

G-Cloud 15 - Service Definition Document

BECS Discretionary



Break down silos, accelerate channel shift and leverage your valuable data and business processes to rapidly develop and deliver lower cost, high quality online services.

Derive tangible benefits and quantifiable savings from Team Netsol's solutions which provide secure front-end data capture, automated assessment, back office system integration, automation and analytics.

Our BECS product suite is recognised as the UK's leading online Revenues & Benefits solution and is a DWP National Product relied on by UK Local Authorities for over 20 years.

Now supported by the BECS Studio digital platform for seamless authentication, data sharing and workflow between your systems and the outside world.

An overview of our service

BECS Discretionary applications deliver streamlined online self-service claims for discretionary awards such as DHP, welfare payments, family and crisis funds.

Staff can manage claims for payments and assess entitlement using policy-based scoring and auditable exceptions that are underpinned by a legal framework.

Help is targeted where it's really needed, delivering personal budget management, comprehensive advice and access to funding whilst reducing customer contacts.

BECS DHP was designed by our DHP User Group to deliver a channel-shifted service for Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Hardship, incorporating self-service data capture and personal budgeting for your customers, and case management and policy-based assessment for your staff. It reduces the workload on assessment staff whilst ensuring a consistent legal approach to fair distribution of budgets to priority groups.

BECS Get Help extends BECS DHP to provide a self-service triage process that signposts customers to available help and resources across different Council service areas based on the customers' individual needs, including to BECS DHP.

Features include:

- Out-of-the-box channel shift of discretionary award application and assessment to digital self-service and assisted delivery
- 24x7 self-service for customers to complete applications securely and easily via a Web browser
- Office-Use-only and system administration interfaces for your staff
- Takes the discretionary award application process out of the back office and enables you to empower Customer Services, Housing Associations, RSL's, RP's, voluntary sector partners and other intermediaries
- Simple, easy to use browser interface that is optimised for mobile, tablet, laptop or desktop
- Meets all government guidelines and standards, including to at least WCAG 2.2 AA Accessibility
- Intelligent questions, routing and personalised guidance for your customers
- Save partially completed sessions to continue at a later date

- Review questions and change answers, with automatic readjustment to ask only relevant questions based on the new and existing answers
- Context-sensitive help and guidance throughout the process
- Address lookup using your back office system's address database or Ordnance Survey's AddressBase (LLPG/NLPG)
- Mobile Working for home visits, reductions and flexible working
- Reduces the time to perform assessments and removes the majority of time-consuming form-filling, scanning and correspondence
- Standards-based integration with EDMS systems, reducing the workload on staff
- Provides a personal budgeting tool that allows for the collation of financial information. This can be customised per authority to include or exclude specific categories
- Automatic generation of an optimised claim sheet with collated customer responses and a required evidence checklist
- Self-service Evidence Upload
- Signatureless legal declarations
- Full administrative control including browse/view submitted and partially completed applications and evidence, user roles and permissions
- Applications are stored within the system for administration in the 'Assessment' module which includes:
 - o Points-based scoring to aid decision making
 - o An Override facility to ensure discretion can be applied to either reject or accept automated decisions
 - o Store award amounts and payment periods
 - o A Policy Editor to allow customisation of priority groups, score weighting and conditionality
 - o Easy to amend so that changes in policy can be implemented in minutes
 - o Filtering of assessments to view things like completed/pending/allocated, or those overridden
 - o Budget reporting, to look at patterns of historical awards and ensure that policy is working
 - o Full reporting of assessments with export facility
 - o Output records to automate the payment process within other systems
 - o Detailed audit trail for review or appeals
 - o Simple in-tray and out-tray management of applications for decision support and workflow
 - o View applications and assessments in easy-to-read PDF format, facilitating delivery of documents for FOIA requests
- Fully integrates with your corporate customer portal
- Statistical reports and data for your MIS
- Localised to your Council details and delivered with your corporate branding and styling
- Served from a .gov.uk domain name if required
- Legislative updates, compliance and restyling included within setup and support costs
- Hosted on secure dedicated hosting infrastructure in the UK
- Fully GDPR compliant
- Improves processing performance, reduces fraud, customer error and appeals

Implementing the system

Installation and implementation are included within the pricing. The implementation phase is documented and project planned with you. This includes configuration of the system to the buyer's requirements, customised branding and styling, and localisation of the rulesbase and text content. Integration with your back-office systems via secure connectivity is procured separately and project planned to aid a smooth delivery.

