




**SIMS**



**ESS SIMS  
Technical Integrator  
Support Charter 2021**

# Introduction

As an MIS provider, we understand your time and resources are valuable and it's important that we offer you both efficiency and value. We are also extremely conscious that our services must be courteous, helpful and professional. This charter (for licensed software users) outlines our promise and commitment to you. We constantly evaluate ourselves against this charter and strive for continuous improvement.



As ESS SIMS develops its solutions and customer base, we are often asked if we follow any industry standard frameworks. Our internal support processes follow the UK Government approved ITIL V3 framework and the appropriate naming conventions in line with those guidelines. In doing so, the language used is very important:



- ⚠ **Incident** = an unplanned service degradation or interruption.
- ⚠ **Problem** = the cause of one or more incidents, also referred to as 'defects'.
  - !!! **Generic** = caused by a software error, potentially affecting multiple customers. Usually resolved with software updates.
  - !!! **Site-specific** = caused by errors in data (where a script may resolve the issue) or other local issues but could also have an underlying generic cause.
- ⚠ **Service request** = Requests for Training, Consultancy, Report Writing, Technical Services and Standard Changes.
- ⚠ **Enquiry** = Requests for information and "How do I..?" queries.
- ⚠ **Change request** = Request for functionality to be enhanced in the product.

Incidents, enquiries and service requests may at times all be referred to as a 'case' or 'ticket'.

## Customer Support Portal

A number of useful tools can be found within Customer Support Portal, which gives you, as a SIMS Integrator, access to the latest news, resources, discussions and events, and can be accessed by visiting <https://support.capitasoftware.com/>.

## Case Logging

If a solution cannot be located, you can log a support incident or enquiry directly with the SIMS Service Desk. This (and any associated solution) can then be viewed online using our Customer Support Portal facility, where you can also add notes to the case and review updates from us.

You can log service requests for Professional and Technical Services (e.g. upgrades) and API Support.

These will be referred to the product manager for consideration and inclusion for discussion at our Software Consultancy Groups, as required.

## Knowledge Base article search

[Knowledge Base article search](#) can be used to obtain an immediate solution to any issue you may have, 24/7. You should always attempt this search, prior to logging a case.

# How can I contact the Partner Support Team?

Our Customer Support Portal facility is a great way to contact us because it enables us to focus our resources more effectively on investigating customer issues. You may even find a solution immediately without having to log a support case and it can be accessed 24/7. You can also email us at [partner.support@capita.co.uk](mailto:partner.support@capita.co.uk) to raise an incident if you have a valid support agreement with us..

In the event of a **P1 Incident**, we urge customers to contact us by phone in the first instance on 01234 832186. Please note this number is for P1 incidents ONLY..

\* Calls to 0844, 0845 and 0870 numbers will cost three pence per minute, plus your phone company's access charge.

**Our opening hours are:**

**08.00 – 17.30**

Monday – Friday  
excluding Bank  
Holidays

A graphic of a house with a sign that says "OPEN". The sign is blue with the word "OPEN" in white capital letters. The house is grey with a white roof. The sign is attached to the front of the house.

**OPEN**



## Case prioritisation

All case investigation is based on Priority, 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest. Enquiries and service requests will never be raised above a P3. When logging an incident on Customer Support Portal, you will have the option of setting the Priority. Once set, a revision of this rating will only be carried out with your reasonable agreement. We ask that our customers use the below guides in setting Priorities.



