

Instructions on the acceptable use of Salisbury District Council ICT equipment and systems

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 You need to be aware that certain aspects of the guidelines refer to disciplinary procedures/action and you should refer to the council's Disciplinary Procedure for further information.
- 1.2 Internal and external email systems and the Internet are integral to the council's operations and essential to provide services required by customers.
- 1.3 The council's ICT equipment and systems are intended to promote efficient communication within the office and with other organisations. These guidelines give advice on the appropriate use of the council's computers including but not limited to PCs, laptops, PDAs, IT operating and telecommunication systems (including email and the Internet) ("IT equipment and systems"). All staff should familiarise themselves with these guidelines. You need to be aware of the risks involved in the inappropriate use of the council's computers and systems.
- 1.4 All IT equipment and systems are the property of the council. You should remember at all times that these systems are intended to be used for council business purposes only, and that any information stored on the network or on a PC or any other council owned equipment is and remains the property of the council. Users are reminded that the intellectual property rights of any material produced as part of their work for the council (whether stored in an electronic or paper format) also remain the property of the council.
- 1.5 Only equipment that has been purchased, supplied by, or approved by ICT Services can be connected to the council's network. This includes, but is not limited to, PCs, laptops, PDAs, digital cameras, data keys and telephony equipment.
- 1.6 Definitions for terms and phrases in this report are given during the course of the guidelines and at the end in the glossary.
- 1.7 Nothing in this agreement shall limit any recognised trade union from carrying out their activities under the Recognition and Facilities Agreement.

2. Who do the Guidelines apply to?

- 2.1 These guidelines apply to all users of IT equipment and systems including, without limitation, councillors, employees regardless of seniority or status, contractors, agency workers, work experience students and volunteers, whether those users are working from the council's offices or designated sites, their **home residence** or any other off-site locations.

3. Use of council Computer Systems:

- 3.1 This part of the guidelines covers the use of IT equipment and systems, and the use of the information created, held, stored and accessed. It also sets out your responsibilities relating to your use of these systems, and, in particular, the use of a computer terminal including any desktop, handheld or laptop computer designated for your use (whether shared or not).

3.2 **Software:**

You must not use any software on your PC other than that provided by ICT services and which you have been authorised and trained to use.

- 3.3. You should also note that it is illegal to make copies of the software which you use in the course of your duties. Software issued by the council for your use is licensed to the council and is protected by copyright law. You must not make copies of software or distribute software that has been copied. This could leave you or the council open to legal action and prosecution.

3.4. **Viruses**

Downloading from the Internet or introducing software programs by means of computer discs, DVDs, CD-ROMs, data keys or other means, can introduce dangerous and potentially business-destroying viruses to IT equipment and systems. All software programmes must be virus checked before use on council machines.

- 3.5 Computer games or **personal** computer discs, DVDs, CD-ROMs, data keys or other equipment, must not be used on the council's computers. If, in the proper performance of your duties, you need to transfer data from a computer disc, data key or similar equipment, you must first ensure that the disc/key is virus checked. If you have to send a disc to an external recipient in the course of your work duties, it must be labelled with a disclaimer for virus protection purposes. For guidance on virus checking please contact the ICT Service Desk (x600).

- 3.6 If you receive a warning message about a virus or you have reason to believe that you may have a virus on your system, you must notify the ICT Service Desk immediately.

3.7 **Security:**

You must not allow your PC to be used by an unauthorised person. Keep your personal password confidential, and change it when prompted. Do not use personal data (such as birthdays or addresses) for your password. You must not enter or use the system using any other person's password. If you become aware of any other person's password or that another person knows your password, you must immediately inform the ICT Service Desk. Managers should not ask users or the ICT Service Desk for the passwords of users in their department/unit.

- 3.8 Users can select other users who may have access to diaries for read only or author access. Other users, including managers, should not expect to have access to diaries or mailboxes of users unless the needs of the council or Service Unit require it. Advice can be obtained from the ICT Service Desk on the use of diaries or mailboxes including the marking of appointments as personal.

- 3.9 You must log out and switch off your PC at the end of your working day. If you are leaving your desk for any period of time you should lock your PC using control+alt+delete, to prevent unauthorised use.

