

Naming and registering websites

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Purpose

This guidance is for government e-communicators, Internet Service Providers and those interested in registering government domain names. This document contains the eligibility rules governing .gov.uk registrations. It sets out the information required for a successful application, the naming conventions that must be complied with and the conditions of use.

Introduction

This guide sets out the national rules and principles for registering and managing government domain names.

Follow the steps:

- Determine if you qualify to register a domain name.
- Review the naming conventions and ensure that your proposed name complies.
- Review the information required to successfully apply for a registration.
- Be aware of the conditions of use for a .gov.uk name.

These guidelines apply to all new requests for registration. Some domain names were registered before these current rules were published. Such names should be regarded as exceptional, and not as setting a precedent.

Domain names are not automatically issued and not on a first come first served basis.

Follow the procedure on the JANET website to [apply for a new domain name](#)¹

If you have any questions about these rules or specific candidate names direct them to naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk Applications for registration **must not** be sent to this email address.

Background to .gov.uk

The highest sub-domain underneath **.uk** is called a second-level domain (SLD). **.gov.uk** is such a second level domain. The Digital Policy team at COI through the Naming and Approvals Committee is responsible for maintaining this guidance which acts as the policy governing the SLD. JANET(UK) administers the SLD on behalf of the Cabinet Office, providing the name submission, name modification, approval and registration systems.

¹ New requests for .gov.uk domain name
<http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/registering-gov/gov-procedure.html>

Guidance

Eligibility

1. To preserve the integrity of the .gov.uk namespace, registration/ownership is limited to:
 - UK government and devolved administration departments and agencies;
 - executive and advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs); and
 - local and regional government bodies (including town and parish councils).
2. The following are not eligible for a .gov.uk domain:
 - individuals (included elected representatives);
 - associations representing public sector staff;
 - public sector pension funds;
 - standalone 'arms length organisations' where staff are not public servants, eg, they are employees of a private or public company;
 - charitable, voluntary and privately owned organisations;
 - companies and organisations registered by [Companies House](#)² that is, private companies (limited by shares or guarantee), private unlimited companies and public liability companies;
 - public, privately owned or charitable organisations undertaking work or programmes within the public sector;
 - public, privately owned or charitable organisations undertaking work or programmes targeting the public sector;
 - internet management and network related companies, including Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and hosting companies;
 - when a public sector organisation, with a .gov.uk domain name, undergoes a change of status that ordinarily would make it ineligible. For example, moving into the charity, voluntary, limited company or commercial sectors, or where the body has a statutory 'independence' from government;
 - [British overseas territories and international organisations](#)

Transformational Government

3. As part of the implementation of the Government's Transformational Government Strategy, Ministers have asked Departments, Executive Agencies

² Companies House <http://www.companies-house.gov.uk/>

and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to reduce the overall number of websites they own. Citizen and business facing information will be converged on www.direct.gov.uk and www.businesslink.gov.uk respectively. Other audience-specific information and services will also converge on a few selected remaining sites.

4. As a general rule, each Department should have one corporate website for information that relates to the workings of the Department (eg. Policy, Ministerial and PSA targets) and should use Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk for customer information, self-service transactions and campaign support.
5. No new websites will be permitted for Departments, Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies unless approved by the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Public Engagement and the Delivery of Services (DA(PED)).
6. You are strongly advised to consult your Director responsible for website rationalisation (e.g. Director of Communications, Director of Information etc.) regarding exceptions to the above guidelines. Failing this, contact the **lead for website rationalisation** alex.butler@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Naming strategy

7. Organisations with, or planning to have, an Internet presence should adopt and exercise a centralised approach to planning the acquisition, management and use of appropriate domain names. A domain name is intellectual property and has both financial and strategic value.
8. Central government bodies must use the appropriate name within **.gov.uk** as their primary domain. Use of non-government domains (e.g. **.co.uk**, **.org.uk**, **.org** etc.) must only be for defensive purposes and must be redirected to the primary government domain.
9. Domain names must not point to anything other than your organisation's home page on the **.gov.uk** domain or to your home page if it is held on one of the [other public sector domains](#)

Defensive registration

10. As part of a defensive strategy, you should consider registering other, closely related domain names, for example, generic top-level domains (gTLDs) – **.com**, **.org**, **.info** and in the **.uk** second level domains (SLDs) – **.co.uk**, **.org.uk**.
11. The objective of defensive registration is risk management – to avoid or reduce occurrences of:
 - **typosquatting** (common misspellings of your domain name);
 - **cybersquatting** (registration of domain names reflecting or similar to the names of existing organisations with the intention of selling the names back to you or for using them for bad faith purposes); or
 - **cybersmearing** (where anonymous authors set up web sites that spread alternative, false or disparaging information).

