promptly and within 20 working days'

If request is refused must give a refusal notice

Review process

- Internal review
- Information Commissioner
- First Tier Tribunal
- Upper Tribunal
- Court of Appeal
- Supreme Court

Cyber security : some facts about the threat

56% of businesses and 62% of charities have reported breaches or attacks in the last 12 months

Attacks can lead to loss of personal information and could cost us taxpayers money

2026 has seen a number of significant cyber security breaches

Why is this important

Our systems can offer good protection, but we are only as safe as the good sense of our users.

You are a data controller and are personally responsible for personal data you hold.



MAR

MARKS & SPENCER

M&S

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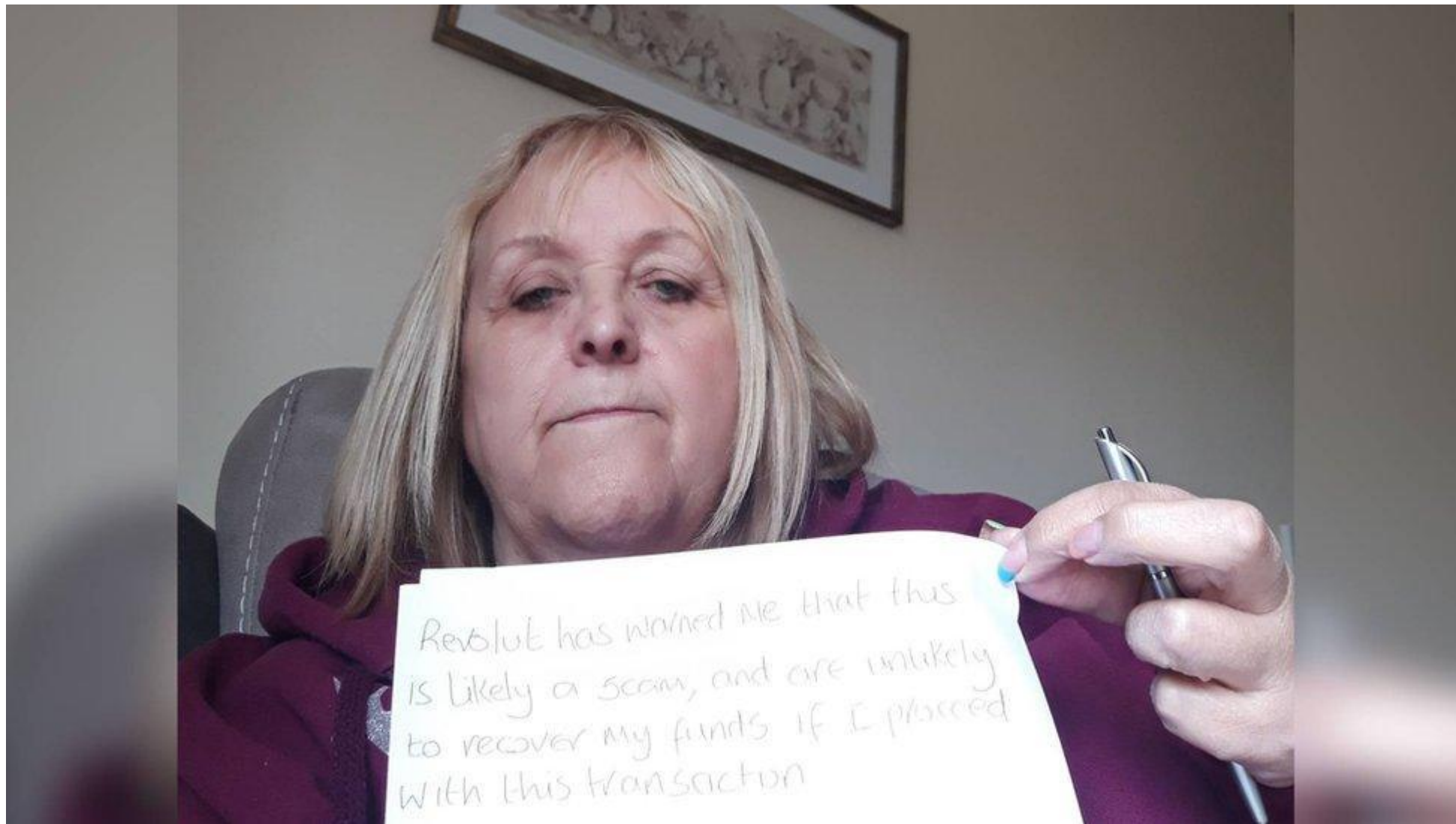
LIF

MARKS & SPENCER



Something
but rainer





“Revolut has warned me that this is likely a scam, and are unlikely to recover my funds if I proceed with this transaction”.

How passwords are hacked.....

Interception

Passwords can be intercepted as they travel over a network.



Brute force

Automated guessing of billions of passwords until the correct one is found.

Key logging

Installing a keylogger to intercept passwords when they are entered.



Manual guessing

Details such as dates of birth or pet names can be used to guess passwords.

Shoulder surfing

Observing someone typing in their password.



Phishing & coercion

Using social engineering techniques to trick people into revealing passwords.



Stealing passwords

Insecurely stored passwords can be stolen, such as ones written on sticky notes and kept near (or on) devices.



Data breaches

Using the passwords leaked from data breaches to attack other systems.

Stealing hashes

Stolen hash files can be broken to recover the original passwords.



Password spraying

Trying a small number of commonly-used passwords to access a large number of accounts.