- 3.10 If you have access to data and programs belonging to the council or created, held, stored or used by the council, whether in the office or at home or elsewhere, it is your responsibility to ensure the confidentiality of such information.

- 3.11 If you are responsible for collating, holding, storing or accessing information relating to organisations or people associated with the council, you must comply with the

requirements of the Data Protection Act and all Freedom of Information legislation. You should check information for accuracy before it is stored within ICT equipment and systems or passed to others, whether within or outside the council.

4. Email:

- 4.1 This part of the guidelines covers use of internal and external email, and the use of attachments.
- 4.2 The email system is a business tool and therefore should only be used in an appropriate businesslike manner (even in the case of occasional out of hours personal use). Outgoing emails sent from your PC bearing 'salisbury.gov.uk' or any of the council's sites as the sender's Domain Names will adversely affect the council's reputation or put the council at risk of legal or other action if the contents are inappropriate.
- 4.3 Personal messages may be sent or received in your own time (i.e. outside of your working hours) but these should respect the primary business purpose of the system and be kept to a minimum, ie, they must not be excessive or unreasonable. You should not misuse the system in any manner described in 6.1 below, for spreading gossip or for any more than brief messages. Because the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the right of public access to all information held by the council, it is important to understand that this includes information contained in emails sent from, received or stored on your PC or any other ICT equipment.
- 4.4 Messages sent on the email systems are to be written in accordance with the standards of any other form of written communication and the content and language used in the message must be consistent with best council practice. Please refer to the council's communication strategy for further information. Messages should be concise and directed to those individuals who need to know about their contents and are affected by them. Do not send anything by email that you would not be prepared to send on the council's headed notepaper.
- 4.5 As required by the councils Dignity at Work Policy, and corporate Equality and Diversity Policy, you must not use email to harass colleagues or other recipients by sending messages that are either argumentative, insulting, or phrased in such a way that you know, or ought to know, will cause distress to the recipient ("flame mail"). All staff are responsible for promoting a working environment which is free from intimidation, humiliation and harassment that violates any person's dignity. Managers should be particularly careful regarding the contents of their emails, which should not be used to criticise or rebuke users or cause humiliation, particularly when circulated to others by (for example) blind copying.
- 4.6 General email messages to a wider group such as "SDC Distribution" should only be used in an emergency such as flood or fire. In all other situations accepted council communication media such as "Link Up" should be used, All personal announcements should be placed in the relevant shared public folder (noticeboard) within Outlook.
- 4.7 Council employees' email addresses should only be given out to external recipients (in response to a specific request from external recipients) if such recipients have a genuine business interest in having them. This is to minimise the amount of "junk email" or unsolicited messages ("spam") received. It is preferable to use 'generic' email addresses (such as thecouncil@salisbury.gov.uk or developmentcontrol@salisbury.gov.uk) wherever possible.
- 4.8 You must not pass on any chain letters, "junk email" or spam received, except to forward

to the ICT Service Desk to block the site.

