Government Security

Government Security Centre for Cyber

GovAssure

Contents

Introduction

The Government Security Centre for Cyber (Cyber GSeC) provides support and advice on cyber security improvements across government. We provide expert consultancy services aligned with the government's:

- Functional Standard GovS 007: Security

- Cyber Security Policy Handbook

- Cyber Security Strategy

We play a crucial role in supporting public sector organisations with their cyber security, ensuring they can protect critical services, manage incidents, and increase resilience. This supports government to lead the way in developing, managing, and protecting essential services.

Cyber GSeC provides services at GovAssure stages 2, 3, and 5 as shown in the diagram on page 6*.

*Correct at the time of publishing

We play a crucial role in supporting public sector organisations with their cyber security, ensuring they can protect critical services, manage incidents, and increase resilience.

Our GovAssure Services

Who is it for?

Any government organisation going through the GovAssure process that has agreed with GSG that Cyber GSeC support can be provided.

How do you start?

All requests for our GovAssure services need to be made through the GSG GovAssure team. The GSG GovAssure lead will work with the organisation and Cyber GSeC to agree what services can be provided for each stage of the process.

Once that agreement is in place, formal service engagement will begin. A Cyber GSeC consultant will contact you to understand the timelines for delivery of the service including any internal or external pressures on delivery, such as the timeline for the Independent Assurance Review at Stage 4.

Cyber GSeC will work collaboratively with the organisation to assist in the completion of its GovAssure process. There are four services available, in agreement with GSG, to organisations participating in GovAssure.

Each service is discrete in that an organisation can use singular or multiple services.

We do not provide a service at Stages 1 and 4.

The services, as set out below, are designed to support organisations at specific stages of the GovAssure process.

- **Stage 2** – GovAssure scope advice and guidance
- **Stage 3** – Self-Assessment Support
- **Stage 3** – Diagnostic Triage
- **Stage 5** – Targeted Improvement Plan Support

Important

Please note that the specific delivery requirements of the service will require appropriate engagement from the organisation receiving support, this may include access to resources, individuals and documentation.

Stage 2 – **GovAssure scope advice and guidance**

The service provides advice and guidance to support discussions between GSG and the organisation to scope the critical systems going through the self-assessment.

There is no specific deliverable from Cyber GSeC with any advice and guidance being captured by GSG. Cyber GSeC will provide written advice if requested or if the GSG representative is absent during the meeting. In that case Cyber GSeC are the GSG representative.

We will:

- review draft scope documents as required

- provide expert cyber security advice and guidance during discussions between GSG and the organisation

- provide written advice if requested or if the GSG representative is absent during the meeting

We are not able to:

- author or change the scope document

What do we expect from you at Stage 2?

- A copy of the draft scoping document which outlines the essential service under review, preferably two working days before any meeting