Number of Characters	Numbers Only	Lowercase Letters	Upper and Lowercase Letters	Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters	Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters, Symbols
4	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
5	Instantly	Instantly	57 minutes	2 hours	4 hours
6	Instantly	46 minutes	2 days	6 days	2 weeks
7	Instantly	20 hours	4 months	1 year	2 years
8	Instantly	3 weeks	15 years	62 years	164 years
9	2 hours	2 years	791 years	3k years	11k years
10	1 day	40 years	41k years	238k years	803k years
11	1 weeks	1k years	2m years	14m years	56m years
12	3 months	27k years	111m years	917m years	3bn years
13	3 years	705k years	5bn years	56bn years	275bn years
14	28 years	18m years	300bn years	3tn years	19tn years
15	284 years	477m years	15tn years	218tn years	1qd years
16	2k years	12bn years	812tn years	13qd years	94qd years
17	28k years	322bn years	42qd years	840qd years	6qn years
18	284k years	8tn years	2qn years	52qn years	463qn years

Time it takes a hacker to brute force your password in 2025

Hardware: 12 x RTX 5090
Password hash: bcrypt (10)



Hive Systems

Read more and download at
hivesystems.com/password

UK Top 15 most popular passwords



Others in top 50

dr@gon

p@ssword1

Strongman12

1q2w3e4r

England

loveisland

123456

password

admin

12345678

qwerty

123456789

Password1

welcome

12345

Lennon11

111111

liverpool1

password123

abc123

iloveyou

What Makes a Good Password?

- **At least 14 characters long (ideally 16 characters or more)**
- **A password should include a combination of letters (both uppercase and lowercase), numbers and characters**
- **Not recycled - have a unique password for each online account**
- **A password shouldn't include any of your personal information like your birthday or address. It's also best not to include any information that can be accessed on social media like children's or pets' names or your hobbies or football team.**
- **It shouldn't contain consecutive letters or numbers (i.e. ABCD, 1234, etc.).**
- **It shouldn't be the word "password" or the same letter or number repeated.**

Phishing

When criminals use scam emails, text messages or phone calls to trick us

- Does it look right?
- Were you expecting it?
- How do they refer to you?
- Is the logo correct?
- Do you need to do something now?
- Do you know the sending
- Is it too good to be true?

From: support@ricrosoft.co.uk ✓
Sent: 16/01/2023 11:44
To: Bob Smith <Bob.Smith@company.com> ✓
Subject: Urgent Action Needed! ✓



Microsoft Account

Verify your account

We detected some unusual activity about your recent sign in for your Microsoft account. you might be signing in from a new location app or device. ✓

To help keep your account safe. We've blocked access to your inbox, contacts list and calendar for that sign in. Please review your recent activity and we'll help you secure your account. To regain access you'll need to confirm that the recent activity was yours. ✓

<http://account.liive.com/ResetPassword.aspx>

Thanks,
The Microsoft Team

From: support@microsoft.co.uk
Sent: 16/01/2023 11:44
To: Bob Smith <Bob.Smith@company.com>
Subject: Unusual Sign In Activity



Microsoft Account

Verify your account

We detected some unusual activity about a recent sign in for your Microsoft account bo*****@company.com. you might be signing in from a new location app or device.

To help keep your account safe. We've blocked access to your inbox, contacts list and calendar for that sign in. Please review your recent activity and we'll help you secure your account. To regain access you'll need to confirm that the recent activity was yours.

[Review recent activity](#)

Thanks,
The Microsoft Team

Malware



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Malicious software that includes viruses, Trojans, worms or code or content that could have an adverse impact on organisations or individuals

RANSOMWARE: Weak password allowed hackers to sink a 158-year-old company



Data theft at Glasgow City Council in June 2025



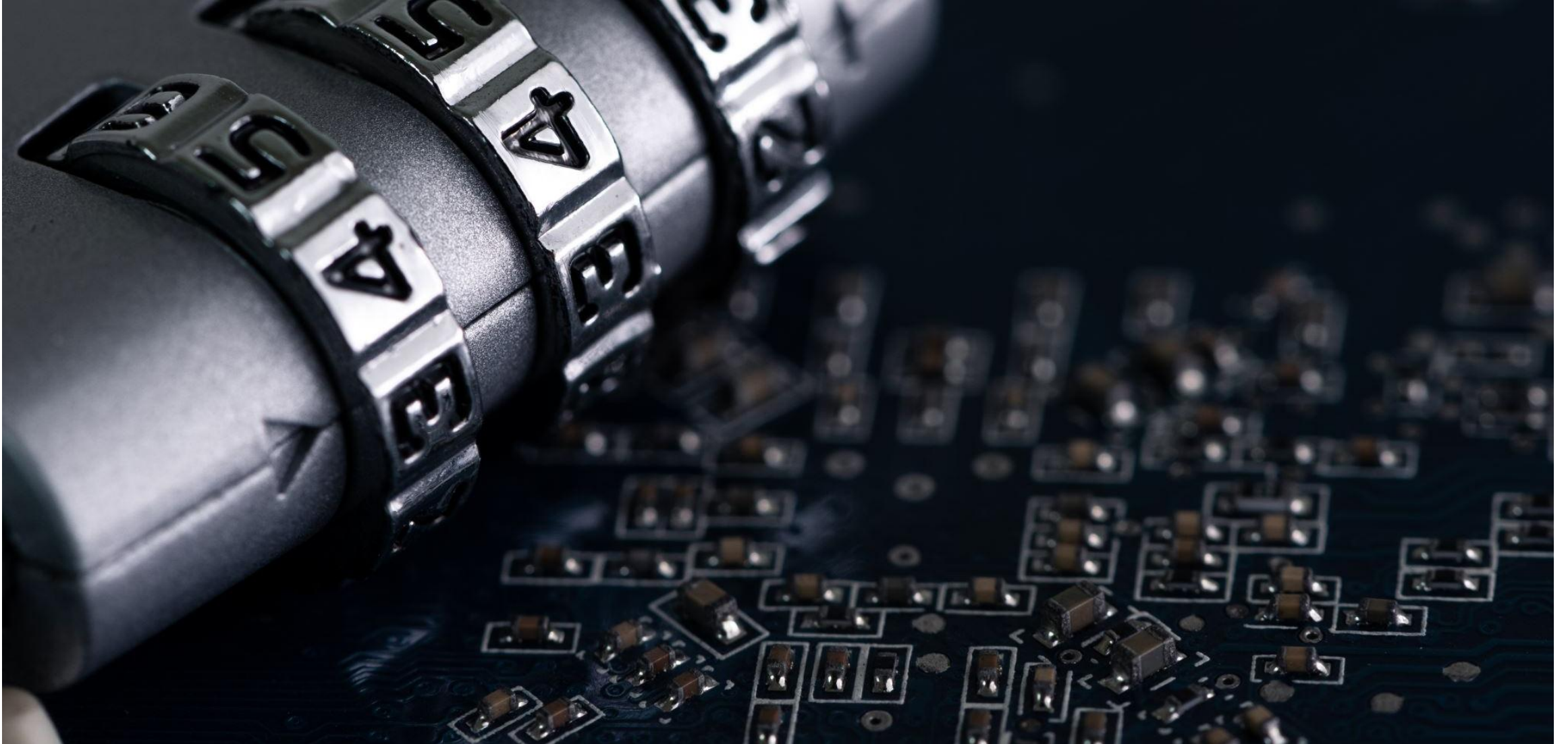
2024 cyberattack linked to death of patient