Directories and sub-domains

12. Departmental, agency, regional and local authority departments, branches, services, initiatives, projects and microsities, should generally be treated as top-level-directories or sub-domains of their parent or sponsoring body, for example:
 - **department.gov.uk/project/** (top-level-directory)
 - **housing.authority.gov.uk** (sub-domain)
13. When agency and NDPB websites are moved to their parent department's site, it will be expected that they have the form **[domain/NDPB]**, for example www.berr.gov.uk/csr

14. However, the use of sub-domains may be necessary for email addresses to delineate between an agency or NDPB and its parent department (e.g. help@csr.berr.gov.uk).
15. It is acceptable to create and use sub-domains (e.g. petitions.pm.gov.uk). However this is not preferable and should only be used for specific reasons, for example extranets or discrete applications managed by third parties. Wherever possible, sub-domains should maintain the look and feel of the parent site.
16. Sub-domains are established by ISPs and do not have to be registered via the Naming and Approvals Committee.

Using sub-domains of .gsi.gov.uk

17. The Government Secure intranet (GSI) is managed by OGCbuying.solutions. An application for an approved GSI name must be routed through your local ICT staff. General queries can be directed to the GSI Team at gsi@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk

Communicating URLs

18. It is acceptable and some organisations may find it preferable to drop the www for marketing purposes (e.g. direct.gov.uk). If so, this should work when entered into a browser address box ('resolve').
19. However, the domain name with www in front (e.g. www.direct.gov.uk) must work as an address. The form with www should be used as the preferred Unique Resource Identifier and cited as links in official documents.
20. The preferred case is always to use the **[domain/top-level-directory]** for example www.direct.gov.uk/actonCO2

Campaigns

21. Taking the above guidance, campaigns should be advertised using the form without the www. and with a top-level-directory, e.g. direct.gov.uk/studentfinance
22. However, references and citations in official documents should use the form www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance
23. The use of different levels of directories and sub-directories in the construction of the website will result in the URL becoming longer or shorter. The naming of directories should therefore be carefully considered. For

example, your top-level directories may reflect organisational brands, projects or the editorial focus of the website. They should also be unambiguous when spoken and easy to type. As with domain names, there is a need to avoid infringing trademarks and third party business names. Using the names of well-known people may also present difficulties.

24. The use of sub-directories should be avoided in campaigns and marketing material, for example:

- department.gov.uk/team/**project/** (sub-directory)

Naming Conventions

25. Names must not imply a national (UK-wide) activity when in reality it is focused on or limited to a regional/geographic responsibility or activity.
26. Names must reflect the legal name or registered 'trading name' of your organisation.
27. Names should minimise risk of confusion with similar organisations, geographic areas or similar registered names and avoid the risk of inadvertent masquerading.
28. Project names may be registered where they are genuinely pan-departmental or of national significance, for example to facilitate 'joined-up government' and where considered unsuitable as a [sub-domain or top-level directory](#) of the sponsoring or parent body.
29. Generic names should be avoided for local, regional or intradepartmental initiatives, and used only for genuinely pan-governmental activities sponsored by the Prime Minister's Office or the Cabinet Office.
30. Domain names must:
 - contain only standard ASCII alpha numeric characters A to Z; numerals 0 to 9 and/or hyphens;
 - not contain less than three characters;
 - not begin or end with a hyphen (-);
 - not coincide with internet protocols, such as, www, ftp, dns, whois;
 - not include postal codes, or pseudo abbreviations, such as, ltd, plc, gov;
 - not contain more than 60 characters (including the .gov.uk) but excluding the prefix www;
31. Internationalised Domain Names are currently not supported and xn-- names are not registerable. Where names contain letters that cannot be reproduced in standard ASCII, the conventionally accepted spelling should be used.
32. When registering any name you should be aware of the need to avoid infringing existing trademarks, trade names and third party business names. These can sometimes mistakenly be used as generic terms. Apart from giving unnecessary publicity there is a risk of it being illegal. Where a trade name, trademark or business name is to be used then written proof of your authority to use the name or mark must be submitted. It may be useful to

check the [UK Intellectual Property Office](#)³ and the searchable [Company Names Index](#)⁴ from Companies House.

