INFORMATION

Commercial Product Assurance (CPA)

The CPA scheme provides independent testing of smart meters or recognised smart metering products.

> The NCSC no longer accepts new products for evaluation under the CPA scheme unless they are Smart Meters or smart metering products.
>
> These changes will not affect existing CPA products that are currently certified or products that are in the process of being evaluated. Products with existing CPA certificates will remain certified until the expiry date stated on their certificate.

The Commercial Product Assurance was set up to help companies demonstrate that the security functions of their products met defined NCSC standards (known as Security Characteristics). The NCSC uses Assured Service Providers to conduct product testing and assessment.

The NCSC now only accepts Smart Meters or recognised smart metering products for evaluation under the CPA scheme. This change to the CPA scheme does not affect any other schemes or services offered by the NCSC.

What is Commercial Product Assurance (CPA)?   —

This is the name of the NCSC scheme which gives companies a way of having their Smart Meter or recognised smart metering product tested to show that the security claims they make about their product can be independently verified.

The NCSC sets the standards which the independent test laboratories use to assess the Smart Meter or recognised smart metering product. These

standards are published so that both the companies and potential purchasers of the products can see the standards against which testing has been performed.

The test looks at the development and security functions of the Smart Meter or recognised smart metering product.

If the evaluation of a Smart Meter or recognised smart metering product is successful, it is listed on our website and it is issued with a certificate which is valid for 6 years.

Any CPA certificates that have already been issued will continue to be valid – for all products - until their specified expiry date.

What products are covered by CPA?   ▬

The CPA scheme assures Smart Meters or recognised smart metering products which currently include; Gas Smart Metering Equipment (GSME), Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME), Smart Metering Communications Hub (Comms Hub) and Han Controlled Auxiliary Load Control Switches (HCALCS).

Any CPA certificates that have already been issued will continue to be valid – for all products - until their specified expiry date.

How do I find CPA products?   ▬

All CPA products are all listed on our website.

I can't find a product with the functionality I need. Is there anywhere else I could look?   ▬

could look.

CPA is a UK scheme, requiring a UK sales base from the product vendor and aimed at the UK public sector.

There is a similar scheme which is internationally recognised known as Common Criteria.

It is also used to assure security-enforcing products, which have to be independently tested against recognised criteria by laboratories using a formalised methodology.

Unlike CPA, Common Criteria certification only recognises a specific version of the product unless assurance maintenance options are used.

More detail about Common Criteria.

How would my company put our Smart Meter or recognised smart metering product through CPA testing?

First of all you must have a UK sales base - that's a requirement of CPA.

Then you need to review the standards against which your product will be assessed. These standards are known as *Security Characteristics* and you can find them all listed on the website.

Finally, you need to pick a test laboratory to conduct the assessment. There are currently three NCSC assured test labs:

- CyTal UK Limited
- KMPG LLP
- NCC Group

If you can't find a suitable Security Characteristic, or your sales base is broader than just the UK public sector, you may want to look at the

broader than just the UK public sector, you may want to look at the internationally-recognised Common Criteria scheme.

If you are looking for a Security Characteristic for a product with an extant CPA certification then please see the Security Characteristics archive page.

How does my company become one of the CPA test laboratories? —

More information available on how to become one of the companies we approve to carry out evaluations and assessments on behalf of the NCSC.

Why is the NCSC making these changes to the CPA scheme? —

The NCSC believes that a new approach to the product assurance model is needed to address issues and some unintended consequences that have been identified with the current CPA Scheme. These include:

• The length of time it takes to certify a product using the current assurance process may restrict the number of times a vendor submits a product for certification. Cost can also cause this effect.

• When building IT systems, there is a tendency to specify and use older, CPA-certified components to tick a risk management box rather than use newer uncertified components, that might be more functional and more secure because they have no badge.

• There is a clear imperative to operate a scheme that is capable of certifying a larger volume and range of products.

See the FAQ "What will replace the old CPA scheme?" below

What is the value of the CPA certificate that I already hold for my product? —

NCSC is changing the way that products will be evaluated in the future. This will not affect products that have already been evaluated – they have been assessed against a set of security characteristics and have met the required standard.

Products with existing CPA certificates – and those being evaluated at the time when the CPA scheme closed to non-smart meter products - will remain certified until the expiry date stated on their certificate.

I was about to buy a product with a CPA certificate but now I hear the scheme is being closed. What should I do?

The CPA Scheme will continue unchanged for Smart Meters or recognised smart metering products.

Any CPA certificates that have already been issued will continue to be valid – for all products - until their specified expiry date.

For other products, you should review your security requirements and ensure that the selected product meets your needs.

What will replace the CPA scheme?

The NCSC is working with a wide range of stakeholders to identify future requirements and to develop a strategy for future product assurance but has not yet made a decision on what assurance offering will be put in place as a result of closing the CPA scheme (except for Smart Metering devices).

We are currently exploring a future assurance model which does not involve point-in-time certification (i.e. of one version, of one product, from one vendor, using a detailed set of security characteristics).

The intent is to deliver an assurance framework and methodology that applies to:

• all products, systems, and services alike

• all threat environments

• Can be employed by designers, developers, owners/operators, insurers, regulators, and others to inform cyber security decisions

And raises the cyber security bar across the board by informing suppliers and consumers what can and should be expected of desired products, systems, and services.

This potential future assurance mdel is likely to be underpinned by three pillars:

a) Principles for product design and security functionality (can be used to derive principles for classes of technology)

b) Principles for product development

c) Principles for through-life security

And the assessment approach will have two complementary aspects:

a) Vendor assurance through assessment against the principles for product development relating to the development processes and practices of a product vendor.

b) Product type assurance through assessment against principles for product design and security functionality through through-life security relating to a class of technology.

The NCSC has set out a strategy for technology assurance that will enable the UK's future digital growth ambitions, while improving the cyber security of

the technology we use today.

This will see an important shift in the way the UK gains confidence in technology products and systems.

As the threat landscape continues to evolve, cyber security needs to become more continuous too. This means a new approach to building the UK's cyber resilience.

Work is under way, in line with the strategic pillars set out in the National Cyber Strategy, but there is a lot more to do.

From gaining confidence in technologies that need to be cyber secure - as well as cyber security technology - to adopting a principles-based view of risk, we have laid out plans on how the NCSC will work with industry to transform cyber security into an enabler of digital growth, rather than a blocker.

As this new approach to Assurance is developed, the CPA scheme will continue to accept only Smart Meters or smart metering products for evaluation. If this continued development of the CPA scheme affects your business needs, then please contact NCSC enquiries.

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WRITTEN FOR

Public sector

Small & medium sized organisations

Large organisations

Cyber security professionals