



The PSN is closing: The time to act is now

The pathway to cloud adoption and digital transformation

What does this mean for public sector organisations?

The PSN was created so that government departments could have a single, secure system for communication. However a technical debt has evolved over recent years. Legacy infrastructure and technologies now underpin critical networks that central and local government entities rely upon to deliver key services and the way in which services are consumed is being limited.


The PSN is no longer fit for purpose. Significant technology advancements means that it's no longer the most appropriate or cost effective option. There is now a desire across the public sector to move workloads across the Internet and make better use of cloud technologies to reduce costs and support the Cloud First agenda.

The latest indication from GDS is that the PSN could close down as early as 2023. This is an ambitious target which affects all users of the PSN and anything or anyone connected to it but is certainly not impossible if action is taken now. Public sector organisations have been mandated to migrate to modern network solutions which offer more competitive commercial terms, increased security and greater flexibility, in order to achieve the transition away from the PSN.

However, many organisations lack the resources or expertise in-house to manage this transition without disruption to services or users, spiralling costs, and severe delays. In many cases departments also have

complex dependencies on other organisations or applications.

In this ebook we'll be exploring what the latest guidelines from GDS mean for public sector organisations and why there's a need for urgency. We'll also look at the next steps needed to start the transition journey and how to overcome any challenges that lie ahead in the path to cloud adoption and digital transformation.



“The imperative is to change, therefore - and to do so at pace and at scale. This is the meaning of transformation. It is in essence a change of working, of culture and of disposition - changes that are made possible by digital technology. That technology is not change itself; it enables the change that is so transformative.”

The Rt Hon Ben Gummer Former MP - Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General

The latest guidelines

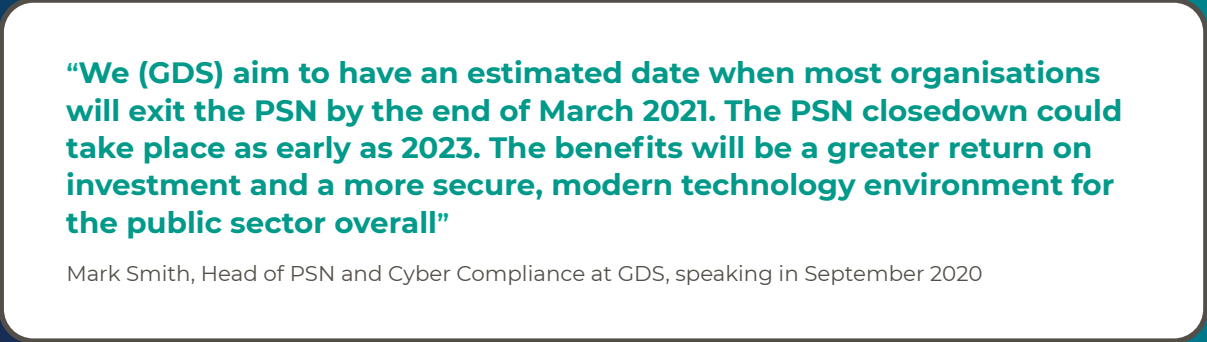
This legacy network is no longer considered fit for purpose as alternative technologies emerge which can offer greater agility, security and value for money. The high cost of maintaining the PSN is likely the key driver for Smith's ambitious 2023 closure date, but the negative impact that an underperforming legacy network can have on citizen outcomes is certainly a factor too.

All organisations need to be more agile, competitive, cost conscious and relevant. They need to be able to flex as the transformation of services continues at pace to meet public expectations. Not only is it the taxpayer who ultimately foots the bill for the PSN, but its performance and reliability directly influence the success of critical policies and initiatives that UK citizens rely upon now more than ever.

The Government's Cloud First policy provides agencies and partners with a clear directive for innovation of their organisation and services - but where do these departments and agencies begin?

The challenge of transitioning services from the PSN to cloud provision requires flexibility, control, security and visibility and this is only possible with a service that can connect with the PSN to multiple cloud providers. However, it's also imperative that the transition can be made without disruption or impact to users and citizen outcomes.





“We (GDS) aim to have an estimated date when most organisations will exit the PSN by the end of March 2021. The PSN closedown could take place as early as 2023. The benefits will be a greater return on investment and a more secure, modern technology environment for the public sector overall”

Mark Smith, Head of PSN and Cyber Compliance at GDS, speaking in September 2020

The time to act is now

As new and disruptive applications, services and technologies become available, organisations require their underlying network infrastructure to provide an agility and flexibility that allows them to be consumed immediately, or as close to immediate as possible. This is simply not possible with the current PSN.

The transition away from the PSN will require careful planning and likely take a significant amount of time. Smith, as he should, is encouraging organisations to begin making preparations sooner rather than later.

We can't hold on any more. This isn't just considering the cost perspective of transitioning away from the PSN but also due to the fact that delaying transformation now will only make it more difficult to innovate in the future.



The challenges of transitioning from the PSN

Service provider

- Needs to continue providing the service
- Needs to migrate to the cloud
- May need to be able to continue interacting with other services on the PSN
- May not be able to move the entire service in one go

Service consumer

- Needs to continue consuming services on PSN
- Needs to maintain their own PSN Compliance
- Needs to be able to access cloud service providers as well as PSN service providers
- May need pan-Government access

Overcoming the challenges ahead

The sheer size and scale of the PSN network makes its closure an enormous risk to all who rely upon it. Careful and thorough planning is critical. The digitalisation of services and processes is fundamental to almost every policy or initiative across central and local government.

The underlying network infrastructure is the enabler for this transformation. In order to consume and leverage new technologies and services as they emerge, organisations will require an agile and flexible network that allows them to connect quickly and without fuss, expense or disruption to cloud service providers.