Using abbreviations or acronyms

33. A small number of three and four letter acronyms may be considered as 'household names', for example, BBC, HSE, ITV, OFTEL, No10, However, to the broad majority of users acronyms are meaningless. Web managers should favour a user-centred approach and register accordingly. For example, host names like education.gov.uk, environment.gov.uk and defence.gov.uk may be considered intuitive and unambiguous to a general user.
34. Three and four letter abbreviations or acronyms (TLAs/FLAs) should only be used if:
- the domain name owner is a central Department of State (for example FCO); or
 - the domain name owner is a central government body such that it is generally known by that abbreviation within the public sector, and to the wider public (for example MOD, NHS); or
 - it can be shown that there is no reasonable and meaningful alternative.
35. Local government bodies should avoid using initials, wherever possible, as these are generally reserved for central government.

Reserved names

36. To reduce risk of public confusion the Naming and Approvals Committee has reserved some names and expressions for specific use. A copy of the current list is available on email request to – naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk

Use of unapproved names

37. You must not use a .gov.uk domain name on promotional material, printed material or other media until it has been correctly applied for and formal approval given by the .gov.uk Naming and Approvals Committee.
38. The Committee will **not** be responsible for any project costs incurred by breaching this rule. Failure to secure approval prior to printing or communication errors is not a ground for appeal if the name is rejected. Project teams and their Internet Service Providers must ensure that approval is secured before authorising the use of a name. If a typographic error is

³ UK Intellectual Property Office <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/>

⁴ WebCheck – Select and Access Company Information <http://wck2.companieshouse.gov.uk/>

made on promotional material the use of a temporary domain name may be approved for use until the error is corrected.

Other public sector Second Level Domains

39. There are a number of public sector areas that in some cases have dual-eligibility with their own domain and the .gov.uk SLD:

- **.mod.uk** (and .mil.uk) – these SLDs are reserved exclusively for the Ministry of Defence and the UK Armed Forces. The registry (operating and administering authority) is the Defence Interoperable Network Services Authority (DINSA). DINSA can be contacted by email at dcسادinsa-helpdesk@mod.uk or by telephone on +44 (0)1225 813426.
- **.nhs.uk** – this SLD is reserved exclusively for NHS organisations and services within the UK. It is administered by the [NHS Information Authority](#)⁵
- **.police.uk** – this SLD is reserved exclusively for UK police services and organisations. The registry (operating and administering authority) is the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) www.pito.org.uk/index.htm

British overseas territories and International organisations

40. In order to avoid confusion a number of geographic and geopolitical areas have their own country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD). For example:

- Channel Islands – **.gg** for Guernsey **.je** for Jersey
- Isle of Man – **.im**
- Falkland Islands – **.fk**
- Gibraltar – **.gl**
- South Georgia – **.gs**
- Pitcairn – **.pn**

41. Their administration departments, agencies and associated public sector organisations are not considered suitable for the .gov.uk Second Level Domain.

Using other languages

42. The Welsh Language Board advise that Departments required to provide a service to the public in Wales should, where there is a difference between

⁵ Network Address Registration Forms NHSnet – NHS Information Authority www.nhsia.nhs.uk/nhsnet/pages/connecting/registrations/default.asp

their English and Wales names, consider registering [Welsh language domain names](#).

43. The use in a domain name of a transliteration of an ethnic minority language must be avoided.

Devolved administrations

44. **Scotland.** Civil Service departments, agencies and services within Scotland, frequently mirror national departments and services, eg, in 'Whitehall'. In order to minimise the risk of confusion to the public and to avoid inadvertent masquerading then geographic clarification **must** be considered.

