

## **Implementation of Cyber Essential Scheme - Your questions answered**

### **What is the Defence Cyber Protection Partnership?**

The Defence Cyber Protection Partnership (DCPP) is a joint Industry and Government response to the cyber-security threat. The DCPP was established in 2013 by the MOD, other Government departments, and defence suppliers working together to improve the cyber-resilience of the sector in the face of increasing volume and sophistication of cyber-attack. Its primary output has been the development of a new Cyber Security Model (CSM) which, on current plans, will apply to all new Defence contracts from Q2 2016. You can find further information by searching for 'DCPP' at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

### **What is the Cyber Essentials Scheme?**

The Cyber Essentials Scheme is a set of measures that all organisations should implement to protect against basic cyber-threats on the internet. It was launched in June 2014. You can find further information on Cyber Essentials, including how to apply for certification, at [www.cyberessentials.org.uk](http://www.cyberessentials.org.uk).

### **Why is the MOD introducing a requirement for Cyber Essentials now?**

Procurement Policy Note (09/14) made it a mandatory requirement for suppliers to Government of certain types of contracts to hold Cyber Essentials certification. The MOD had an initial exemption but is now introducing Cyber Essentials, bringing it in-line with other Government departments and as a precursor to implementing its CSM.

### **Why is the MOD requiring Cyber Essentials and not Cyber Essentials Plus?**

This is in line with Procurement Policy Note 09/14. Cyber Essentials Plus will, however, be incorporated into the CSM, under which any contract assigned a risk level of Low or above will require suppliers to have achieved Cyber Essentials Plus. Full details of the required cyber profiles are set out in DEFSTAN 05-138, also available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Suppliers who expect to be bidding for such contracts in the future may wish to achieve the higher level now.

### **Does the requirement to achieve Cyber Essentials apply to all contracts?**

The requirement to achieve Cyber Essentials will apply, from 1 January 2016, to all new MOD requirements which entail the transfer or creation of MOD identifiable information. The requirement will not initially apply to existing contracts, but will be addressed following implementation of the CSM. Framework contracts are out of scope until they are next re-competed.

### **What is 'MOD identifiable information'?**

Information which could be identified as relating, either explicitly or implicitly, to the MOD and its activities.

**Does this mean I need to have achieved Cyber Essentials by 1 January 2016?**

Although the requirement to achieve Cyber Essentials will be included in new contracts from 1 January 2016, compliance is only required by the time of contract award.

**How much does it cost to achieve Cyber Essentials?**

The cost of achieving Cyber Essentials certification through an official certifying body is approximately £300. This does not include the cost of any improvements required to achieve compliance. Innovate UK runs a voucher scheme for Small and Medium enterprises which can be used to improve their cyber security. Further information on how to apply for these vouchers can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and searching Cyber Security.

**How does Cyber Essentials apply to foreign suppliers?**

If a foreign supplier is bidding and has an equivalent Cyber certification you must contact the MOD DCPD team ([issdes-dcpp@mod.uk](mailto:issdes-dcpp@mod.uk)) who will assess the equivalence. However, there is nothing preventing foreign suppliers from gaining Cyber Essentials certification.

**If a supplier subcontracts out elements of the contract, does it need to flow this down the supply chain?**

Yes, the requirement to achieve Cyber Essentials certification should continue to flow down the supply chain wherever those contracts include MOD identifiable information. It is always the responsibility of the contracting organisation to ensure that its subcontractor has achieved certification.

**Can a potential supplier be excluded from the bidding process if they do not have Cyber Essentials certification?**

As long as a supplier has confirmed it is working towards achieving Cyber Essentials and will have it in place prior to contract award, it will not form part of the selection criteria.

**What if a supplier cannot obtain Cyber Essentials ahead of contract award?**

The MOD will, at its discretion, allow suppliers extended time to obtain the certification if they can prove it is due to delays in achieving certification and not due to a supplier failing the process.

**What if a supplier is refusing to comply?**

It is at MOD's discretion not to take a company any further in the bidding process for non-compliance with Cyber Essentials. If there are exceptional circumstances which mean that a supplier cannot comply, the MOD will take a risk-based decision as to whether to proceed and, as a minimum, will expect alternative measures to be in place to mitigate the risk.

**How long is the Cyber Essentials certification valid for?**

The Cyber Essentials certificate is valid for a period of 12 months, at which point it must be renewed. As above, it remains the responsibility of the contracting organisation to ensure that its subcontractor has renewed its certification.