- 4.9 You should carry out regular housekeeping to remove deleted and sent items on a weekly basis, as this will result in a significant cost saving by reducing the need for extra storage space on the ICT network.
- 4.10 Should you receive an email message which has been wrongly delivered to your email address, you should notify the ICT Service Desk and not respond to the sender (because it can validate the email address to the sender). If the email message contains confidential information you must not disclose that confidential information to external bodies such as the media, members of the public, contractors, suppliers or customers, who have no business knowing it. Should you receive an email that contravenes these guidelines, the email should be brought to the attention of the ICT Service Desk.
- 4.11 Confidential information (including Personal Data or Sensitive Personal Data) should not be sent to external bodies (such as those mentioned in 4.10) by email without prior authority of your Manager.
- 4.12 You must not attempt to access an email not addressed to you unless you are authorised to do so by the user for business purposes. You may only send emails from your own login ID and may not send any emails other than under your own name unless you are authorised to do so by the other user.
- 4.13 Please note that the unauthorised reading of emails that are not addressed to you could constitute a criminal offence.
- 4.14 Although all incoming emails are automatically virus checked by the council's system, it is worth noting that emails and their attachments may carry dangerous or potentially damaging viruses. Never open an email attachment from an unexpected or untrustworthy source or if, for any reason, it appears suspicious (for example, if it ends in .exe). Such emails must always be virus checked before being opened. If in doubt contact the ICT Service Desk.
- 4.15 You must not send out, nor encourage the receipt of, non-work related email attachments including, but not limited to, pictures and video clips.
- 4.16 You should ensure that the transmission of "Personal Data", for example databases or spreadsheets, outside the council does not infringe the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 ("DPA") and the councils Data Protection guidelines.
- 4.17 All outbound emails will have the council's disclaimer attached. If your email is personal (subject to 4.2) then you should make it clear that this is so by stating such in the subject heading (see 4.20 below).
- 4.18 You must not use your email account to subscribe to mailing lists unless you obtain the prior consent of your manager, and they relate to council matters or are of professional interest.
- 4.19 If you know you are going to be away from your workplace for a day or more then you must activate your "Out of Office Assistant" facility on your PC so that it invites senders of emails to forward their emails to a colleague (with their prior consent) or invites contact by another method, such as phone or admin facility, so that any urgent business may be dealt with in your absence.
- 4.20 If you are away from your workplace on annual leave, or due to sickness or unforeseen

circumstances, it may be necessary for an authorised manager or member of ICT Services to access any of your emails that are of a business nature, to ensure that your manager or colleagues are able to deal with urgent business communications and your work. Emails which are clearly marked as “Personal” or “Personal and Confidential” in the subject heading will not be routinely viewed as it will be assumed that they are private and non-business related. If, however, these words follow another heading such as “Contract” or “Business” or “Services” which may be work related, then it will be assumed that the email is work related, and may be opened as and when circumstances dictate. Your attention is drawn to 4.2 above, and the section entitled “Monitoring Intercepting & Recording” at 12 below.

5. Internet Use

- 5.1 If you are given internet access this will be to assist you in doing your job. You must only use the Internet for legitimate research purposes which relate to council business and not for personal use except for the conditions in 5.2 below.
- 5.2 However, incidental personal use is permissible provided that:
 - 5.2.1 It is in full compliance with the council’s rules, policies and procedures including, but not limited to, the Dignity at Work policy and the Disciplinary Procedure;
 - 5.2.2 Usage is reasonable and not excessive, and takes place out of your normal working hours;
 - 5.2.3 Usage does include on-line shopping for private use, outside of normal working hours, but does not include any inappropriate sites such as on-line betting and gambling;
 - 5.2.4 Usage does not include accessing private email accounts such as Hotmail or Yahoo, newsgroups, chat-lines, dating agencies or similar services, or any material of the nature described in 6.1 below; and
 - 5.2.5 Usage does not commit the council to contractual obligations.
- 5.3 Please remember that websites can provide information on who has visited them. If you visit a site, you may well leave a cookie (a “calling card”) that will enable the site owner to work out who has visited. If the website that you visit is an inappropriate one, you are putting the council's reputation at serious risk.
- 5.4 Where practicable, the council will prevent access to known offensive, sexually explicit or any other inappropriate websites.
- 5.5 You must not download any graphics, screensavers, software or any other program from the Internet at any time unless specifically authorised to do so as part of your duties.
- 5.6 If you download or otherwise reproduce copyrighted information, text or other materials, you must adhere to any licensing conditions to ensure compliance with the Copyright, Design & Patents Act 1988, or any relevant succeeding or contingent act.
- 5.7 You should be aware that not all information on the Internet is accurate, complete or reliable and you should always critically evaluate its validity before using it.

6. Email and Internet Use and Misuse

- 6.1. Misuse of the email system or Internet system by the intended or negligent viewing, downloading or transmission, distribution or receipt of any material or images listed below (without limitation), whether or not in working hours, will constitute Gross Misconduct and the council will take disciplinary action according to the Disciplinary Procedure which may result in the offender's dismissal.