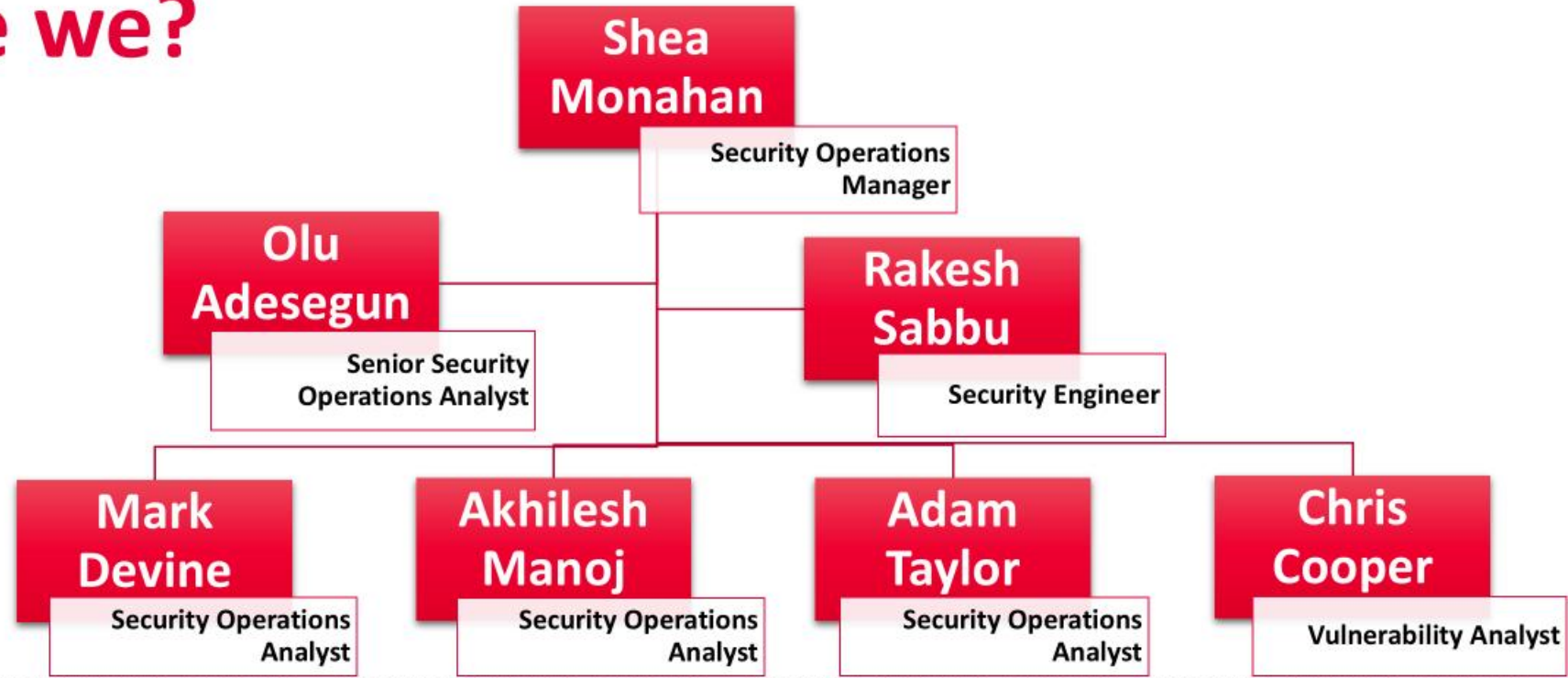
Report concerns – or potential concerns via the Assyst Portal using IT Security Concerns or speak to a member of the team.

- Take screen shots
- Provide the sender's email address, date and time of the email, content of the email
- Do not download or open the attachment or file
- Do not close your machine down before reporting
- After reporting delete from your inbox and deleted folder immediately

Introduction to Security Operations Centre and recent Cyber Attack at ECC



Who are we?