The biggest challenge in the short term is negotiating the transition period where some organisations, services and applications have moved away from the PSN, but others have not. There are going to be a lot of moving parts as the transition gathers pace. Organisations need to be mindful of how they intend to consume services or applications that remain on the PSN longer than themselves. This creates an additional layer of complexity when migration plans are being finalised.



The past year has demonstrated that, when required, organisations of all sizes and levels of digital maturity can respond rapidly to transformation needs, with a high degree of effectiveness. Many were forced to deliver key services remotely with little or no pre-warning as the COVID-19 pandemic hit the UK and the whole country was asked to work from home where possible.

Whilst closing the PSN will be a large undertaking, the COVID-19 response across all sectors gives many reasons for optimism that Smith's 2023 estimation can be achieved. No matter how long the PSN has left, the overriding challenge in all cases will be the need to ensure that data is protected, risks managed and solutions are secure to these new services.

As a government consumer of the PSN or PSN Services, continued, secure access to all services throughout transition is essential as transformation is undertaken. Organisations must have the flexibility to consume new services, some of which may need access back into the PSN during any transition.

As a service provider to many consumers on the PSN, it's also essential that continued provision of those services is guaranteed whilst migrating to a more sustainable or alternative platform to PSN, typically public cloud.

The pathway to cloud adoption and digital transformation

The advent and proliferation of cloud and cloud services is the biggest single enabler of digital transformation at scale. The things that make cloud great: flexibility, scalability, control, cost and security, must now be demanded from the networks that serve them if they are to avoid becoming an inhibitor to further transformation.

Organisations need to retain access to services on the PSN during the transition, while also having the ability to connect rapidly and securely to a range of new cloud service providers or cloud hosted applications.

They need a suite or ecosystem of network and security functionality that is available on demand, without burdening them with concerns around excessive cost, long lead times or security implications and allows the organisation to transform at a pace suitable to their needs.



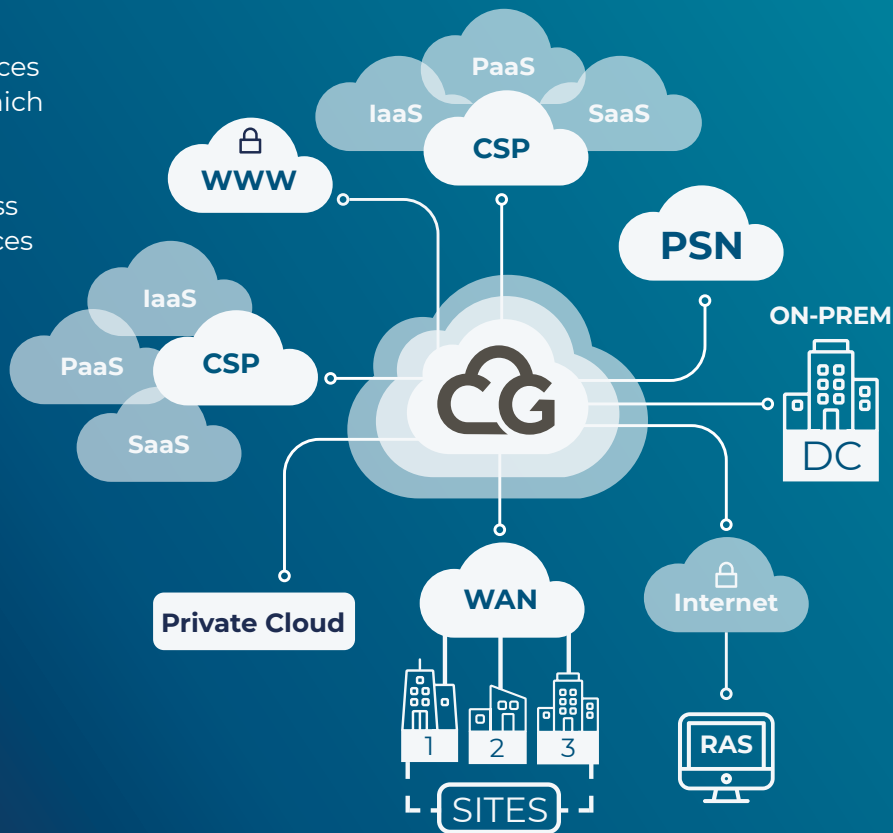
Start your journey

Cloud Gateway provides a Public Services Network (PSN) accredited platform which improves network performance, reduces cost and complexity and strengthens security. It gives you access to your current and future Cloud services whilst preserving the backbone pan-Government PSN connectivity.

It provides the transition path and end-state architecture to allow you to transform at a pace that suits your organisation to achieve your digital ambitions.

The Cloud Gateway platform is NCSC compliant and can be deployed in minutes.

Get in contact to talk about your transformation and make digital transformation a reality.



About Cloud Gateway

Cloud Gateway provides flexible, networking and security solutions to rapidly connect organisations to multiple cloud service providers, the HSCN, the PSN and the internet - delivered as a service at a pace suitable to the business.

Using Cloud Gateway's cloud-native Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) framework solutions, organisations of any size can choose the tools needed to improve performance, reduce cost and complexity and strengthen security. Cloud Gateway secures all remote, internet and network traffic, with rapid deployment and government grade security. Built-in flexibility ensures continuous change is future-proofed. Organisations have a single, timely and accurate source of truth, ensuring regulatory compliance and protection from cyber threats.

Visit us at www.cloudgateway.co.uk
Contact us on info@cloudgateway.co.uk
Twitter: [@cloudgatewayltd](https://twitter.com/cloudgatewayltd)
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/cloudgateway

