

Changes to how agents access HMRC's online systems: Q&A

Keeping customer data secure is always a top priority for HMRC. We continuously review our processes to ensure they keep pace with security best practice, taking account of constantly evolving cyber threats.

This Q&A is to provide further information about changes that will affect agents who use automated login. You may call this silent login - your background login mechanisms developed to log into HMRC's website on a pre-approved basis.

What is changing?

HMRC is in the process of replacing Government Gateway with a new platform that is more secure, has additional functionality, and is fit for the future.

We are committed to minimising the impact of this transition on all users of the Gateway and ensuring they continue to receive the best possible service as we move services off the current Gateway and onto the new platform.

What does it mean for agents?

As part of this work, we need to make some changes that will affect agents who use automated login. You may call this silent login - your background login mechanisms developed to log into HMRC's website on a pre-approved basis.

If you access HMRC's services by entering your Government Gateway credentials each time then you do not need to take any action.

We are asking all agents who access HMRC services via their software on an automated basis, rather than entering their Government Gateway username and password each time, to contact us by Friday 14 December 2018 so we can work with them to enable ongoing access.

Once agents have contacted us, providing us with the details we need, we will add them to a secure access list and supply them with a new web link. This link will allow their automated login to continue working.

As part of our future plans to continue improving security for agents we will at some point be removing this automated functionality. We will work with professional bodies to agree this date and ensure agents are given sufficient notice.

We strongly advise agents not to build any further solutions that utilise this automated functionality as this extension to access is only temporary.

What timeline is the transition running to?

Agents should receive an email from HMRC week commencing Monday 26th November. If you wish to continue your access on an automated basis you will need to respond, with the user details we require, by Friday 14th December.

Once you have provided us with your user details you will be added to a secure access list and provided with a new url to continue your automated access for an interim period. Current automated access will stop working from Monday 11th January. After this date anyone wishing to continue logging in on an automated basis will have needed to send their user details to HMRC and use a new url which will have been sent in response.

Automated access will eventually be removed permanently and all users will need to enter their credentials via Government Gateway. We will work with Professional Bodies to agree when this will happen and ensure agents have sufficient time to prepare.

If you have submitted your user details but have not received the new url by Friday 21st December please contact agent.login@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.

As an agent what do I need to do?

We will be emailing all agent stakeholders week commencing Monday 26th November to ask for the user credentials of anyone accessing HMRC's online systems without first entering their Government Gateway credentials.

If you access HMRC's services by entering your Government Gateway credentials each time then you do not need to take any action.

If you wish to extend your automated access temporarily you will need to send user details to HMRC by Friday 14th December. We will add all users to a secure access list and send you a new url. Please remember your current automated access will be blocked from Friday 11th January.

If you have submitted your user details but have not received the new url by Friday 21st December please contact agent.login@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.

How are you letting agents know about this?

We have held meetings with Professional Bodies and Large Professional Services Firms and we'll be emailing agents direct.

We'd welcome your support in ensuring all agents are briefed in plenty of time; if you are aware of anyone that has not yet engaged with HMRC please do let us know.

What happens if I don't send you our user details?

If you use an automated method to access HMRC services and we have not received your user credentials by Friday 14th December your online access route to HMRC systems will change.

You will no longer be able to use your current automated login from Friday 11th January and will instead need to use Government Gateway credentials each time to login.

Why are you moving to a new platform?

The new platform is more secure, has additional functionality, and is fit for the future.

When will it be moved?

Full migration will be complete by March 2019

What services are impacted by this change?

Agents who use the automated login method will ultimately be unable to access the Government Gateway platform by this mechanism (unless added to the secure access list).

Access is still available by entering credentials via Government Gateway or by being added to a secure access list, details above.

Does this affect my Agent Services?

Applying to be on this secure access list only relates to automated login (also known as silent login) and continuing your access via that method on the new Government Gateway platform.

Will it affect me if I am using a third party tax software product?

You will only be affected if you use an automated login method - background login mechanisms that have been developed to login to HMRC's website. If you do not enter your credentials each time you login then you will be affected.

If I have bookmarked the Government Gateway login page and my username and password are stored in the password manager of my browser. Do I need to contact you?

No. You do not need to contact HMRC in either of these scenarios.

Will this change impact two step authentication?

No, it will not be impacted.

You have issued a communication to agents about changes to Government Gateway over the weekend of 24th and 25th November 2018. Do these changes relate to the automated login method?

No, these changes are separate and not related.