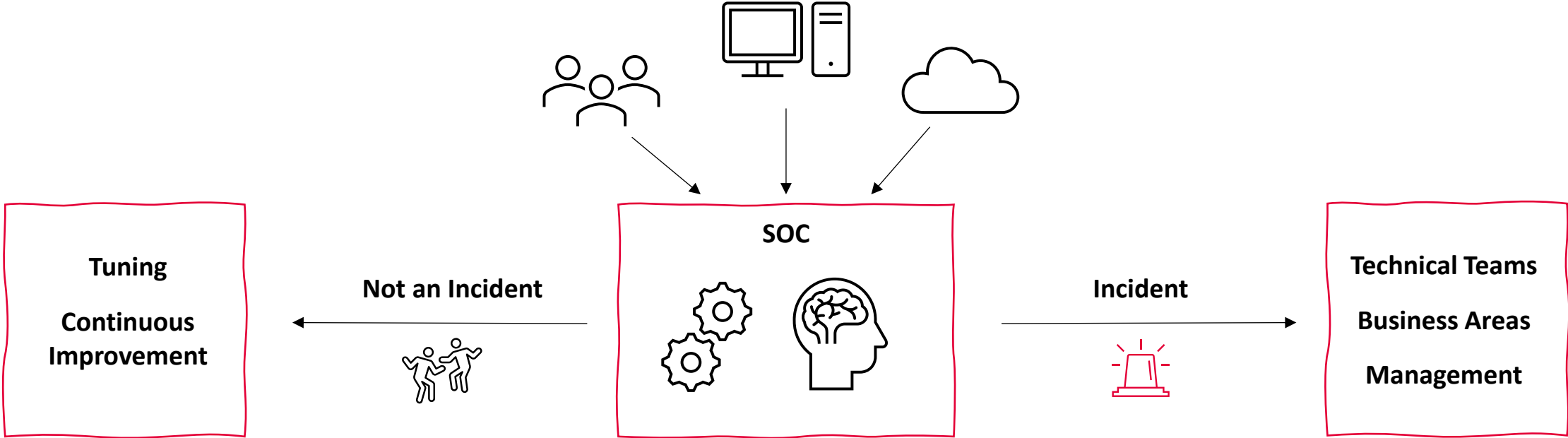
SecurityHQ

IBM Radar

Bridewell



What do we do?



What are we looking for?

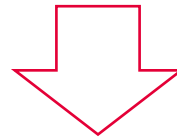
Threat Actors

A cyber threat actor is any individual or group that poses a threat to cybersecurity. Threat actors are the perpetrators behind cyberattacks

Nation State

Cybercriminals

Insider Threat



Threats

An event or condition that has the potential for causing loss and the undesirable consequences or impact from such loss.

Ransomware

Insider Threat

Phishing

Why do we do this?

Average UK cost of Data Breach

£3.87 Million

Most organisations have suffered more than one

Average Time to Detect and Contain

277 Days

Those that detect in under 200 days save an average £1 million

Open Access News | Digital Transformation News

Cyber attacks increasing by up to 50% in local councils across the UK

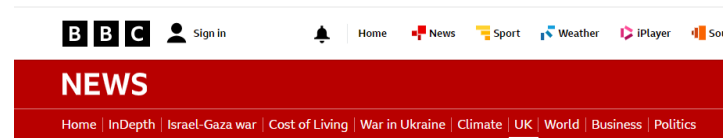
March 29, 2023

William Eichler 19 May 2023

List of councils impacted by Capita data breach grows

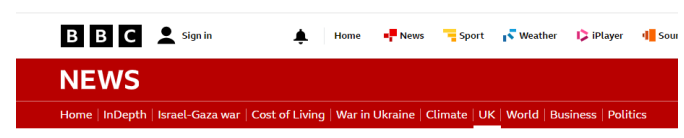
The number of local authorities impacted by Capita's most recent data breach has risen to five.

A cyberattack on the revenues and benefits software supplier in March put files stored by councils in a cloud-based data storage system at risk.



Cyber attacks on Kent councils disrupt online services

19 May 2023



Criminal investigation into Leicester City Council cyber-attack

19 March



The city council says it is still unable to say if there has been a data breach

Cyber attack recovery effort cost Hackney Council over £12m last year

By Julia Gregory, Local Democracy Reporter | Thursday 13 October 2022 at 21:28

Mosaic Recovery

£152,000

Housing Registry

£572,000

Spotlight on Policy > Cybersecurity | 2 May 2022

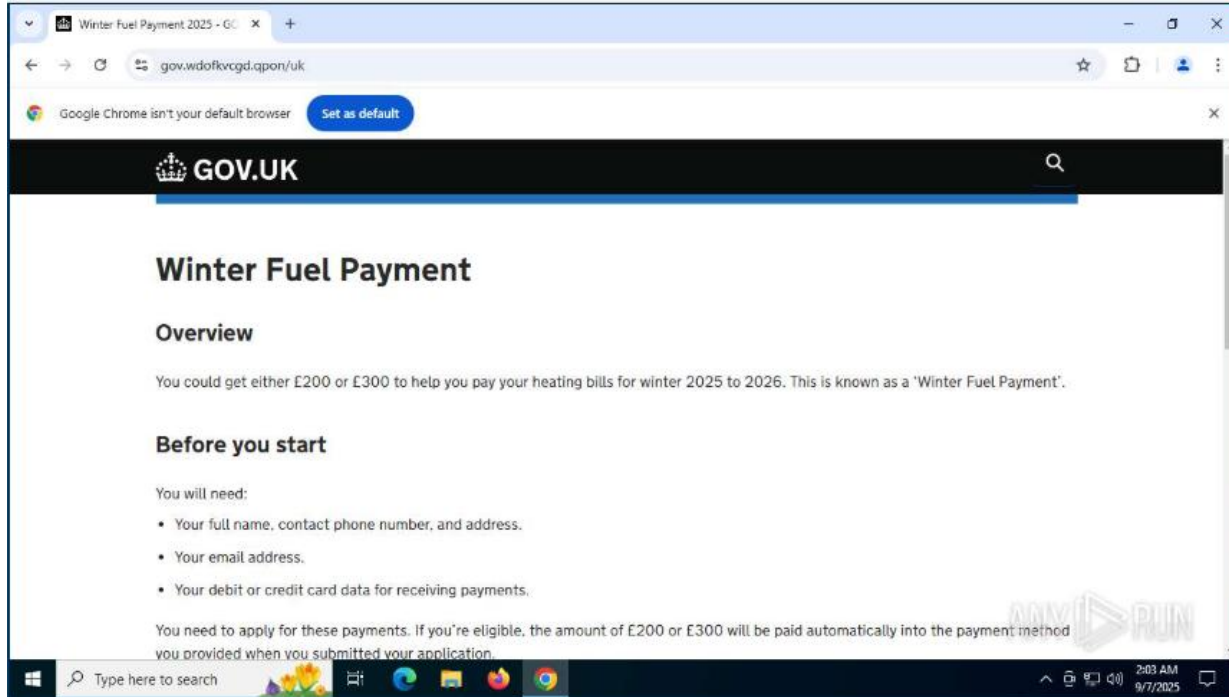
How ransomware shut down an English council

The attack that sent Redcar and Cleveland back to pen and paper.