		Urgency Level		
		Urgency 1 Impacts work that cannot be completed by the integrator and is critically time sensitive.	Urgency 2 Work that cannot be completed by the integrator is not time sensitive but is high in volume.	Urgency 3 Work that cannot be completed by the integrator but is not time sensitive.
Impact Level	Impact 1 A service interruption which has a critical impact on the activities of the integrator, causes significant financial loss and/or disruption to the integrator or results in any material loss or corruption of school data.	Priority 1	Priority 1	Priority 2
	Impact 2 A service interruption has occurred which can or could have a major (but not critical) adverse impact on the activities of the integrator and no work around is available.	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
	Impact 3 A service interruption which has a major adverse impact on the activities of the integrator which can be reduced to a moderate adverse impact due to the availability of a work around.	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	Impact 4 A service interruption which has a minor adverse impact on the provision of the Service to End Users or a flaw which is cosmetic but does not compromise confidence in data.	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 4



## Priority Examples

Priority Level	Examples
Priority 1 – Blocker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure with the APIs/Business Objects</li><li>• Failure in interfacing as a result of a change to an API/Business Object</li><li>• Consultant on-site.</li></ul>
Priority 2 – Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The integrator is unable to access a product API (but all other areas are fine), such as Attendance</li><li>• Specific business critical time of year such as Exam Results Day or Census Day.</li></ul>
Priority 3 – Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An error message appearing on an individual's system but is not preventing the integrator from using the APIs/Business Objects</li><li>• One or more users (not all users) experiencing an issue</li><li>• Performance-based issues with the system.</li></ul>
Priority 4 – Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “How do I...?”</li><li>• Service requests</li><li>• Help with performing tasks within the system or APIs/Business Objects.</li></ul>

# How will your issue be resolved?

## Incidents

Incident resolution may take different forms e.g. advice, workaround or upgrade to later version – regardless of whether this version is released yet.

## Problems

Problem resolution depends on the nature of the issue and, depending on its priority and/or its status as generic or site-specific, you will see a resolution provided as either a Script, Hotfix, Service Pack or in a Main Release.

Once a resolution has been provided, your case will be set to a status of 'Resolution Offered'. This gives a window of ten working days to get back to us if there is still an issue. After this period, it will become permanently 'Resolved'.

## When will your issue be resolved?

### Incidents

We aim to resolve cases according to their priority, usually with the most urgent and impactful cases being addressed first. The following is the Key Performance Indicator we use to target how quickly we aim to resolve an incident.



Priority	4 hrs	8 hrs	2 days	5 days	10 days	12 days	15 days
1	75%	95%	100%				
2	60%	75%	90%	95%	97%	100%	
3	60%	70%	75%	80%	85%	95%	98%
4	60%	70%	75%	80%	85%	87%	90%



# Change requests

Our goal is to deliver outstanding software to meet the needs of schools now and into the future. ESS SIMS places its integrators at the forefront of our strategy when it comes to interfacing against our products. The main focus for schools will always be providing the best possible education for the children in their care, and to do that, our focus will always be on ensuring that we understand these educational challenges and deliver software solutions to help.

Dealing with customer change requests correctly and efficiently is a fundamental part of keeping in-line with changing needs. It also gives our customers the opportunity to directly influence the development of our products. We capture change requests in a number of mediums to ensure that we are giving our customers alternate ways to consult with us. An example of these are:



**SSAP (SIMS Strategic Advisory Panel)** – A group of Chairs from Support Team Regional User Groups, to advise us on local issues and give strategic direction regarding the schools they support



**Independent Strategy Group** – A group of leading schools in the Independent sector



**Academies Strategic Group** – A strategic group of academies and multi-academy trusts



**Consultation Groups** – As part of our engagement, product managers also hold consultation groups for specific solutions, this allows the product manager to gather, on a group basis, the change requests for a single solution



**Customer Support Portal** – We encourage users to submit change requests via Customer Support Portal, to share your ideas with other users. The customer has the option to vote on a change request already submitted, which helps us to prioritise the change requests



**School Visits** – Our product management team visit a range of schools across the country to ensure we are meeting the needs of different type of schools across different regions of the UK.

## What is the process for change request management?

Change requests are reviewed by product managers on a periodic basis and especially at the time of business planning for the following year and before Customer Consultation Groups.

**Stage 1** will take on the status of 'published for consultation'. This is then either rejected, a duplicate (or work around) or becomes 'considered for a future release'.

