



SSRO

Single Source
Regulations Office

Guidance on DefCARS functionality

Version 13.2 – 3 November 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance document is issued by the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO) and explains the functionality of the Defence Contract Analysis and Reporting System (DefCARS).

DefCARS design and development

- 1.2 DefCARS is the central system managed by the SSRO for the capture, storage and analysis of all electronic data reported by contractors in accordance with the Act and the Regulations. It is agreed with the MOD that submission of all statutory reports, with the exception of the Strategic Industry Capacity Report (SICR), via the DefCARS system is how contractors are to meet the requirement to electronically submit their reports to the SSRO and the MOD.
- 1.3 DefCARS is intended to provide a user-friendly web interface and facilitate both compliance with reporting obligations and discharge of the SSRO's functions. This guidance identifies relevant features of DefCARS and gives assistance with submitting reports through the system.
- 1.4 The security of data within DefCARS is one of the SSRO's key priorities. Guidance relating to information security and system administration is available to users via 'onboarding', email correspondence with the SSRO helpdesk and the guidance links in the system.
- 1.5 DefCARS is designed to allow contractors to input data in an efficient way. For instance, certain data required across multiple reports will only need to be entered once, certain data is auto-populated from one report to another and validation errors and warnings will provide the submitter with assistance when reviewing data entered. Copy and paste functionality assists users where they need to submit large amounts of data on some pages.
- 1.6 The system has been designed to facilitate any future changes to the regulatory framework, and will allow the introduction of better analysis and standard reports to inform contract negotiations involving the MOD and contractors. The SSRO will also regularly review the functionality of the system, and where necessary, implement upgrades and improvements through system updates.
- 1.7 From 1 April 2024, where contractors need to submit information about the components of their contract, the SSRO will set up each of the components as if it were a contract in DefCARS. We will do this once a contractor or the MOD has notified us that a component has been created and provided basic information about the component. A contractor may have a number of components for a single contract in respect of which they have to provide separate information about each component. This guidance makes clear what the specific requirements are for component level information and how that information can be provided in the system.

- 1.8 DefCARS users will not be allocated to components. Therefore, Admin Users will need to know to which contracts users currently have access and ensure they are allocated to the components that are associated with those contracts. This information is not automatically available in DefCARS for the user, but if Admin Users contact the SSRO's helpdesk (helpdesk@ssro.gov.uk) this information will be provided. Admin Users will need to ensure that each user can see the components that relate to their contracts.

Personal data

- 1.9 The General Data Protection Regulation came into force on 25 May 2018. The SSRO has reviewed how it manages personal data across the organisation, and in particular in relation to personal data included in the information processed by DefCARS. The SSRO has published a Personal Information Charter which sets out the principles we will apply to personal data.
- 1.10 One of these principles is to limit the information which includes personal data, and is held within DefCARS, to only that which is necessary. In order to help us, the SSRO would encourage anyone submitting statutory reports through DefCARS to limit the personal data content in those reports to that which is specifically required by the Single Source Contract Regulations. Supporting information should not normally include personal data. The SSRO will provide further guidance on the management of personal data in future revisions to its reporting and DefCARS user guidance.

Review of the guidance

- 1.11 The SSRO engages on its reporting guidance and DefCARS through its Reporting and IT sub-group. The sub-group meets in March, July and November and has representation from industry, ADS Group and the MOD. Any contractor with a QDC or QSC can become a member of this group. For more details contact the SSRO helpdesk.
- 1.12 The SSRO will prioritise the future development of its reporting guidance and DefCARS taking into account the feedback received from the Reporting and IT sub-group. The SSRO will aim to issue updates at appropriate intervals, clearly explaining what has changed from version to version. Contractors will need to familiarise themselves with these changes and have regard to the guidance in place at the time of reporting.

2. General system functionality

- 2.1 This section sets out guidance in relation to the general system functionality in DefCARS, covering user navigation, data formats, auto-population and validation. References are made to report types throughout the section, which are further explained in the separate reporting guidance on contract and supplier reports.

Contractor home page

Exhibit 1 – Contractor home page

The report status and any notifications will be shown.

Click on the name of the Contract to find reports for data entry.