Total Cost

£8.7 Million

Does this happen to ECC?



Can you tell the screenshot is a fake?

Would you like a threat actor to have your details?

Do you know what threat actors can do with your personal information?

Official Gov website link: [Winter Fuel Payment: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

- In the early hours of 7 September 2025 at 02:32 AM, ECC Security Operations Centre (SOC) was alerted by SHQ, our external security partner, regarding "Connection towards malicious URL" incident. This was prioritised as a severity 1 incident due to potential impact on our systems and our out of hours engineer was on call to respond.
- Following our investigation, we identified that a security alert was triggered due to interaction with a malicious URL. An ECC employee forwarded an email from their personal email address to their work email on 27th August at 10:15 AM. Defender did not flag the URL at the time, as the domain was newly created and had not yet been recognised as malicious. However, the threat was detected on 7th September when the user attempted to access the URL, triggering Defender's real-time protection mechanisms.
- SOC team responded immediately with a series of containment and remediation steps to mitigate any potential risk:
 - Blocked the malicious URL
 - Reset the user's password
 - Revoked active sessions
 - Deleted the email from the user's inbox.
 - Analysed user's sign-ins, audit logs, and authentication methods logs, and no suspicious activity found other than user interacting with malicious URL.
- Out of this incident we conducted a lessons learned activity to review what went well and highlighted some improvements. We have since implemented changes to strengthen our controls and response processes.

What do we want you to do

- Use ECC email address for everything ECC – secure, updated, controlled.
- Have a privacy notice which is accessible – use the model ECC one and include it on your signature
- Look out for people asserting their rights
- Use a strong password
- Don't allow others to use your device where ECC data is stored
- Be careful
 - Don't send information to the wrong place – check
 - Secure destruction of papers
 - Don't leave personal papers in a risky place
- Be on the alert for scams – we are only as safe as our weakest user



Do not share

your login details or have the same as other logins

Do not
bypass

security controls

Do not

setup auto forward

Access

Only access your ECC account from safe countries

Do not install

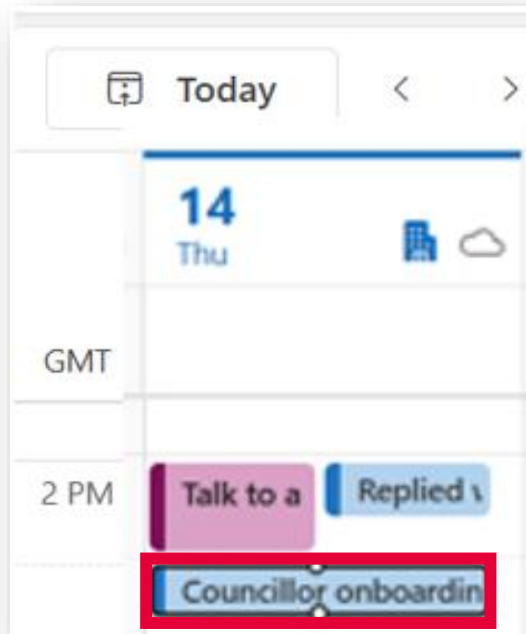
applications or software on ECC devices without seeking guidance

