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## Deadline looms for network sharing

18 June 2009 | By Dan Drillsma-Milgrom

Councils have a matter of months remaining in which to sign up to the government's electronic data sharing network.

The Department for Work & Pensions has confirmed the Government Connect programme will close at the end of September by which time all local authorities will be expected to have signed up.

Once connected to the network, councils will be able to securely transfer information such as data on benefits claimants with the government.

However, in order to sign up, councils must make sure their data handling protocols meet the government's 'Code of Connection' standards.

According to the latest figures, around 255 councils have connected out of 375. The majority of the remaining authorities are expected to sign up in September.

Yurong Lin, chief executive of IT security firm Deepnet, said those councils needed to review their security procedures now in order to meet the regulation.

"Achieving compliance can appear confusing but councils must address this head on by reviewing security processes so they have enough time to implement any necessary changes before the deadline arrives," he said.

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