

FOR BUYERS AND COMMISSIONING PARTIES

Someone has shown you a Westmark mark. Here is what it means.

A short guide for prime contractors, Contracting Authorities, landlords, licensing authorities, insurers and anyone relying on an assurance outcome.

READING THE CLAIM

What was actually examined

A Westmark outcome is an opinion formed on evidence examined within a defined scope, on a sample, at a point in time, and reviewed by a second person before it was issued.

Under the Defence Supplier Mark

Seven sections and fifty-four requirements, examined across three to six engagements that the assessor selected rather than the supplier proposed. The selection had to include any engagement where an incident was reported, any carrying a Security Aspects Letter, and at least one delivered beneath a prime contractor. Delivery personnel were interviewed without a manager present.

Under the Protected Premises Mark

Five sections and twenty controls. At the enhanced tier this included a site visit with the lockdown timed against the staff on duty, a live test of the communication channels, and interviews with front-line workers alone. A Declared entry rests on a desk review and a remote interview with no site visit.

The rule that does the work

A requirement scores full marks only where the evidence came from more than one independent source. A procedure and the checklist derived from it count as one source. Applied without exception, that rule is what separates the outcome from a documentary review.

Two numbers, answering different questions

The outcome reflects the score. The confidence level, High, Moderate or Limited, reflects how strong the evidence was. A high score does not produce a high confidence level. Limited is applied automatically where fewer than three engagements were available, where unaccompanied interviews were declined, or where no observation was possible, and the assurance statement says which.

Conditional, read properly

Conditional is a positive outcome with improvement actions attached, completable within three to six months and verified before the outcome converts. It is common on a first assessment. A holder must say so wherever the outcome is claimed, and a claim that omits it is a breach of the scheme terms worth raising with us.

THE LIMITS

This section matters more than the rest

- **It is a sample.** Between three and six engagements were examined. The others were not.
- **It is a point in time.** The assessment date is on the certificate, and validity runs twenty-four months with a self-declaration at twelve.
- **It is scope-bound.** An Operational scope outcome says nothing about cyber delivery, and the reverse. The scope is on the certificate.
- **It is entity-bound or premises-bound.** A parent, subsidiary, joint venture, franchisee or other premises in a portfolio that was not assessed is not covered.
- **It does not cover subcontractors.** It assesses how the holder manages them.
- **It is not a warranty,** and it does not discharge any obligation you owe to anyone else.

What you still have to do

Where you have been shown a Defence Supplier Mark outcome, you still issue the Security Aspects Letter and obtain the signed acknowledgement, flow down the applicable Defence Conditions, complete the risk assessment and issue the Cyber Risk Profile where DEFCON 658 applies, satisfy yourself on clearances and screening for the individuals attending your sites, and conduct whatever audit your own obligations require.

Where you have been shown a Protected Premises Mark outcome, you still make your own notification to the Security Industry Authority where you are separately a responsible person for the same or connected premises, co-ordinate under section 8 where you share responsibility, and satisfy yourself on the licensing, fire safety and health and safety matters this assessment does not cover.

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.

ACTING ON IT

Verify it, or commission your own

Verifying a claim

Every outcome is on a public register. Search by certificate reference or organisation name at **hub.westmarkassurance.co.uk/verify**. No account is needed. The register shows the outcome, the scheme, the assessed scope, the confidence level, the assessment and expiry dates, the control set version, the reference, and whether the outcome is current, suspended, withdrawn, surrendered or expired. If the register does not show it, it is not a Westmark outcome.

Scores are never published and may never be claimed. An organisation quoting a percentage is in breach of the scheme terms whatever the figure says. Send anything that looks wrong to hello@westmarkassurance.co.uk. We require correction within ten working days and withdraw the outcome where correction is not made.

Commissioning an assessment yourself

You can commission an assessment of a supplier or a responsible person directly. Where you do, you receive the outcome, the assessed scope, the confidence level, any improvement actions and any limitation recorded. Section scores reach you only with the assessed organisation's written consent, given at scoping.

The assessor does not discuss emerging findings with you before the statement is issued, and takes no direction from you on the sample, the scoring or the outcome. That is what makes the result worth having.

Two things you are told without the organisation's consent

Under the Defence Supplier Mark, a disqualifying condition on unreported loss of classified material, or on misrepresentation to the assessor. Under the Protected Premises Mark, an absent procedure, an unremedied enforcement notice, or misrepresentation to the assessor. Those findings bear directly on whether you can rely on the organisation, and withholding them would leave us complicit in what we found.

Talk to us

Tell us who you need assessed and what you are relying on the outcome for, and we will tell you what the assessment covers and what it costs.

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

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