Digital Adoption and Change

EDS Councillor Onboarding

May 2026

Join a meeting – MS Outlook Calendar



Calendar - Dee.Kahn@essex.gov.uk

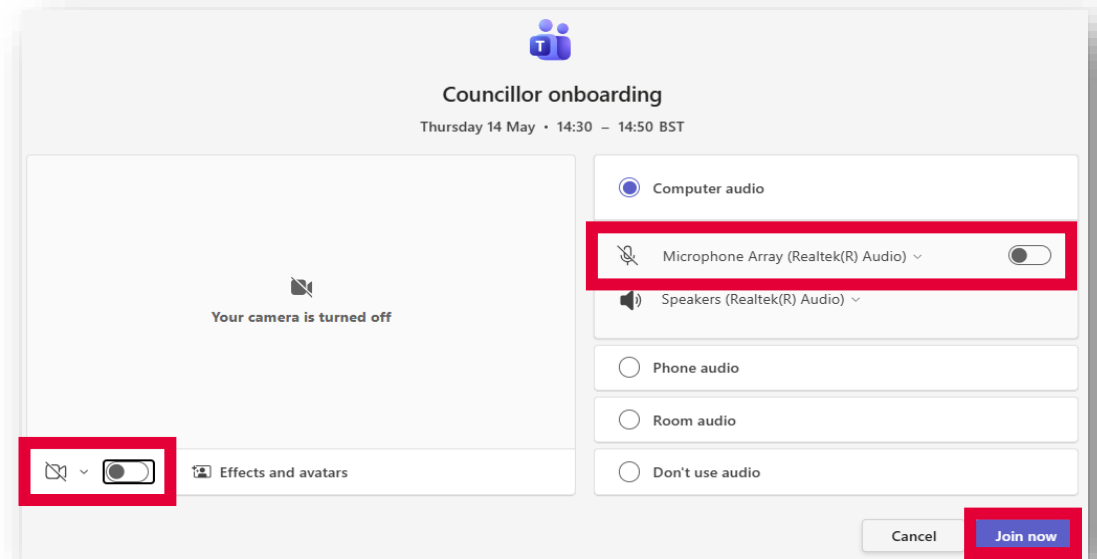
Councillor onboarding



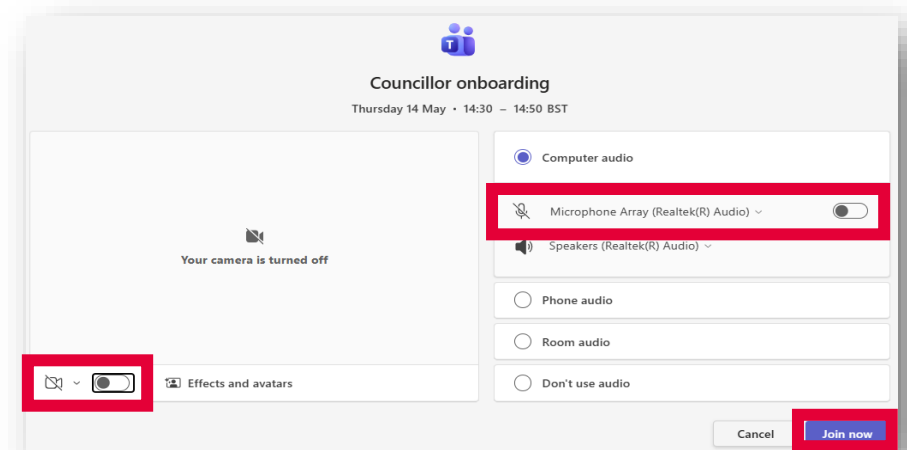
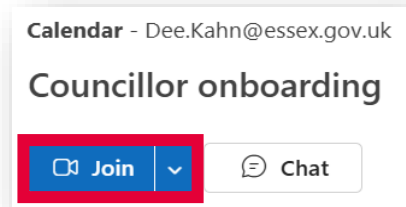
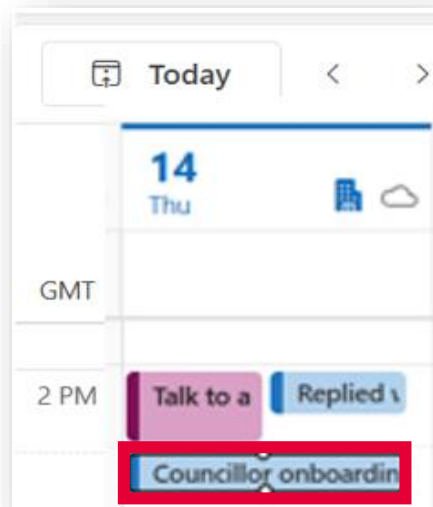
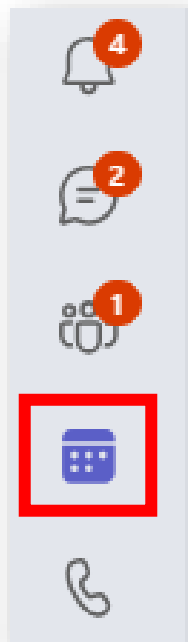
Join



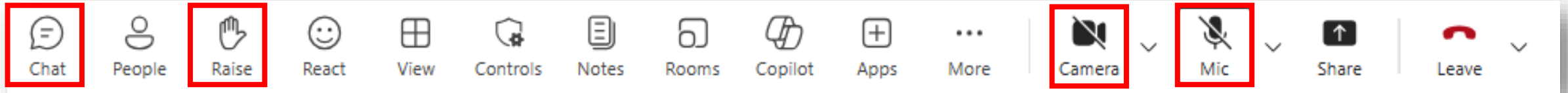
Chat



Join a meeting – MS Teams Calendar



MS Teams - Meeting Toolbar



Chat

Chat icon

Click to see comments and questions relating to the meeting.



Raise

Raise icon

Want to verbally participate in the meeting? Let the host know by using this icon.



Camera

Camera icon

If you want those attending the meeting to see you, click this icon.