- The availability and engagement of your colleagues
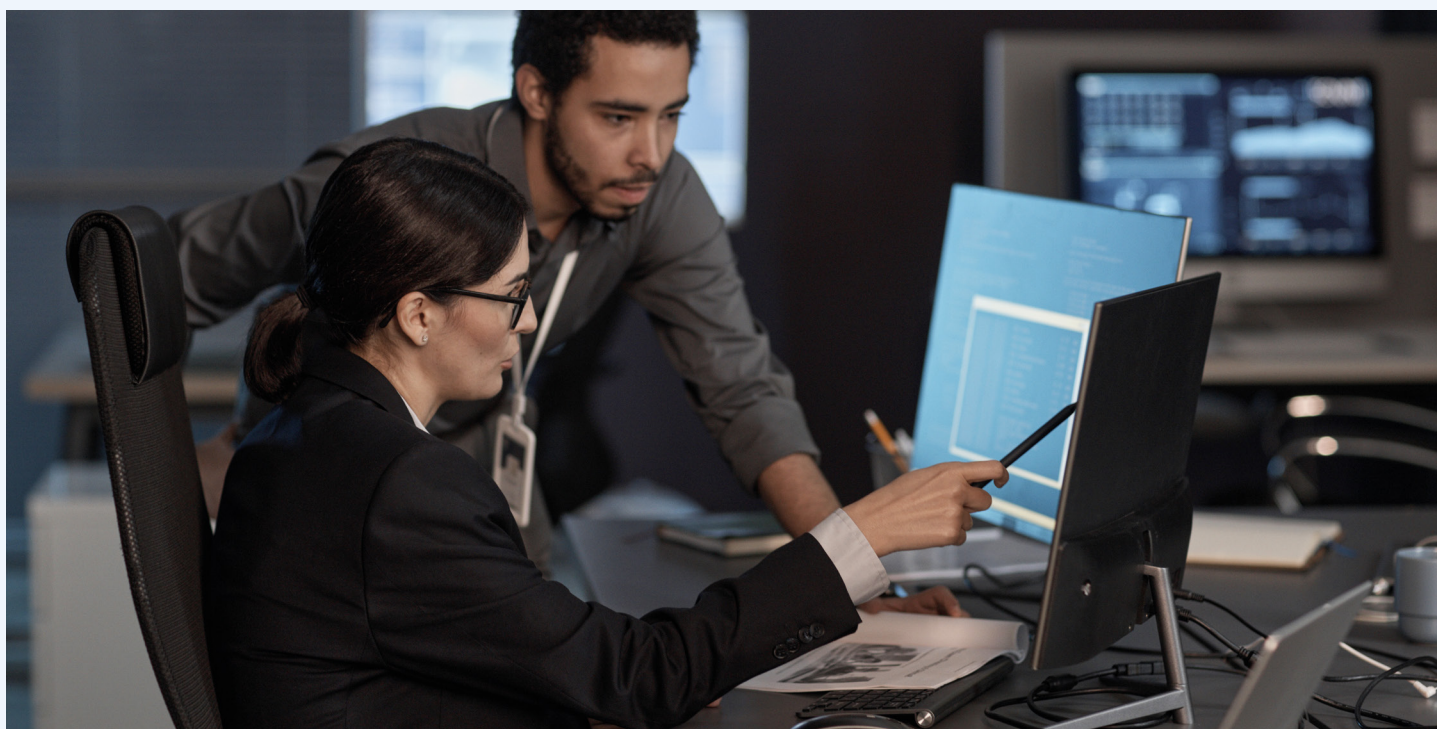
Stage 3 – **Self Assessment Review**

The Stage 3 Self-Assessment service is structured around providing advice and guidance to your organisation on how to approach the completion of WebCAF.

This is the vehicle that is used by the organisations to provide a self-assessment and for the independent assessors or other assessors to review the self-assessment. The introduction to WebCAF and instruction how to use it is provided by GSG.

We will, through written communication, meetings and/or workshops as preferred:

- reinforce any understanding of Stage 3 and WebCAF process

- provide advice and guidance on how to approach responses to Contributing Outcomes (COs) and Indicators of Good Practice (IGPs) in WebCAF

- assist with the identification of relevant documentary evidence such as policy, process, reports that you may have already in place

- identify what evidence may lie with other assurance frameworks (ISO 27000, NIST) already used in your organisation

- provide advice and guidance on meeting the target Government CAF profile

- provide advice and guidance to understand the example evidence provided in GovAssure WebCAF and how to apply it

- provide a tailored review of self-assessment submissions. This will give a view on:

  - whether the commentary provided meets the requirements of the Government CAF Profile (Baseline or Enhanced)

  - whether the self-assessment commentary could undergo an independent assessment. This will focus on the likelihood of an independent assessor stating that an assessment cannot take place considering the quality of the commentary and evidence provided

  - the opportunity to improve your self-assessment commentary and find if required additional evidence before submitting to an independent or other assessor

- provide advice and guidance in an agreed written format

We are not able to:

- complete or submit the self-assessment on your behalf

- provide any form of sign off of the self-assessment

- gather evidence on your behalf

- provide advice on remediation at this stage

- manage your staff or third parties in the process

What do we expect from you at Stage 3?

- If required, a pre-meet to discuss the approach

- Early availability and engagement of your colleagues

- Regular timetabled meetings

- A copy of the completed scoping document

- Appropriate access rights to your WebCAF

- Access to any evidence put forward in the self-assessment, if possible

Stage 3 – **Diagnostic Triage Service**

This service is provided only when specifically requested by GSG to support an organisation in its self-assessment and to inform GSG in their support for the organisation.