For example: www.scottishproperty.gov.uk
www.property-scotland.gov.uk

45. **Gaelic language** – The Scottish Parliament has passed legislation – Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Departments, councils and agencies providing a service to the public in Scotland may where there is a difference between their Welsh and English names consider registering the Gaelic language equivalent. Applications for Gaelic language domain names must provide, for information, the English language equivalent.

For example: www.gaidhealtachd.gov.uk
and www.highland.gov.uk

46. **Northern Ireland.** Civil Service departments and agencies within Northern Ireland, frequently mirror departments and services, eg, in 'Whitehall', are required to use a geographic/regional indicator, for example this suffix (with or without the hyphen) '-ni'.

For example: www.niproperty.gov.uk
www.property-ni.gov.uk

47. **Wales.** Domain names should be in English. In order to minimise the risk of confusion and to avoid inadvertent masquerading then geographic clarification must be considered by departments, councils and agencies providing a service to the public in Wales.

For example: www.welshhousing.gov.uk
www.housing-wales.gov.uk

48. **Welsh language** – this is the current exception for domain names. Welsh Language Board advise that departments, councils and agencies providing a service to the public in Wales should, where there is a difference between their Welsh and English names, consider registering the Welsh language

equivalent. Applications for Welsh language names must include information on the English language equivalent.

For example: www.anglesey.gov.uk and
www.ynysmon.gov.uk

49. Where the full Welsh language title is not used the following **suffixes** may be used (with the hyphen):

- ‘-cb’ Cyngor Bwrdeistref (Borough Council)
- ‘-cs’ Cyngor Sir (County Council)
- ‘-ct’ Cyngor Tref (Town Council)
- ‘-wcc’ Cyngor Cymuned

Local authorities

50. Local authorities generally use the format ‘area.gov.uk’, unless there is the possibility of confusion with another authority or service (for example, national, devolved, regional, county or city) then geographic clarification will be necessary.

For example: www.anyriver.gov.uk
www.anyriveressex.gov.uk
www.anyriver-essex.gov.uk

51. Where districts or town have the same name then county/geographic clarification is required, for example town-county.gov.uk

52. Where the full title is not used the following **suffixes** may be used (with the hyphen):

- ‘-bc’ Borough Council
- ‘-cc’ County Council
- ‘-dc’ District Council
- ‘-mbc’ Metropolitan Borough Council
- ‘-ra’ Regional Assembly

For example: www.anyriverboroughcouncil.gov.uk
www.anyriver-bc.gov.uk
www.anyriver-essex-bc.gov.uk

53. Parish/town councils – where a domain name is to be operated by a ‘higher authority’ for collective website or email management of, eg, all the parish/town councils on a county-wide or other clearly identified geographic area then the following **suffix** can be used ‘...parishes.gov.uk’ – with no hyphen.

For example: www.norfolkparishes.gov.uk

54. Individual Town Councils – unless the full title ‘towncouncil’ is used the following **suffix** is required with the hyphen ‘-tc’

For example: www.anyrivertowncouncil.gov.uk
www.anyriver-tc.gov.uk

55. Individual Parish Councils – unless the full title ‘parishcouncil’ is used the following **suffix** is required with the hyphen ‘-pc’

For example: www.anyriverparishcouncil.gov.uk
www.anyriver-pc.gov.uk

56. Welsh Community Councils – unless the full title ‘communitycouncil’ is used the suffix ‘-wcc’ must be used.

57. Scottish Community Councils – unless the full title ‘communitycouncil’ is used the suffix ‘-scc’ must be used.

Using suffixes

58. Certain types of public sector organisations are required to use a **suffix** (unless the full title is used) (with or without the hyphen). These are:

- Associations of Local Councils/Authorities ‘-alc’ or ‘ala’
- Association of Parish and Town Councils ‘-aptc’
- Area Child Protection Committees ‘-acpc’
With effect from 01 April 2006
See ‘Local Safeguarding Children Board’
- Business Improvement Bid ‘-bid’
- Centre for Procurement Excellence ‘-cpe’
renamed as Centre of Excellence ‘-ce’
- Criminal Justice Boards ‘-cjb’
- Crown Prosecution Services region(s) ‘-cps’
- Digital Interactive Television ‘-tv’
- Educational networks ‘-edunet’
- Electoral Registration Office(r) s ‘-eor’
- Electronic voting see ‘*voting electronically*’ under **prefixes**
- Embassies ‘-emb’
- Fire and Rescue Services ‘-fire’ or ‘-frs’
- Government Regional Offices *see under prefixes*