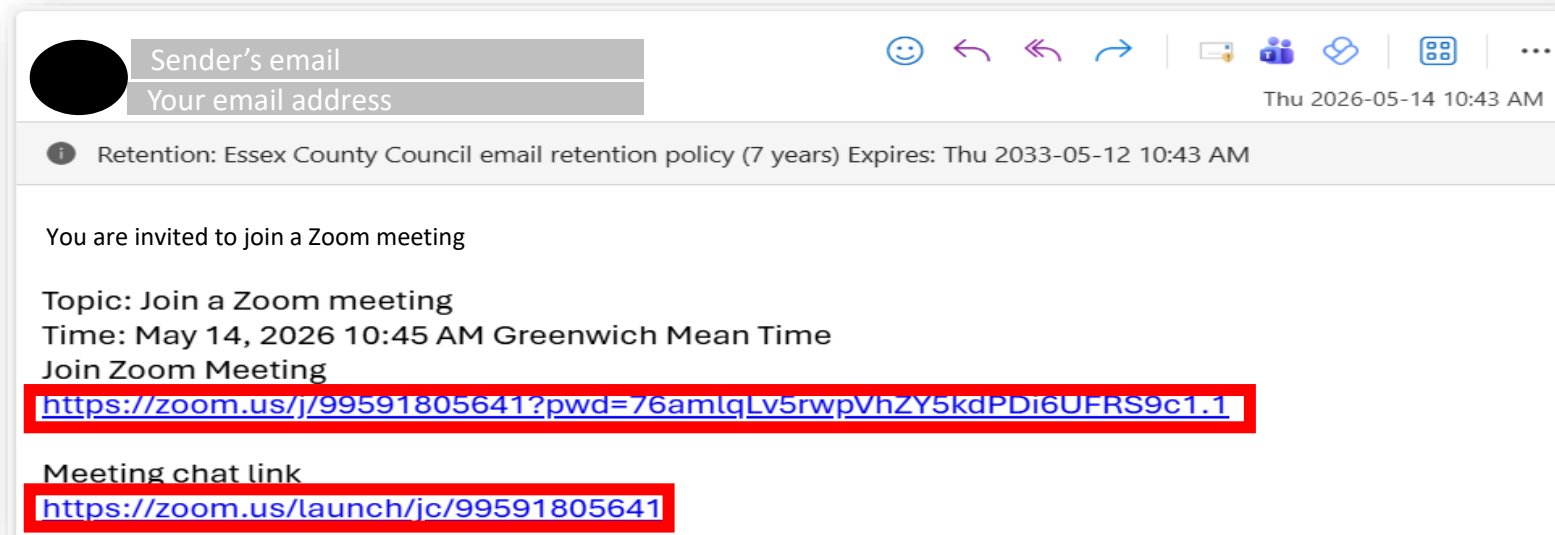
Mic

Mic icon

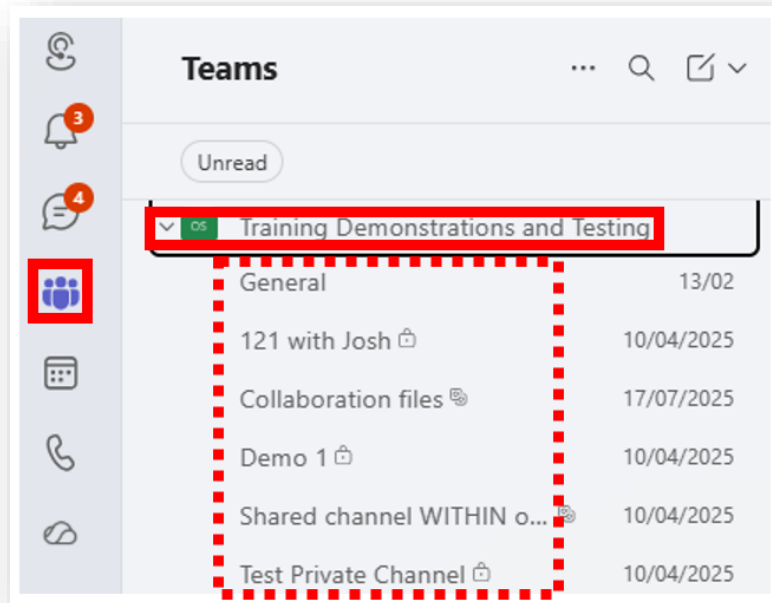
Use this icon to mute or unmute your microphone.

Microsoft Teams combines meetings with chat and collaboration tools, while **Zoom** is designed specifically for hosting video meetings and webinars.

Join a Zoom meeting



Access a MS Teams site



Microsoft Teams sites are where a group of people engage and carry out work together

Channels are like 'sub folders' that relate to specific topics

If you've been invited to join a Teams site, you will get an email invitation or see it appear automatically in Teams

If you haven't been invited to a Teams site, you need to ask the owner to add you as a member

Using a non ECC Device

If you want to use a personal Windows device or Apple device we recommend using the Web Apps to access your ECC emails or use Teams.

You can do this by going to Office.com and sign into the relevant Apps e.g. Outlook or Teams using your ECC email address and then follow the instructions. (We will email instructions to you all next week)

Please do not try to install the Microsoft Office apps on your personal devices (mobile phones tablets and laptops) as it will apply our ECC policies which will apply to your device put in place certain restriction's such as more complex password requirements.

Using a non ECC Device Cont.

We are working currently to.....

Improve our mobile phone user experience – it is very much a work in progress and we are listening to users to act on feedback of their experiences

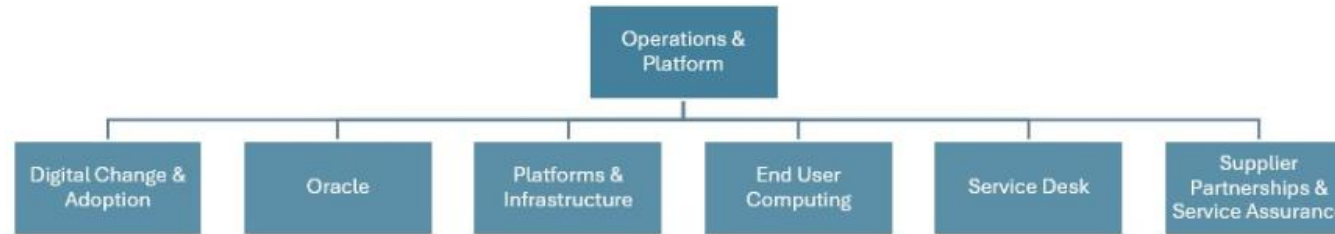
Produce a solution for many of you who have dual roles across District and Borough and County Councils to access your ECC emails on a District device and vice versa. We will send further updates soon.



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Further Information

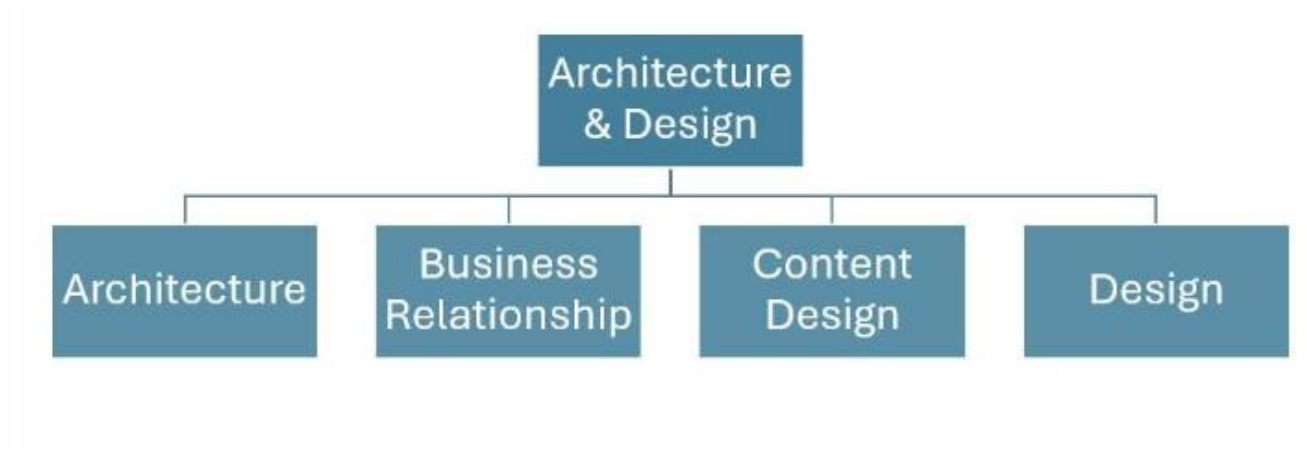
Operations & Platform



The Teams...