Onboarding

A UAT instance of the system is provided to you for further customisation and optimisation prior to deployment to Live production. Onsite or Web-based training is included, depending on your preference.

Upon receipt of an order and acceptance of the contract, the following process is followed:

- The order is acknowledged and Sales requests implementation resource
- Our Head of Operations provides resources and you are contacted to discuss detailed requirements
- Our Project Manager mobilises the Engineering Team, agrees requirements and timescales with you, and forms a project plan for approval
- Our Engineering Team then liaises with you throughout the implementation process, agreeing integration requirements, working with your IT and other stakeholders throughout all areas of the implementation
- An Account Manager will oversee the process and engage with you where necessary
- A UAT system is configured and set up for testing once localisation has been completed
- A defect backlog and RAID logs are managed via our Kanban change management process
- Any system integrations are then end-to-end tested to ensure successful transfer of information to the buyer's systems
- Council users are identified, added to the system, and onsite or online training is arranged and delivered
- Go-live timescales are agreed and roll-out is commenced upon sign-off

Training materials and reference guides are provided to you for wider distribution within your organisation.

BECS supports all modern browsers including desktop and mobile versions of Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Apple Safari and Firefox. Its responsive Web design works unaltered on mobile devices including smartphones and tablets.

Offboarding

BECS data is generally transferred to your back office systems in real-time or batched within 1 day, depending on your preference. Partially completed data that reaches its data retention lifetime is securely deleted automatically from production systems. Any partially completed, un-transferred data or generated documents that exist when the contract ends are transferred securely to you in an encrypted compressed archive prior to secure deletion of all of your data from our servers.

When the contract ends, the secure connection to your back office systems is decommissioned, and certificates and user accounts are revoked. Your data is securely deleted within 30 days.

Technical Requirements

The BECS system and supporting processes are fully compliant with ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus, an ISMS is maintained and ISO 22301-compliant business continuity is provided.

Access to the system is secured over the Internet by HTTPS (TLS 1.2+) using certificates with strong cryptography. Where a VPN is used for back office integration, strong cryptography (e.g. IKEv2, AES-128, SHA-256, large key sizes, DH19+) is employed. The system is protected by highly available firewalls with threat protection and all data at rest is encrypted within a trusted subnet zone. Penetration testing is performed daily by Team Netsol on our entire infrastructure and the BECS system hosted on it.

The system runs on dedicated application servers and is designed to be invulnerable to cross-site scripting exploits, SQL injection attempts and other OWASP vulnerabilities. Network intrusion, anti-DDoS and anti-flood measures are in place and the system is actively monitored and alerted in the event of an incident, degradation of service or failure of a system component.

Data storage conforms to FIPS-140-2 and FIPS 197 (AES 256) and multiple levels of physical security are employed within the secure datacentre. Digital access to stored session data is controlled by roles and permissions, and authentication is by means of strong credentials and multi-factor authentication (e.g. 2FA) where appropriate.

Accessibility

The system is optimised for mobile, tablet or desktop use. It is designed and tested to satisfy all Government guidelines and standards, including the WCAG 2.2 Accessibility Standards to at least AA level.

Integrations

BECS has numerous integrations ready and available to exchange information with your core systems. BECS readily integrates with:

- Your corporate customer portal and corporate authentication systems using BECS Studio
- Multiple EDMS systems including NEC Information@Work, Civica, MRI EDMS, Documentum, Idox, OpenText and others

We can also facilitate integrations into other core, EDMS and CRM systems on request.