• Housing Authority Trusts	'-hat'
• Joint Services Units	'-jsu'
• Learning and Skills Councils	<i>see under prefixes</i>
• Library and Education Boards (Northern Ireland only)	'-leb'
• Library Services	'-library or libraries'
• Local Education Authorities	'-lea'
• Local Government Associations	'-lga'
• Local Safeguarding Children Boards	'-lscb'
• Magistrates Court Committees	'-mcc'
• Magistrates Court Services	'-mcs'
• Mobile services	'-mobile'
• Museums museums	'-mus' or museum or museums
• National Park Authorities	'-npa'
• National Trails	'-way'
• Parish/Town councils (collective) hyphen)	...parishes (with the hyphen)
• Passenger Transport Authorities	'-pta'
• Passenger Transport Executives	'-pte'
• Police etc (excluding Police Authorities)	'-police'
• Police Authorities	'-pa'
• Port Health Authorities	'-pha'
• Public Health Observatory	'-pho'
• Prisons	<i>see under prefixes</i>
• Probation and related services	'-probation'
• Record Offices	'-ro'
• Scottish Community Councils	'-scc'
• Sea Fisheries Committees	'-sfc' or '-seafish'
• Single Non Emergency Number	-snen (with the hyphen)
• Street Works Registers	'-swr'
• Television	see Digital TV
• Valuation Joint Boards	'-vjb'
• Virtual Private Network/system	'-vpn'
• Waste Disposal Authorities	'-wda'
• Welsh Community Councils	'-wcc'

Using prefixes

59. Certain types of public sector organisations are required to use a prefix (unless the full title is used). These are:

- Excellence in Cities initiatives 'eic-' (**prefix** rather than suffix)
- Government Regional Offices 'go-' (**prefix** rather than suffix)

- Learning and Skills Centres
- Prisons
- Voting electronically

'lsc-' (**prefix** rather than suffix)
'hmp-' (**prefix** followed by name)
'vote-' (**prefix** followed by name)

How to apply for a .gov.uk name

Your application for a domain name **must** be submitted through an [approved Internet Service Provider](#) (ISP), who will act as your registration agent with Janet Customer Services, using the [appropriate templates](#).⁶

60. **Accuracy is important** – you need to give your ISP sufficient information – a number of applications are being initially rejected with advice because the applicant has not read the rules, used the wrong template, or supplied misleading or inadequate information.
61. Entries in the ‘to represent’ field **must** reflect the organisation or project that the requested name will represent and not the domain owner or sponsoring organisation or project if this is different. This should be included in the ‘domain owner’ field.
62. Entries for **Organisational Contact** – must be name/address of the person or contact point designated to receive communications from the Registrar/Naming and Approvals Committee related to the administration of the domain name. This person must be an employee of the proposed domain name owner.
63. Entries for **ISP Contact** – must be name/address of the person or contact point designated to handle hosting issues associated with the domain name. This person must be an employee of the proposed ISP.

Your application must describe your organisation

64. If the information requested below is not provided, the application will automatically be rejected.
65. To be considered for a UK government domain name you **must** clearly describe the status of your organisation (as domain owner) and the purpose of the domain name you are applying for. Include:
 - the status of your organisation (for example, central government, executive agency, borough council, parish council);
 - the role and objective of your organisation;

⁶ JANET Domain Name Registration: .gov.uk procedure
<http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/registering-gov/gov-procedure.html>

- the status of your staff (for example, civil servants, local government officials or employees) ;
- the source of your funding (for example, central taxation, CMF, council tax);
- to whom your organisation is accountable (for example, Secretary of State for...).

66. **Purpose of the domain name** – you must outline the primary purpose and planned content of your proposed domain name, for example:

- an information website
- a transactional website
- a campaign website
- an educational website, eg, aimed at children/schools
- a redirect page, or a name being used for [defensive purposes or typosquatting](#) (you must include the address to which the redirect is going)
- email purposes only

67. Who is the **audience** for your website? You must identify your primary audience (eg, educationalist, pensioners, general public, council tax payers etc).