**Stage 2** will have the status 'considered for a future release'. This has achieved initial approval, is popular and is a high enough priority within the resources available to be developed within the next 36 months. Once on a project backlog it moves to the next status of 'planned for a future release'. However, change requests that reach stage 2 may still be rejected for various reasons (example: not the sufficient number of votes) and not reach stage 3.

**Stage 3** will have the status 'planned for a future release'. This will be a change request that is committed to a project to be developed and delivered within the next 12 to 18 months or planned for our next generation of SIMS.

## What can you do to support faster resolution?

When contacting the Partner Support team about any issue, be prepared to provide as much information as possible including:

- Who you are
- The school this is affecting
- The specific APIs/Business Objects
- The release version you are on
- What impact this is having on your business in real terms e.g. deadlines
- Environmental issues that may have caused or might affect it e.g. any recent upgrades, other software or hardware changes including network
- A reference number (if calling about an existing matter):
  - As much detail as possible about what you are reporting, including:
    - Error messages (and the steps you take to reach it)
    - Time/date when these errors occur
    - If the issue is replicable
    - Screenshots
    - What environments are affected e.g. Live/ Test/Project/Train.





# How will we communicate with you?

We will aim to resolve your query immediately, but sometimes a deeper level of investigation is needed. The time required to do this will depend on the complexity of the issue and the factors involved. It may be necessary to ask you a few questions in order to establish additional information or even to request a copy of the data for further investigation.

The majority of communication you can expect from us will be in the form of updates by email or Customer Support Portal. For P1 incidents, we will call you in the first instance.

We target our initial response to cases based on their priority:

Priority	Response
1	20 mins
2	1 hour
3	8 hours
4	24 hours



While your case is being investigated, you can expect contact every five working days with higher frequency, on priority 1 incidents. However, if your case is escalated as a 'problem', you will usually only be further updated when:

- Your issue is going to be reviewed
- Your issue is accepted as a defect
- If a developer requires some further information from you.

## How can I send data to ESS SIMS ?

To assist in the analysis and resolution of issues logged with our teams, we may require a copy of the school's data. The current accepted method is our [SFTP service](#) which provides a secure and efficient means of safely sending your data to our support teams.



## How will my data be used?

To achieve the fastest resolution possible, we may need you to supply or give controlled access to your data for investigation by a trusted Support Partner outside of the [EEA](#); this will be via an approval process in each instance. ESS SIMS adheres to the [2018 Data Protection Act](#) and will only release your data to these partners upon your approval via the [GDPR process](#).

## What staff security measures are currently in place?

Our current policy is to acquire enhanced disclosure checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service for all staff who are working in a restricted role, i.e. one where they will potentially come into contact with children and young people on a regular basis. ESS SIMS holds [ISO 27001](#) certification and all staff are required to take part in and complete annual training and an assessment on Information Security Awareness.



## What should I do if I want to feedback?

If you are happy or unhappy with the service that you have received, please tell us. It helps us to identify both good and bad practice and, where positive, encourages our staff in providing a world-class service.

Should you wish to escalate any issue relating to the service that you receive, you can contact the Customer Care Team at **[SIMSfeedback@capita.co.uk](mailto:SIMSfeedback@capita.co.uk)**

Alternatively, you can contact the SIMS Service Desk Management Team using the below details:

Name	Position	E-mail
<b>James Bruce</b>	Escalation Team Manager	<a href="mailto:james.a.bruce@educationsoftwaresolutions.co.uk">james.a.bruce@educationsoftwaresolutions.co.uk</a>
<b>Kam Bains</b>	Partner Manager	<a href="mailto:kam.bains@educationsoftwaresolutions.co.uk">kam.bains@educationsoftwaresolutions.co.uk</a>
<b>Darren Pepper</b>	Head of Partner Management	<a href="mailto:Darren.pepper@educationsoftwaresolutions.co.uk">Darren.pepper@educationsoftwaresolutions.co.uk</a>