

March 2014

### Introduction:

SCRA is preparing for the implementation of the UK Government Security Classifications by setting up new email signatures. It is important that all staff apply the new classification markings. [Guidance](#) has been produced to help staff do this.

The new classifications must be implemented across the UK by Wednesday 2 April 2014.

This means that all emails containing personal information that we send both internally and externally must be given a marking of OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE PERSONAL.

### Why is this happening?

The current UK Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) is being replaced with the new **Government Security Classifications (GSC)** to make it easier and more cost-effective for public sector information to be marked, handled and protected in a consistent and proportionate way.

### How the scheme works:

The new GSC are designed to protect information and to reduce the risk of sensitive information being compromised.

There are three levels of classification:

- **OFFICIAL**
- **SECRET**
- **TOP SECRET**

The majority of public sector information will be classified as OFFICIAL.

For particularly sensitive information requiring a more limited 'need to know' level of protection then a **caveat** is used by marking the information OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. Applying a **handling descriptor** makes the need for this protection clearer, and the 2 that apply to SCRA are:

- COMMERCIAL – commercial or market sensitive information
- PERSONAL – sensitive information relating to an identifiable individual

### SCRA's adoption of the scheme

SCRA's general business information (see Table 1) falls within the OFFICIAL classification and does not require a protective marking.

**All personal information is sensitive**, so when sending case or staff information electronically (i.e. communications with social work, etc) the email **must** be protectively marked as :

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE PERSONAL**

## Introduction of the Government Security Classifications

All staff must set up their default signature so emails are marked OFFICIAL–SENSITIVE PERSONAL.

You will only need to remove the default setting if you are sending another type of electronic communication (i.e. general email).

Staff that send non-personal sensitive information to Scottish Government, partner organisations or suppliers through emails are to protectively mark them as either :-

**OFFICIAL–SENSITIVE**

or

**OFFICIAL–SENSITIVE COMMERCIAL**

whichever is appropriate to the information being sent.

Staff using these protective markings need to set up their email signatures so these markings can also be selected.

### What we need all staff to do:

To ensure successful implementation, all staff must amend their email signatures. The document '[Protectively Marking Emails](#)' provides guidance on setting up the default email signature so emails are marked as OFFICIAL–SENSITIVE PERSONAL. Once staff are familiar with the guidance they should be able to set up other email signatures<sup>1</sup> to suit their business needs.

To ensure SCRA are prepared for the new GCS users must send a test email using their new default signature to the [SCRA Security Mailbox](#). This is to provide assurance to SCRA management that all staff have set up their default signatures correctly before the GSC come into force on 2 April.

Any staff revising a document that has been protectively marked using the old classifications must remove them and either not mark the document as it is not sensitive or mark OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. That is old markings such as NON-PROTECTIVELY MARKED, UNCLASSIFIED or PROTECT are to be removed and those marked RESTRICTED are now to be marked as OFFICIAL\_SENSITIVE in accordance with the guidance given above.

### Action for managers:

All managers should by now be fully briefed on the implementation of GSC. Managers now need to ensure that every member of staff is prepared for the introduction of the GSC, and are asked to check that staff have their email signatures in place and are aware of how to classify electronic communications.

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<sup>1</sup> Contact [Bruce Knight](#), if help is needed to set up other signatures for protectively marking emails

## Introduction of the Government Security Classifications

### What if we fail to classify information correctly?

Failure to apply a protective marking will mean that SCRA is not complying with our obligations as a public body, and could compromise information security.

### When am I to use the OFFICIAL–SENSITIVE marking?

Table 1 shows the difference between general business information and when it becomes sensitive that it needs added protection. Due to the nature of SCRA's business SCRA regards all personal information as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE.

OFFICIAL	It becomes OFFICIAL- SENSITIVE when...
All records which allow people to be identified are "personal data" and we are trusted to protect it.	...children or vulnerable adults may be at direct risk of harm if the information is shared with the wrong people.
Management information and reports are critical to smooth running and accountability of the business.	...announcements or processes associated with it would be seriously harmed if released.
Draft reports are embargoed before release.	...the content is so controversial that mishandling will have serious consequences for SCRA or SG.
IT Network plans might be commercially sensitive or contain details of security protections.	...indicated security vulnerabilities would allow an attacker to seriously compromise our systems.
Policy development and advice to ministers.	...if the subject is very contentious and sensitive

**Table 1: Routine business information and sensitive business information.**

### Any questions?

If you have any questions about implementing the GSC please contact [Bruce Knight](#), SCRA's Information Security & Technical Assurance Officer on 61596 or your line manager.