68. **Using abbreviations within your application.** Not everyone on the Naming and Approvals Committee may know what your abbreviations stand for. Spell them out when you first use them within your application.

69. The Naming and Approvals Committee reserves the right to check the details you provide and to contact named individuals about any individual application.

Appealing against rejection of your application

70. If your application is rejected, it will be with advice explaining why the Naming and Approvals Committee has taken this decision.

71. You have the right to appeal against the decision. Your appeal should include new information on why you feel you should have the name you originally requested. Simply repeating your original application is inadequate.

72. [Failure to secure an approved domain name](#) prior to, for example, printing publicity and similar material, is **not** a ground for an appeal.
73. Many applications are rejected because they are made on the wrong template, or inadequate information is supplied. In these cases an appropriate resubmission is required not an appeal.

Using an approved Internet Service Provider (ISP)

74. The .gov.uk domain is not a commercial operation. Its management and registration are centralised, but the COI does not provide advice on who is a suitable ISP. These are commercial activities trading in a competitive environment.

[Details of JANET's approved ISP scheme](#)⁷

[A list of ISPs on JANET's scheme](#)⁸

How to make changes to or cancel your .gov.uk name

75. [Information regarding changes to a registered domain name](#)⁹

[Information regarding cancelling a domain name](#)¹⁰

⁷ Approved ISP Membership <http://www.ja.net/services/domain-name-registration/approved-isp-membership.html>

⁸ Approved ISP <http://www.ja.net/services/domain-name-registration/approved-isp-membership/a-isp.html>

⁹ Modifying DNS Entries for ac.uk and gov.uk Domains <http://www.ja.net/services/domain-name-registration/modify-dns-entries/procedure.html>

¹⁰ Cancelling Registrations <http://www.ja.net/services/domain-name-registration/cancelling-registrations.html>

The conditions of use for a .gov.uk name

76. There are conditions and conventions attached to the .gov.uk domain and the following paragraphs are intended to guide you on acceptable use of that name.
77. The applications (Web, email, etc) using a .gov.uk domain name must comply with current UK legislation and support channels that provide accessibility for disabled people, members of ethnic minorities and those at risk of social/digital exclusion. Legislation includes Copyright, Data Protection Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Welsh Language Act.
78. The minimum level of accessibility for government websites is Level Double-A of the [W3C guidelines](#)¹¹. Websites must satisfy this requirement by December 2008, as set out in Delivering inclusive websites (TG102).
79. Website code (markup and style-sheets) must validate with respect to its selected vocabularies (e.g. XHTML 1.0 and CSS 2.0). The importance of this is highlighted in Minimum technical standards for government websites (TG109).
80. The acceptance of the name is conditional on that name being used specifically and exclusively for the organisation on whose behalf it is registered. The Naming and Approvals Committee expects that the use of an approved domain name on a web server will lead directly to the home page for that organisation and not to that of its ISP/hosting service or any other agent, ie, a page on a non-public sector domain. Abuse of this principle will result in the name being withdrawn.
81. In practice this means that if you have a .gov.uk domain name it should be your principal domain name and not used simply as a redirect to a non-public sector domain (eg, .co.uk, .org.uk, .info, .com). Of course the protective registration of a name in other Top Level and Second Level Domains that redirects to your .gov.uk name is common and the accepted practice.
82. When you are using a .gov.uk domain name to deliver a web presence you are reminded that websites should comply with the **e-Government Interoperability Framework**, the **Guidelines for UK Government websites** and **Framework for Local Government** particularly on such issues as use of metadata, PICS labelling, accessibility and security.

