

The Govt. Security Classifications & Prevent

WHAT IS THE GOVT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION POLICY?

- **The Govt. Security Classifications** (GSC) were introduced by HM Govt. (HMG) in 2014 to ensure that all public sector organisations- including health collect /share process/ store HMG information so that assets are protected.
- HMG information assets are classified into three types: **OFFICIAL**, **SECRET** and **TOP SECRET**. Each attracts a baseline set of security controls providing appropriate protection against breaches.
- All routine public-sector business, operations and services should be treated as **OFFICIAL** by default - this includes personal information that is required to be protected under the Data Protection Act 2018 or other related legislation .
- A small amount of **OFFICIAL** information (e.g. health records or information patient information shared for Prevent/Channel purposes) is of a particularly sensitive nature, where loss or disclosure would have damaging consequences for your organisation, the Govt & the more importantly the individual.
- All such information of this nature should be identified & clearly marked at **OFFICIAL SENSITIVE - PERSONAL** by the originating organisation.

CLASSIFIED BY WHOM?

- Only the originating organisations can classify an asset or change its GSC classification (although other organisations may in certain circumstances challenge the classification).
 - **Every effort should be made to consult the originating organisation before a sensitive asset is considered for further dissemination disclosure, (e.g. including release under the Freedom of Information Act).**
- If in doubt you should speak with the originating organisation & consult with your organisational Information Governance (IG) lead.**



HM Government

OFFICIAL MARKING

- GSC classifications can be added to information in many different ways but the most important thing is that the marking is clearly visible to anyone using or receiving the information.
- There should be clear marking the top and bottom of documents or the subject line or body of emails.
- Personal/sensitive information shared within a health setting for Prevent or Channel will carry an **OFFICIAL SENSITIVE : PERSONAL** marking, i.e. where the loss or compromise of information could have severely damaging consequences, not only for individuals, but also reputationally for the Prevent/Channel policy more generally.
- **OFFICIAL SENSITIVE** information must only be shared by secure email such as NHS.net accounts.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that all GSC information that has been entrusted to you, receives the appropriate degree of care & protection.

PLEASE NOTE: If documents are marked as 'NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED' they can be openly be shared and published on public facing websites . If in doubt please ask the originating organisation.

If you're not sure or don't know, pick up the phone and ask someone that does!!

**Please click on this link for further advice:-
[HMG WORKING WITH OFFICIAL INFORMATION](#)**



7 Minute Briefing



WHEN HANDLING OFFICIAL INFORMATION.....

All information has value & should be treated with care. Your organisational policies will be able to provide detailed handling guidance but there are some key things that you will need to remember:

- Only share information with those who have a legitimate need to see it .
- Maintain a clear desk & always lock sensitive information away.
- Only use authorised IT systems to work with or store information .
- Dispose of classified information appropriately .
- Only carry the information that you need when working off site .
- Do not discuss sensitive issues in public places .
- **Report lost or stolen information immediately**

AND FINALLY:...

- All Prevent guidance/information should be checked for GSC protective marking.
- Documents marked at **OFFICIAL** or above **should not** be published on public facing websites or shared outside of the organisation without permission from the originating organisation.
- **However** they can be shared with relevant staff and colleagues on a need to know basis.

IF IN DOUBT PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR MANAGER OR IG LEAD