- **Digital Change & Adoption** – supports the adoption of, and learning and development for, new solutions and systems and oversees ECC user experience.
- **Platform & Infrastructure** – oversees the availability, performance, and scalability of the organisation's critical platforms and digital services.
- **Oracle** – manages, secures, and supports our Oracle Cloud solutions—covering infrastructure, integrations, and applications to ensure reliable, resilient, and innovative services.
- **End User Computing** – To ensure every user is equipped with secure, reliable devices and licenses and fulfilment of service requests
- **Service Desk** – the single point of contact to resolve IT issues, and keep business operations running smoothly
- **Supplier Partnerships & Service Assurance** - This team manages third-party risks and strengthens vendor relationships to ensure high-quality, secure, and uninterrupted service delivery.

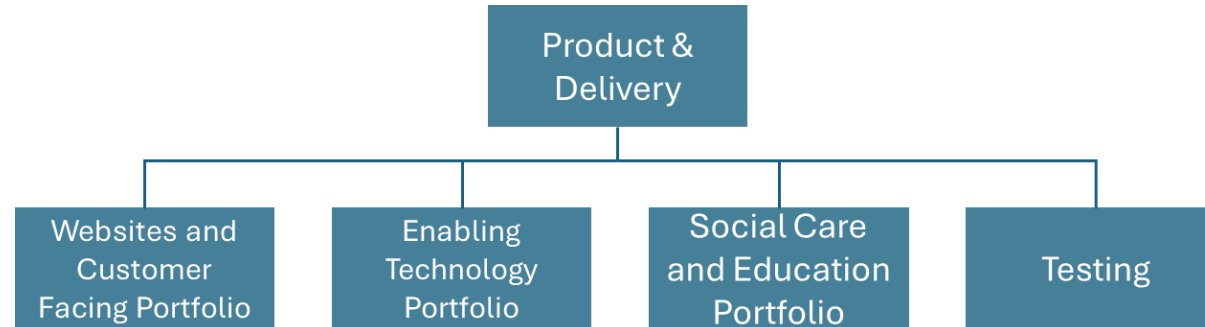
Architecture & Design



The Teams...

- **Architecture** - sets secure and sustainable rules so digital solutions work well together and support the organisation's goals.
- **Business Relationship Management** – connects the Essex Digital Service with services across the organisation, shaping opportunities and priorities to deliver the right improvements.
- **Content Design** - create clear, accessible digital content that helps people quickly understand and use council services.
- **Design** - design inclusive, evidence-based services to meet the needs of people using council services.

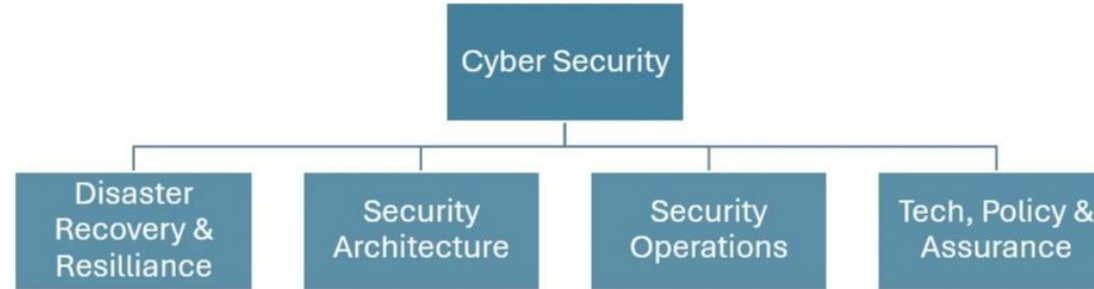
Product & Delivery



The Teams...

- **Websites and Customer Facing Portfolio** - designs and manages our public-facing websites and digital channels, ensuring residents and customers can easily access information and services online.
- **Enabling Technology Portfolio** - delivers and maintains the core technologies that underpin our digital products, making sure our tools and platforms are reliable, scalable, and fit for purpose.
- **Social Care and Education Portfolio** - develops and supports digital solutions for social care and education, helping frontline staff and service users benefit from modern, accessible, and effective digital services.
- **Testing** - ensures all our digital products and services are robust, secure, and user-friendly by rigorously testing new features and updates before they go live.

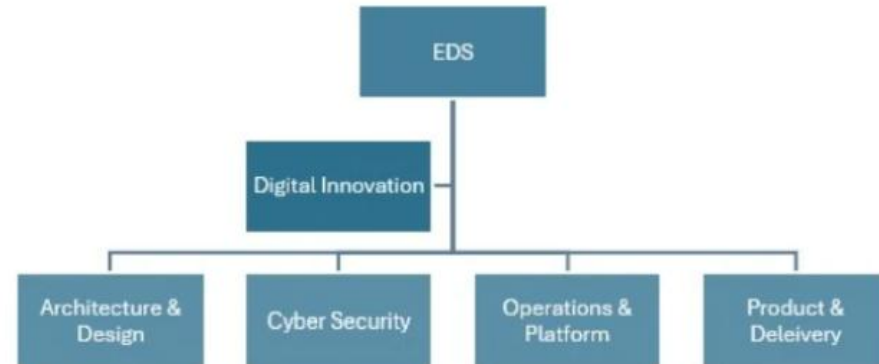
Cyber Security



The Teams...

- **Disaster Recovery & Resilience** - ensures the organisation can withstand, recover from, and continue operating through major disruptions by planning, testing, and strengthening systems against failures.
- **Security Architecture** - oversees the selection, deployment, and maintenance of security technologies.
- **Security Operations** – monitors, detects, and responds to threats across an organisation’s systems to keep its digital environment secure and resilient.
- **Technology, Policy & Assurance** - reviews and updates technical standard operating procedures and information practices to align with the strategy.

Digital Innovation



The Team

Digital Innovation Lead - a role focused on setting the strategic direction for digital innovation and embedding ways of working that deliver responsible, evidence-led, and impactful change.

- My aim is to explore the art of the possible and turn it into tangible value for residents, staff, and partners.
- I'm working across ECC and the wider Essex system to identify opportunities, evaluate emerging technologies, and lead projects that improve experiences and create long-term value.

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The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.