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Data Encryption and Passphrase Guidance

This guidance forms a part of the Data Protection Policy

Secure your data and learner information

All service users must encrypt and also password protect all their learner data files including learner details when they are sending them electronically. This includes all spreadsheet files sent via email and any emails which include personal information about learners such as names, postcodes, date of birth or ULNs.

Following the correct security procedure means that your learner's information is better protected.

Your data protection responsibilities:

Protecting the personal information about your learners is a compliance requirement under the Data Protection Act.

What must you do before sending data electronically to the Learning Records Service?

1. Ensure that your files are encrypted to AES 256 bit encryption standards using acceptable encryption software such as WinZip.

2. Create and use a passphrase with a recommended minimum of 15 alpha-numerical characters including symbols, for example L3arN!ngr3C0rds

3. After emailing us your encrypted files, you must contact the recipient or LRS Service Desk (for SFA) and communicate the password using a different communications method, such as telephone.

NOTE: encryption alone or password protection alone does not constitute adequate protection of your data files and could still be deemed a security breach.

What constitutes a security breach?

- Sharing your account details, or allowing someone else to use your account. Each user should have their own user account, and accounts that are no longer required should be removed immediately. 'Generic' accounts are prohibited.
- Sending a learner's ULN number and any of the 5 demographics (Given Name, Family Name, Date of Birth, Gender or Postcode) in an unencrypted email
- Sending more than one of the 5 demographics in an unencrypted email (Given Name and Family Name are deemed as one demographic in this instance).
- Sending an encrypted file containing learner data, where the password has also been sent via email.

Review of policy

The guidance was incorporated in January 2018. The next review is expected in June 2019 or as and when there is a requirement.

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