



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Testing a cyber assessment framework framework for local government

What we've learned so far

Who are Local Digital Cyber?

- Cyber Assessment Framework
- Cyber Support
- Coordinating role during incidents and vulnerabilities
- Cross-government engagement on cyber

What is the CAF?

- The National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Assessment Framework, published in 2018
- Designed to support effective cyber regulation for critical national infrastructure
- Outcomes based, rather than a checklist
- A sector-agnostic core that is designed to be extendable and customisable to a particular sector

Why are we implementing the CAF for local government?

- DLUHC is the steward of the local government sector
- We are the lead government department for a cyber attack impacting local authorities
- The Government Cyber Security Strategy places a responsibility on lead government departments to understand and articulate the cyber risk in their sector

Testing the CAF with councils



- 10 councils
- Testing the content and applicability of CAF to the local government sector
- Testing the baseline profile
- Understanding user experience
- Planning future work

What we learned

- Councils see value in self-assessment
- All councils identified actions to improve their cybersecurity posture
- Several councils fed back that it helped them consider new questions
- Results could help engage senior leadership and unlock budget
- No big reasons why CAF wouldn't be appropriate
- No obvious need for different profiles, though some councils will require support to meet the baseline profile

Testing the CAF with councils



- 8 councils
- In-depth assessment with a clearly defined scope
- 3 critical systems plus the underlying enterprise network
- Development of best practice, guidance materials and templates
- Discovery into automated validation of controls

What we've learned so far

- Scope needs a great deal of consideration - assessments without a clear scope lack meaning and consistency
- Councils have struggled with capacity and timescales, but are keen to avoid compromising the scope or scale of the assessment
- Many councils will likely lack documentation required to support the scoping phase
- Common critical systems nominated: adult social care, children's social care, back-end finance systems

What's next?



- 20 additional councils adopting the CAF with minimal direct support
- Develop the ‘**CAF overlay**’: standalone guidance, templates and other supporting material to communicate scope and lead councils through the self-assessment process
- Fully understand and evidence the burden on councils, informing key policy decisions

What's next?



Preparations include:

- Determining incentives for adoption
- Discovery into reporting service
- Balancing cost, risk and benefit
- Alignment with potential overlapping CAF requirements - MSPs, Fire and Rescue, NHS DSPT

How can we get ready?

- Councils - think about prioritisation of critical systems
- Vendors and partners - think about products and services in a CAF context



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Thank you

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