

Buckinghamshire County Council Email Blocking Policy

1 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 E-mail blocking: The process of stopping e-mail from reaching its intended recipient.
- 1.2 Sender: The sender of the e-mail. (Please note this policy is not concerned with Automated blocking of 'Spam' e-mails)

2 OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 To enable blocking of e-mail from specific external addresses.
- 2.2 To ensure that e-mail blocking is done for legitimate reasons and in a rational, fair and consistent manner.
- 2.3 To ensure that e-mail blocking protects staff and reduces disruption to Council services, by both blocking specific e-mail traffic and encouraging a change in the behaviour of the Sender.
- 2.4 To ensure that e-mail blocking is not used in retaliation, as punishment, or where there has not been significant inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.5 To ensure that proper recording and monitoring of e-mail blocking is carried out

3 SCOPE

The Council may seek to take action to block an external e-mail address where there is, for example:

- 3.1 Persistent abusive or threatening behaviour.
- 3.2 Personal or professional harassment.
- 3.3 Inappropriate disclosure of personal/sensitive/confidential information.
- 3.4 Inappropriate language.
- 3.5 Use of defamatory emails.
- 3.6 Use of persistent/vexatious emails.
- 3.7 Persistent use of 'spam' e-mail that is not blocked through automated systems.
- 3.8 A breach of any law.



4 DURATION

- 4.1 E-mail blocks should normally be for set periods.
- 4.2 If the block is for more than three months, quarterly reviews must be carried out to assess the continued need for the block.
- 4.3 The duration should reflect the nature of the reason for the block and the likelihood of the sender repeating the behaviour. An indicator of this may be whether the Sender has engaged in similar behaviour before.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Requests to block e-mail addresses can only be made in writing by the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors or Heads of Service.
- 5.2 The reason for the block should be clear and specific.
- 5.3 Any Officer that requests a block must consider reasonable requests to remove it.
- 5.4 The Sender must be informed of the action to be taken and the reasons for it, prior to the block being initiated. This should be done by the block requester.
- 5.5 The Sender must still be permitted to communicate with the Council via other means e.g. letter, telephone etc. It may be appropriate to request that the Sender has one designated point of contact.
- 5.6 Services must keep a confidential record of all requests to block e-mail addresses. This should include the name of the Sender, the address to be blocked, and the length and reason(s) for the block. A record should also be kept of requests to remove e-mail blocks.
- 5.7 The ICT Department must keep a central confidential record of all blocked e-mail addresses. This should also include the name of the Sender, the address to be blocked, the length and the reason(s) for the block.
- 5.8 The ICT Department will instigate quarterly reviews. The requester should advise if the block can be removed.

6 METHOD

- 6.1 A designated IT Officer will arrange the e-mail address block. E-mails will be blocked from reaching all BCC recipients.
- 6.2 In circumstances where a full block is not deemed necessary an individual may be advised to set their e-mail account to filter out any e-mails from a particular address.