The material must not be;

- 6.1.1 Defamatory;
 - 6.1.2 Offensive, pornographic or obscene. This includes not only indecent or obscene materials which it is an offence to possess and/or publish, but also materials which anyone in the office might reasonably view as distasteful or likely to give offence to others;
 - 6.1.3 Untrue or malicious;
 - 6.1.4 In breach of copyright;
 - 6.1.5 In breach of confidentiality of council information;
 - 6.1.6 Harassment on grounds of sex, age, religion, religious belief, race, disability, sexual orientation or political belief;
 - 6.1.7 For personal business activities;
 - 6.1.8 Illegal;
 - 6.1.9 Bullying;
 - 6.1.10 In breach of security of any IT equipment and systems.
- 6.2 Personal and private use of the email system and Internet during your working hours is not permitted (with or without the limitations referred to in 5.2 for internet use). The email system and Internet should not be accessed otherwise than for the council's business purposes in working hours.
- 6.3 Any incoming emails of the kind referred to in 6.1 above will be stored on the ICT network, and could be forwarded or otherwise distributed. If you receive any such inappropriate email material you must:
- 6.3.1 Delete it – ideally without reading it first where the email is obviously spam (unsolicited junk email).
 - 6.3.2 If the sender is known to you or is not an obvious source of spam, reply to the sender saying that you do not wish to receive such material in the future. You should keep a hard copy of your reply so that you can demonstrate that you have taken the appropriate action. Your attention is also drawn to 4.10 above.
 - 6.3.3 Delete your copy of the incoming material. Never forward inappropriate material, externally or internally, unless requested by the ICT Service Desk for further action by them.

- 6.3.4 If your actions have failed to prevent the inappropriate material arriving, you should draw this to the attention of the ICT Service Desk (who may be able to block it).

7. Legal Action against the council

- 7.1. Messages sent over the email system can create legal obligations on the part of the council and could give rise to legal action against the council. Claims of defamation, breach of confidentiality or contract could arise from a misuse of the system. It is therefore vital for such email messages to be treated like any other form of correspondence and where necessary hard copies and/or a back-up on a computer readable medium should be retained.
- 7.2 You must not agree to terms or enter into contractual commitments or make representations by email without having first obtained proper authorisation.
- 7.3 You are also reminded that messages are disclosable in any legal action taken against the council and therefore before you send an email, think carefully about its content, and ask yourself how you would feel if you received that message or knew that it may be disclosed in Court.

8. Private Use

- 8.1 The council does not object to a reasonable amount of use of its word processing (MS Office) system for private documents, but such documents must only be worked on in your own time (outside your working hours). You should also be aware that the council has the right to view any documents on its word processing system at any time, and you should not, therefore, use it to create or store sensitive personal information.

9. Care of your Computer Terminal

- 9.1 You must take care when using any IT equipment and systems to avoid causing any damage to them. In particular, you must avoid allowing food and drink into contact with the equipment or allowing small objects such as paper clips and staples to fall onto/into the keyboard. Ensure that there is always good ventilation around the monitor and base unit and that the equipment is kept clean.

10. Reporting Misuse of email and Internet Facilities

- 10.1 You are encouraged to report unlawful or inappropriate use of the email system or Internet to your Manager, in confidence.

11. Training

- 11.1 Training will be provided as necessary in the correct use of relevant IT applications, and the interpretation of these guidelines, to enable you to carry out your duties. Should you feel that you require further training to carry out your duties, you should contact your line manager to discuss such training.

12. Monitoring Intercepting and Recording

- 12.1 The council routinely monitors the use of IT equipment and systems and may use specialist automated software for this purpose. The council may need to monitor, intercept and record the use of these systems, including your PC and any associated equipment to ensure this use is not abused. You agree to comply with the Acceptable

Use Guidelines, and to the council monitoring, intercepting and recording your telephone calls, use of emails, Internet use, faxed messages and word processed documents which are created, stored, communicated or otherwise made on any IT equipment and systems.