View guidance on

- DefCARS functionality
- Contract Reports
- Supplier Reports
- Information Security
- DefCARS Security Operating Procedures (SyOps)
- Shared Service Security Policy (SSSP)

[Download list of compliance issues](#)

Note: The Reports list is sortable by clicking on the column headers.

The screenshot displays a contractor's home page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links to various sections. Below this is a calendar view showing months from July to October. The calendar highlights specific dates with colored bars, indicating report submission dates. Below the calendar is a table with the following columns: Defence Contractor, MOD Contract Number, Contract Title, Date of most recent submission, and a dropdown arrow. The table lists several contracts, including 'On-Boarding Contractor' with various titles like 'Ancillary Services', 'IT Support', 'Radio Communications', 'Build Test', and 'Supplier Reports'.

Defence Contractor	MOD Contract Number	Contract Title	Date of most recent submission
On-Boarding Contractor	REF/0001	Ancillary Services	08/10/2018 16:59:50
On-Boarding Contractor	REF/0002	IT Support	
On-Boarding Contractor		Radio Communications	26/10/2018 12:43:04
On-Boarding Contractor		Build Test	08/03/2021 12:11:25
On-Boarding Contractor		Supplier Reports	

- 2.2 When a defence contractor user logs into DefCARS a calendar (see Exhibit 1) will be visible on the home page. This calendar shows the submission dates listed in the latest submitted reporting plan for each contract or component that the user has access to. Reporting plan dates are required in the Contract Reporting Plan, which is submitted via a Contract Initiation Report (CIR) on DefCARS (see Section 4 of the reporting guidance on contract reports). Submission dates for supplier reports are not displayed as supplier reporting is dependent upon whether on-going contract conditions are met within a financial year (see Section 2 of the reporting guidance on supplier reports).
- 2.3 Users can navigate between years using the arrows at the top of the calendar. By clicking on a date the Contractor, Contract and Report Due Date (the submission date) are displayed. Clicking off a date will cause the list to disappear. Email notifications will alert contractors to forthcoming report submission dates, overdue reports and other key events, as set out in Table 1.

- 2.4 Contractors can download a report which will provide them with details of compliance issues which have been raised on all contract and supplier reports which are visible on the Home page for their individual user account. This report can be generated by selecting the 'Download list of compliance issues' button on the left hand side of the Home page (see Exhibit 1). Selection will download an .XLS report that details the relevant compliance issues for any contract and supplier reports. The list of issues will be sorted chronologically based on the date the issue was released to the contractor.

Table 1 – System generated email notifications

Message category	Event
Calendar	Submission date reminder (sent one week in advance)
	Report overdue reminder (sent one day after the due date and every subsequent month for six months)
Compliance Issues (Administration User, Submitter and Editor permissions only)	Approve issues
	SSRO issues released
	MOD issues released
	Unresponded to issues (30 days)
	No current issues
Status (Administration User, Submitter and Editor permissions only)	SSRO status changed (Under review, Issues identified or No current issues)
	MOD status changed (Under review, Issues identified or MOD verification complete)
New potential or actual QDC or QSC added (Administration User only)	A new or potential QDC or QSC has been added to DefCARS (this is only where the contracting company already exists on DefCARS)
Potential QDC conversion	Potential QDC converted to an actual QDC

- 2.5 Below the calendar, users will also see a list of all the contracts, and components associated with them, which they have access to, submitted reports on, and have reports available for completion. The system will highlight the status (e.g. if a report is due or overdue) and any identified issues with each submitted report in this list. The contract and component list are sorted by default based on recent DefCARS activity in relation to that contract (e.g. drafting or submitting a report in DefCARS) but clicking any column header (Defence Contractor, MOD Contract Number, Contract Title and Date of Most Recent Submission) will re-sort the list in ascending order according to that column header. A second click of the column header will re-sort in descending order. This is particularly useful when a contractor wants to see the components which are associated with individual contracts. The SSRO will use a naming convention for components so that they are listed with the contracts that they relate to.
- 2.6 On the DefCARS homepage, users can search for a contract or component within their contracting company using the contract reference number or contract title. Admin Users can also search in contract administration using the contract or component number and title.