Therefore, the decision to consume this service is between GSG and the organisation. There are two different sub services that can be delivered. Either or both services can be consumed. They are:

Stage 3 – **Diagnostic Triage Service - Workshop facilitation**

We will:

- facilitate a workshop, set up by the organisation, to take attendees through the completion of one or two contributing outcomes (dependent on time) along with supporting IGP statements

The purpose of this workshop is to help you understand the approach and quality of the commentary and evidence required for the completion of the CAF self-assessment. This will further enable an independent assessor or any assessor to conduct an assessment.

We are not able to:

- organise the workshop
- complete or submit the self-assessment on your behalf
- gather evidence on your behalf
- provide any form of sign off of the self-assessment
- provide advice on remediation at this stage
- manage your staff or third parties in the process

Stage 3 – **Diagnostic Triage Service – Sample review of the organisation's WebCAF**

We will:

- conduct a more in-depth sample review of a series of contributing outcomes (number to be agreed with GSG)
- provide written suggested amendments to commentary and evidence where it is identified that there is a need for more information and/or evidence

We are not able to:

- organise the workshop
- complete or submit the self-assessment on your behalf
- gather evidence on your behalf
- provide any form of sign off of the self-assessment
- provide advice on remediation at this stage
- manage your staff or third parties in the process

What do we expect from you at Stage 3? – Diagnostics and Triage Service

- Early availability and engagement of your colleagues.
- Organising and being secretariat at any workshop

- A copy of the completed scoping document
- Appropriate access rights to your WebCAF
- Access to any evidence put forward in the self-assessment, if possible

Stage 5 – **Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP)**

The TIP is informed by the output from Stage 4 of the GovAssure process.

Utilising the output from the independent or other assessor review, our consultants will use their experience to assist you to prioritise remediation activities based on benefit and risk, whilst highlighting any dependencies

We will:

- assist you in the production of your TIP based on the report issued by the independent or other assessor from Stage 4. To do that we shall assist you to:

- consider the Contributing Outcomes that were judged to be 'not achieved' in the final report authored by the independent or other assessor

- discuss which of those contributing outcomes should be prioritised for remediation activity and clearly articulated in the TIP

The TIP and its associated actions and risks remain fully owned and managed by the organisation.

We are not able to:

- author or own the TIP

- assist in any technical implementation

- own any remediation activities

- own any risk

What do we expect from you at Stage 5?

- A copy of the completed scoping document

- Final Assessment Report agreed with the independent assessor

- Your focus on the prioritised areas for improvement based on the outputs of the final report

- Details of current cyber security and technology improvement plans

- Early availability and engagement of your colleagues

- Access to your WebCAF and evidence for review

At every stage of our
involvement, you will
benefit from the knowledge,
advice, and support of
people passionate about
the public sector who are
also proven experts in
the cyber security field.

Benefits and Objectives

Aligning the right evidence

Our support helps government organisations work towards meeting the objectives and outcomes of the Government Cyber Security Strategy and Government Cyber Security Policy Handbook. The Cyber GSeC outputs from the services provided are detailed in the service descriptions above.

Hands on WebCAF guidance

We provide subject matter expertise to support in the identification and presentation of evidence to support an organisation's WebCAF submission as part of the GovAssure process, helping improve cyber resilience security objectives.

Prioritising remediation

Maximise the Stage 4 output to prioritise remediation based on outcomes, risks, and dependencies. Written advice and guidance is provided to the organisation in a form directly correlating to the relevant COs and IGPs.

Cost effective

Our involvement reduces the risk of a potentially ineffective submission and hence the likelihood of funding an abortive assessment with associated costs.

Access and Funding

GovAssure is a referral only service. If you think that you may need Cyber GSeC support, please speak to your GSG contact. Once agreed with GSG, you should contact Cyber GSeC at cybergsec@hmrc.gov.uk to set up an initial call to discuss your requirements in more detail. You will be given an estimated duration of consultancy time once your requirements have been established in full.

The GovAssure service is funded by the National Cyber Security Programme (NCSP) and will not be charged to departments, their EAs or ALBs should they wish to use it.

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