

WESTMARK DEFENCE SUPPLIER MARK

Prove how you handle security risk, across the work you actually deliver

An independent assessment for organisations delivering into
Ministry of Defence, government and government-aligned
contracts.

THE GAP

A prime contractor has two options. This is the third.

The government Secure by Design principles place their obligations on departments and arm's length bodies. Suppliers have no route to certify against them.

Contractual security obligations reach a supplier through Security Aspects Letters, Defence Conditions, Defence Standards and Industry Security Notices. No single certification covers that ground. Cyber Essentials speaks to technical controls on your own systems. ISO/IEC 27001 speaks to a management system. Neither examines how your people handled classified material on a live engagement last quarter.

So a prime contractor assessing a supplier either does the work itself, at its own cost and on its own judgement, or accepts a self-declaration and hopes. The Westmark Defence Supplier Mark is the third option: an independent examination, carried out to a published standard, with the result on a public register.

7 sections in the control set	54 requirements assessed	3 to 6 engagements sampled	24 months of validity
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Who it is for

Organisations delivering into Ministry of Defence, government and government-aligned contracts, at any size from a sole director to a multi-site business. The scheme is built to work at the small end: a supplier of five people is assessed against the same requirements as one of five hundred, with the evidence expected in proportion to what they do.

What it is worth having

In a tender

An answer to the security section that is not your own word for it, with a reference a buyer can check in seconds.

In your own house

An examination that finds what your own review will not, because the assessor interviews delivery staff without a manager in the room.

What it is not

Westmark Assurance is not an accredited certification body and does not offer UKAS-style certification. An outcome is a judgement by Westmark Assurance and carries no certification, accreditation or approval by government, the Ministry of Defence, the Security Industry Authority or the Home Office.

THE ASSESSMENT

Evidence from the work, not a folder of policies

Seven sections, fifty-four requirements

SECTION	WHAT IT COVERS
Governance and accountability	Named accountability, the written procedure set, risk appetite, resourcing, competence, and how obligations are identified before mobilisation.
Risk management and project implementation	Engagement level risk assessment, threat picture, controls traceable to risks, the security plan approved before work starts, change and close-out.
Contractual, statutory and personnel security	Security Aspects Letters, establishment regulations, baseline screening, clearance and escort, aftercare, statutory notices, cyber contractual obligations.
Information and asset handling	Classification and marking, aggregation, storage, transmission, devices, site discipline, output review, return and destruction.
Cyber and technical security	Applies at Cyber scope. Bounded access, credentials, privilege, logging, vulnerability handling, configuration, components, testing, decommissioning.
Incident management and continuous assurance	Recognition and reporting, the external route, recording and investigation, reporting culture, lessons, self-review.
Supply chain	Applies where you use subcontractors. Assessment before engagement, flow-down, their people, oversight, close-out.

How the evidence is taken

- **The sample is the assessor's.** Between three and six engagements, selected by them, and the selection must include any engagement where an incident was reported, any carrying a Security Aspects Letter, and at least one delivered beneath a prime contractor.
- **Records generated during delivery** carry more weight than documents written for the assessment.
- **Working practice is observed** where observation is possible.
- **Delivery personnel are interviewed without a manager present.** What they describe unprompted is evidence in its own right.

The corroboration rule

A requirement scores full marks only where the evidence comes from more than one independent source. A procedure and the checklist derived from it count as one source. The rule is applied without exception, and it is the difference between this and a documentary review.

THE RESULT

Three outcomes, and eleven ways to reach none of them

Disqualifying conditions

Eleven conditions prevent a confirmed outcome whatever the score, among them work undertaken without security aspects defined, personnel granted access without baseline screening, and loss of classified material that was not reported to the Contracting Authority and the Defence Industry Warning, Advice and Reporting Point.

OUTCOME	WHAT IT TAKES
Westmark Defence Supplier Mark	Overall 80 per cent or above, every section above 50 per cent, no disqualifying condition, evidence consistent across the sample. Carries a confidence level.
Westmark Defence Supplier Conditional	Overall 60 per cent or above with no disqualifying condition, and something falling short of confirmed. Improvement actions attached, to be completed within three to six months.
Not Confirmed	Below 60 per cent, or a disqualifying condition met. No certificate is issued and nothing appears on the register.

Conditional is a positive outcome

It records that your position is sound in substance with identified deficiencies being addressed, and it is common on a first assessment. Where the actions are verified complete, the outcome converts to the full Mark for the remainder of its period. Wherever a Conditional outcome is claimed, the holder must say that improvement actions are outstanding.

Confidence, recorded separately from the score

Alongside the score the assessor records how strong the evidence was. This answers a different question from how good the position is, and a high score does not produce a high confidence level.