¹¹ W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>

83. Having a .gov.uk domain name means you (the Registrant) have exclusive right to its use. Your organisation does not own the domain name outright; periodical renewals have to be undertaken to retain the right to use it.
84. If after registration the original status of your organisation or project changes to, for example, charity, voluntary or commercial status, then your eligibility for a .gov.uk address ceases. You must inform us at naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk and negotiate a timescale for termination of the name.
85. Protectively marked information must not be published under your domain name, unless release of the information is under Freedom of Information.
86. A registration fee is levied on your Internet Service Provider. This covers a period of two years, after which a renewal fee is payable for each subsequent two year period.
87. Registering a domain name does not mean that it is automatically a trademark. Refer to the Patents Office website at www.patent.gov.uk/about/ippd/issues/domain.htm
88. When your website goes live you must inform the .gov.uk Naming and Approvals Committee directly by email to naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk confirming (a) the .gov.uk URL of your home page, (b) the date that it went live as a public website, and (c) confirm that your website complies with and will continue to comply with the accessibility recommendation for public sector sites, that is, W3C WAI Level AA. Failure to comply with this may result in the name being withdrawn.
89. It is recommended the managers of individual .gov.uk domain names establish and maintain a generic website team email address, for example, `webteam@****.gov.uk` or where appropriate `postmaster@***`
90. Central government departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies must follow the transformational government strategy. You need to satisfy ministers and Directors of Communications that you have complied with the overall policy for government websites. No new .gov.uk domains will be permitted unless they conform to the model of website convergence. In general, this consists of audience-specific channels (e.g. Directgov, BusinessLink, workforce channels etc.) and department-run websites.

Withdrawal of a .gov.uk name

91. The following summarises conditions that may result in withdrawal of a .gov.uk domain name.

- a. Non-conformance with any of the above principles and practice of the rules and conditions.
- b. Persistent failure to maintain an accessible and functional website. For example, obsolete and de-commissioned domains – where there is persistent delivery of, for example, a code 404 page.
- c. Persistent failure to meet the minimum technical standards for government websites, including accessibility and coding standards.
- d. Failure to renew the name.
- e. Change of status of the organisation or project that the domain name represents or change of status of the domain name owner. If you inform us at naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk a suitable timescale for withdrawal can be negotiated.

See [Appendix A Process for withdrawal of a .gov.uk name](#)

Appendix A Process for withdrawal of a .gov.uk name

The following is our code of practice on the withdrawal of and right to use a previously approved .gov.uk domain name

- **Renewal not confirmed:**

We assume that all .gov.uk domain owners will wish to renew and be active in ensuring services will be continued. Therefore we restrict the effort we put into chasing an ISP for domain name renewal before using our right to terminate it. We will attempt to obtain confirmation of renewal twice over a 90 day period before withdrawal of the DNS entry.

- **Charges not paid:**

ISPs, upon joining the JANET's Approved ISP Membership Account agree to accept the responsibility to pay their JANET invoices in a timely manner. When registration/modification/renewal charges are not paid within 60 days of the date of the invoice we reserve the right to suspend the DNS entry and within another 30 days withdraw the DNS entry.

Where the ISP has indicated that it is not willing to accept responsibility for the renewal payment then within 60 days we will suspend the DNS and take reasonable steps to contact the named domain owner for instructions on a 'way forward'. If this is also unsuccessful then within another 30 days we will withdraw the DNS entry.

- **Decommissioned or faulty website:**

The minimum number of times and period over which we should attempt checking a domain name (a) for which we have received public complaints about its accessibility or the number of broken links, (b) that consistently appears to be decommissioned and/or (c) delivers nothing to the user, for example, a 404 page, three times over a 90 day period, then the DNS will be withdrawn.

- **Not conforming to the 'principle and practice':**

If a domain name is not conforming with the principle and practice (e.g. commercial ISP holding page), we would attempt checking a minimum of twice over a 60 day period before withdrawing the DNS.

- **Ineligible organisation**

The period of time that a .gov.uk domain name may continue to be used by any organisation or project after undergoing a change of status that makes that organisation or project ineligible for a government domain name should be negotiated with the .gov.uk Naming and Approvals Committee. Around 90 days

as a **redirect** to the new domain name before the DNS is withdrawn, should be seen as an average.

Definitions:

1. **Suspension** is taken to mean that the name will be switched off but after appropriate action or payment the domain name can be re-instated (re-delegated), usually with 24-48 hours.
2. **Withdrawn** is taken to mean that the DNS has been removed. To have it restored the registrant has to make a new application that will be subject to the rules and charges current at the time of the new application. This point is particularly important for local authorities where the use of suffixes is now mandated.