Service Levels & Support

The SLA for service availability is 99.9% and for packet delivery is 99%. Service Level Credit is calculated as: $(\text{Annual Price} \times \text{Outage Minutes}) \times \text{SLA\%} / (365 \times 24 \times 60)$ Service Level Credits must be requested within 5 days of an outage and are subject to a monthly maximum.

We provide user support with ticketing via phone or email with response times applying Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, excluding UK public holidays. The default response times based on issue impact are:

- Critical events during office hours: 1 hour
- Critical events out-of-hours: 8 hours
- High, Medium and Low issues support, during office hours only: 1 day
- Change Requests during office hours only: 5 days

Out-of-hours monitoring of support requests is performed and response times then apply from the next available working day. The exception is for Critical events that require our business continuity call tree to be activated, in which case response will be as soon as feasible.

Team Netsol is committed to providing excellent support for its services. We operate an ITIL-like Kanban issue resolution process that triages issues based upon their scale and impact:

- Critical - Service unavailable or many users affected - Resolution within 1 day
- High - Parts of service unavailable but still functional - Resolution within 1 week
- Medium - Low number of users affected but still functional - Fix available for UAT within 1 month
- Low - Minor issue with available workaround - UAT of fix within 3 months
- Cosmetic - UAT of fix within 3 months

Customers log issues with our helpdesk via a dedicated email address or phone and are issued with a 'Support Ticket' which is visible to Support engineers. Outside of standard helpdesk hours, there is monitoring of support requests and an emergency call tree process in place.

Bug fixes, security patches and issue resolution are included in the contract price. Customer Change Requests are subject to assessment to identify whether there is an associated cost that then needs to be approved by the customer.

We provide technical account management via our Head of Operations, escalated to our Product Manager and Infrastructure Manager as appropriate.

Software upgrades, comprising feature enhancements and bug fixes, will be tested and released to Test and Live systems as required. We endeavour to make the system available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, subject to agreed uptime SLA. The only exceptions are during Planned and Unplanned Maintenance windows.

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

The system is vertically and horizontally scaled with ample capacity for a significant increase in use by individual or all customers, well above the peak processing periods normally experienced. Several shared system components, e.g. storage, databases, etc. are configured for high availability and sized with future demand in mind.

Each system instance is re-sizeable and isolated from the resources of other instances. Monitoring and alerting facilitates pre-emptive action by support staff when an instance's available resources fall below the acceptable threshold. Resource availability is reviewed weekly during Infrastructure Team meetings and planned accordingly.

Data is stored within a private cloud within known UK processing locations. Penetration testing is carried out annually as a minimum by approved qualified providers and daily by Team Netsol using an industry-recognised penetration testing service. BECS is protected against data loss and loss of infrastructure by means of data backup procedures and offsite replication. The application servers, databases and data storage are replicated offsite to enable the service to be restored after loss of the primary site. ISO 22301 compliant procedures are activated in the event of a service loss, security incident or physical event (e.g. fire, terrorist threat, etc.)

Team Netsol's services are designed to be resilient. Email, SMS and Microsoft Teams alerts are sent to Team Netsol engineers for any sub-optimal events or incidents. Outage reporting to customers is performed by email by our support staff to designated customer contacts once an event is confirmed by our engineers as an outage or another significant incident that affects customers.

Our policies and procedures are detailed in our ISO 27001 compliant ISMS. All security patches are deployed within 14 days of notification, in accordance with Cyber Essentials guidelines. Threat management is operated via a mix of automated facilities from our infrastructure vendors, our own research of security bulletins and weekly review of CVE databases.

Team Netsol's protective monitoring approach is described in its ISMS policies and procedures which may be inspected on request. Potential compromises are assessed as a critical priority and any actual breach will be reported in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Information Commissioner's Office guidelines. Incidents are responded to within the timescales determined by our ISMS based on their scale and impact.

Team Netsol implements a risk management approach to security and any system changes are assessed for risks, known threats and vulnerabilities. We implement a Secure Development Policy which includes OWASP guidelines, SOLID and DRY principles for code development.