LEVEL	BASIS
High	Consistent, corroborated, observed across the full sample.
Moderate	Sufficient, drawn from a narrower sample or fewer sources.
Limited	Meets the threshold while resting on stated process, a single engagement, or corroboration that could not be fully tested.

Limited is applied automatically where fewer than three engagements were available, where unaccompanied interviews with delivery staff were declined, or where no observation of any kind was possible. Where it applies, the assurance statement says why.

WHAT YOU GET AND WHAT IT COSTS

The documents issued to you, and how the fee is worked out

What you receive

A certificate carrying the assurance mark and a verification code, an assurance statement, a scoring report that is confidential to you, and an assurance summary written to be shared with customers. Every document is issued in the Westmark hub and stays available there.

What to have ready

Your security procedure set, the risk assessments and security plans for recent engagements, any Security Aspects Letters, screening and clearance records, incident records, and the names of the delivery staff who did the work. If something does not exist, say so at scoping. It changes the timetable rather than the welcome.

Fees

Assessment fees are calculated on assessor days at a published day rate, banded by the size of the organisation and the scope assessed. A band 1 organisation of up to five staff starts at one assessor day for Operational scope. The day count covers the document stage, the examination, findings testing, scoring and technical review.

An annual scheme fee is payable on issue of a positive outcome and on each anniversary while it is held. It covers the register listing, the licence to use the mark, review of the annual declaration, updates to the template pack, and verification of your claims by third parties.

Where you already hold an accepted certification, the Crossover and Concession Map reduces the day count. Defence Cyber Certification at level 2 or above, and ISO/IEC 27001, each take off half a day, to a maximum of one day and never below one day in total.

No fee turns on the result

Fees are payable whichever outcome is reached. Assessor pay does not vary with the outcome and no fee arrangement is contingent on a result. Travel and accommodation are charged at cost with no markup. The whole fee is quoted in writing before the Assessment Agreement is accepted.

HOLDING THE OUTCOME

How long it lasts, and what you may say afterwards

Validity

- Twenty-four months from issue.
- A self-declaration falls due at twelve months, completed and signed in the hub.
- The outcome attaches to the legal entity named and the trading names listed. A parent, subsidiary or joint venture that was not assessed is not covered.
- The scope assessed is printed on the certificate. An Operational outcome says nothing about cyber delivery.

What you may never claim

The claim wording issued with your outcome is what you use. Beyond it, no holder may claim certification, accreditation or approval by government, the Ministry of Defence or the National Cyber Security Centre, compliance with the government Secure by Design policy or its ten principles, satisfaction of DEFCON 658 or Defence Standard 05-138, or standing as Cyber Essentials, ISO/IEC 27001, Facility Security Clearance or List X. The term Secured by Design belongs to a separate police-owned scheme and may not be used. Scores are never published and may never be quoted.

Westmark requires correction of a wrong claim within ten working days, and withdraws the outcome where correction is not made or where the claim asserted government certification.

The register

A positive outcome is published on the Westmark register with the entity name, the scope assessed, the outcome and the date it expires. Anyone can check an entry, with no account and no charge, at hub.westmarkassurance.co.uk/verify. A withdrawn or expired outcome shows as withdrawn or expired rather than disappearing.

The annual declaration

At twelve months you confirm in the hub that the position assessed still holds and that nothing material has changed. Where something has changed, tell us when it happens rather than waiting for the declaration to fall due. A change of scope, of legal entity or of the work you deliver may call for reassessment.

If you disagree with the outcome

An appeal is raised in the hub and considered by someone who took no part in the assessment or the technical review, with the decision given to you in writing. A complaint about conduct, timeliness or an assessor follows the same route. Neither costs anything and neither affects the outcome while it is being considered.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

From enquiry to register entry

- 1 Scope**
A conversation about what you deliver, at what classification, for whom, and which scope fits. We check the Register of Related Bodies at this point.
- 2 Quotation and agreement**
Both are issued in the Westmark hub and accepted on screen. The acceptance is recorded with who accepted it, their position and the time, and stands as the signature.
- 3 Assessor assigned**
Authorised for the scheme and the scope, with no advisory history with you, and accepted with a conflict declaration.
- 4 Self-assessment**
Plain questions in the hub, one for each requirement, answered yes, partly or not yet. No score is shown to you. It tells the assessor where to spend the time and tells you what to have ready.
- 5 The assessment**
Documents, delivery records, observation and interviews. Any view that may be adverse to you is put to you before it settles, so you can produce more evidence.
- 6 Technical review**
A second person who took no part in the assessment confirms the record or returns it with reasons. Nothing is issued until that is done.
- 7 Outcome and register**
Documents issued in the hub, the entry published, and the claim wording sent to you with the licence terms for the mark.

Talk to us

Tell us what you deliver and to whom, and we will tell you what the assessment involves and what it costs.

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Verify any outcome at hub.westmarkassurance.co.uk/verify

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