- 12.2 To ensure that it complies with its own legal obligations the council may monitor and record:
- 12.2.1 times, periods and patterns of Internet use, websites accessed, connection lengths and times at which connections are made; and
 - 12.2.2 frequency, times and patterns of email use, email addresses to which you have sent emails and the size of attachments and content.
 - 12.2.3 telephone calls for certain service sectors for the protection of staff.
- 12.3 The reason for the monitoring, intercepting and recording in 12.1 and 12.2 above is to check whether your use of IT equipment and systems is legitimate and complies with the council's rules, to find messages lost due to computer failure, to investigate misconduct, for example audit investigations, managers acting upon concerns about email or web usage, and as a result of any detailed analysis of web filtering reports etc, and to comply with any of the council's legal obligations such as the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Even deleted emails may be retrieved for these purposes. Users should therefore avoid using council email facilities to communicate any sensitive personal information.
- 12.4 The council's monitoring activities are regularly reviewed and appraised in order to ensure that they are not excessive or disproportionate to the need to protect the systems against infringements or breaches of integrity or security. You will receive periodic reminders that we are monitoring your PC use and of your obligations as part of these guidelines.

13. Publication on the council's website

- 13.1 The council's own public website is an important part of our external communication. You are encouraged to contribute material for this site and to refer to it to develop your understanding of the services that the council provides.
- 13.2 Before passing any material to the editors in the Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism (MED&T) Service Unit for publication on the council's web-site, you must ensure that it: -
- 13.2.1 is accurate, up to date and conforms to the style and layout of the website set by MED&T;
 - 13.2.2 follows the council's branding and style requirements as described in the Editorial Style Guide;
 - 13.2.3 does not infringe another person or organisation's copyright;
 - 13.2.4 clearly identifies the author and the date of publication and has been approved in writing for publication by your manager;
 - 13.2.5 is consistent with the council's Vision, and Core Values.

- 13.3 Service Unit Heads should ensure that there are named people in their work area who ensure that information provided by their sections on the public website is accurate, kept up-to date and conforms to the council's branding and style requirements.
- 13.4 If you are intending to add a link on the council's website to that of another organisation, as a matter of courtesy you should contact that organisation to request the link and ensure that the council is informed if the website address subsequently changes. You should also ensure that this site is accurate and does not contain offensive or inappropriate material and that a disclaimer is added about the content of all linked sites. Please contact MED&T for further information.
- 13.5 The council owns the copyright to all material published on its website. The unauthorised publication of council material or the misuse of either the council's material, or corporate identity will constitute Gross Misconduct. If you discover such material on the Internet, you must immediately inform MED&T or the ICT Service Desk.
- 13.6 Any enquiries regarding the content of any material contained on the council's website should, in the first instance, be referred to MED&T.

14. Glossary of Terms

Business Use	Use of IT equipment and systems for council business purposes
Data Subjects	An individual who is the subject of personal data
Domain Name	Text name identifying the council across the Internet - 'salisbury.gov.uk'
External bodies	The media, members of the public, suppliers or customers (including members of the public who are not employees, agents, officers or councillors of the council)
File Server	A computer that stores data for Network users and provides Network access to that data
Flame Mail	Messages that are either argumentative, insulting or phrased in such a way that you know, or ought to know, will cause distress to the recipient
Intercept	The contents of communication being available other than to the sender or recipient.
IT Equipment and Systems	The council's computers including but without limitation laptops and PDAs, IT, operating and telecommunications systems (including email and the Internet).

Monitoring	Observe, supervise, keep under review, measure or test at intervals of transmission for the purpose of control or regulation.
Network	An interconnected system of computers (including file servers) each belonging to the council, which can communicate with each other via the council's operating and telecommunications systems and share files, data and resources or the operating and telecommunications mechanism of the council, including the file servers and computers or the information stored on a central information system (owned by the council) including the computer file servers.
Personal Data	Biographical information such as a person's name, age, address or details of a worker's salary and bank account or completed job application forms
Personal Use	Use of IT equipment and systems for private and non-council business related purposes
Privileged/Authorised User	[User authorised by another user or designated as a Privileged User by the council]
Recording	Registering, setting down for reference or retrieval
Sensitive Personal Data	Information relating to a user's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs or other beliefs or a similar nature, trade union membership (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), physical or mental health or condition, sexual life, commission or alleged commission of any offence or proceedings for any offence committed or alleged to have been committed, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings.
Spam	Unsolicited email messages received
Your PC	A computer terminal, including but not limited to any desktop handheld or laptop computer designated for your use.