We have firm change management procedures, use a hybrid Agile approach for new development and use Kanban for ongoing support and implementation, supported by industry-standard tools for issue tracking, configuration management and deployment.

Service Constraints and Customisation

BECS services may be customised, including (but not restricted to) the following:

- Styling and branding customised in accordance with corporate guidelines where possible
- Buyer-specific content may be changed
- Policy schemes are localisable
- Question-and-answer rulesbase may be modified to match local requirements
- Council Tax schemes are localisable to your local scheme
- Lookup data from local datasources can be imported
- EDMS document indexing is customisable

- Customer portal integration is customisable
- Supporting evidence requirements are localisable
- Custom management reports can be added
- Administrative user accounts can be self-managed

You localise and customise the services during the implementation phase by working through the agreed implementation plan. After go-live, customisation is handled as part of normal support or as a Change Request, depending on the nature and scale of the customisation.

Customisation is performed by Team Netsol's staff on your behalf for items that are not customisable by you and is released to production systems once UAT has been performed by you and approval given to proceed.

An out-of-hours planned maintenance window is reserved for security patching and infrastructure upgrades every weekend. You are notified in advance if a reserved window is to be used and end-users are notified before and during maintenance to minimise disruption.

To implement back office integration with the BECS Discretionary solution, you may need to provide the following:

- a secure reverse proxy or VPN connection
- an appropriately licensed and activated APIs from your core system suppliers. The APIs are often already available to you but, if not, they can be purchased from your supplier and BECS will then communicate through the standard interfaces. Note: We do not use robotic process automation as this often breaches the terms of use for your suppliers' systems and is brittle to changes in the supplier's system.

Add-ons

BECS GetHelp – intelligent signposting to financial help

BECS GetHelp provides a directed triage process to point customers to the right sources of financial and non-financial help from the Council and local partners, including DHP, white goods, welfare grants, etc. Based on their described circumstances, customers can then select from a checklist the relevant services that they want to engage with.

Pricing

BECS services are not provided on a per-use basis. Instead, each service adheres to a Service Level Agreement and Team Netsol contracts to provide an outcome to you in accordance with the defined service level. This enables you to process as many applications as you wish without incurring additional costs and Team Netsol ensures that it has sufficient resources and capacity to meet the service levels irrespective of usage.

Each service attracts a Base Price and a Unit Price. The Base Price ensures that adequate capacity is available for the service and the Unit Price reflects the different support and hosting costs associated with different sized organisations.

The Unit Price is charged per Council Tax Chargeable Dwelling in the Local Authority (as identified in England via MHCLG's "Council Taxbase local authority level data" published in November, in Wales via StatsWales' "Council tax dwellings, by local authority" published in January, and in Scotland via Gov.Scot's "Chargeable Dwellings" published in September.)

As an example for BECS DHP, Local Authority A has a base price of £4,860 and a 'Chargeable Dwelling' number of 10,000 properties with a charge of 4p per dwelling, this would carry an annual cost of £5,620 + VAT. Initial standard setup, configuration, training and testing would be included in these costs.

How to order?

All BECS services are supplied on an annual subscription basis which includes licencing, installation and localisation, hosting, initial training, support and maintenance. Integration with EDMS, core Revenues & Benefits systems, customer portals and other systems (where required) are separately chargeable on approval of a project plan at our standard SFIA rate card day rates for such work. You subscribe to each BECS service that you need for a term of not less than one year. Invoices are raised annually and payment is due as indicated within the 'Terms and Conditions Document'. Additional services and training can be purchased at the rates indicated within the 'Pricing Document'.

Buyers should follow the G-Cloud 15 guidelines for procuring Team Netsol's products and services.

Contract Termination

There are no exit fees at the end of contract, as there is no pro-rata return of any unused part of the subscription period, and final data transfer and service decommissioning is included within the pricing.

There is a notice period indicated in the 'Terms and Conditions Document' that should be adhered to within the contracted period, which is used to trigger the exit and decommissioning process.

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