- 2.7 Users can start new reports from the home page using the 'new submission' option, where the user's permissions allow this. Once a contract report or component level information is submitted, it becomes read only. Users can submit a correction to a submitted contract report or component level information using the 'start correction' option on the home page. All data from the submitted contract report or component level information will be copied to a new version which can be edited or updated. The 'new submission' option will appear for contracts logged on the system but where no information has yet been added.

System help and guidance

- 2.8 Users can access system help and this reporting guidance via a help bar on the left-hand side of the contractor home page, and the 'Get help with this page' links at the top of each page within reports. The links on each page take the user to the equivalent page within the guidance document.
- 2.9 If Administration Users would like to have information about their company's DefCARS users, which permissions they hold and which contracts they have been allocated to, this information can be requested from the SSRO's helpdesk at helpdesk@ssro.gov.uk.

Report Navigation

- 2.10 Each contract report or component level information can be navigated using the report page menu visible on the left-hand side of the screen or via the Next Page buttons at the bottom of each report page. Clicking on a Comment, Issue or Supporting File listed on the Report Home page will navigate a user directly to the relevant report page.

Guidance on how to have open two report pages at once

- 2.11 Users can open multiple DefCARS reports in a web browser by navigating to the reports page for each report, right clicking on the 'View' button and selecting 'Open link in new tab'. This will open the report in a new tab and allow the contractor to open the other report or multiple reports in other tabs.

Breadcrumb Trail

- 2.12 Each screen indicates the contract or component, report and page being viewed, in a sequence that we refer to as a 'breadcrumb trail'. For example, [Contract or component name] / draft S2 / ICR / Overview / DPS Inputs. Clicking on an element of the breadcrumb trail will redirect a user back to that DefCARS screen.

Data formats

- 2.13 DefCARS facilitates the collection of data in a standardised format for analysis purposes. Therefore, some data is required in certain specified formats which are set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Data formats

Data type	Guidance
Dates	All dates must be in the format dd/mm/yyyy. Dates can either be entered by selecting the relevant date from a calendar view or can be typed in.
Percentages	Percentages are to be entered excluding the percentage sign and as, for example, "10.5". If the user enters "0.105" instead, the system will recognise this as 0.105%, and if the user enters "ten and a half per cent", the system will not convert words to the relevant figure.
Monetary values	Generally, data is required in units of £ million (e.g. contract prices) or £ (e.g. cost recovery rates). Users should refer to the system and this guidance for the units required.
Decimal places	This guidance will specify the number of decimal places required and in most cases three decimal places are needed. An indication of what is required is shown throughout this user guidance. DefCARS can accept up to six decimal places. If a value which has more than six decimal places is pasted into a data field, the system will truncate the value at six decimal places, and will not round it.
Numerical values	The system can accept values with up to ten integers. The system does not currently allow comma separators to be used when entering data. DefCARS will allow values which include comma separators to be pasted into data fields, however the commas will be removed from the formatting once pasted. Negative values can be accepted by DefCARS but there is a -£1 million limit on using negative numbers in any annual total of costs or price reported.
Text	There are differing character limits on each field. The system will indicate if the character limit for a field is exceeded.

Auto-population

2.14 Some information within DefCARS will be auto-populated to reduce the data entry required to complete reports. Where the same fields appear within a report, the system will populate these throughout that report. The system will also auto-populate consistent fields from one report to another. For example:

- The first QCR will be auto-populated from the latest submitted CIR. Any subsequent QCRs will then be auto-populated from the latest submitted QCR.
- The first ICR (Lower or Higher Value) will be auto-populated from the latest submitted CIR. Any subsequent ICRs will then be auto-populated from the latest submitted ICR.
- The first Contract Completion Report (CCR) will auto-populate from the latest ICR (of either type) if available and not auto-populate from a QCR. If no ICR is available, then it will populate from the latest CIR.

- If a draft Qualifying Business Unit Cost Analysis Report (QBUCAR) report is created within 15 months of the 'Last day of the most recently completed Business Unit Relevant Accounting Period' in a previously submitted report, the system will pre-populate all 'prior year estimates' in the draft report, using the 'current year estimates' from the previous QBUCAR.

2.15 Where contractors are reporting component level information the same auto-population rules as set out above will apply. Contract level information does not auto-populate into component level information. Contractors should check auto-populated data and update where appropriate so that the data complies with the reporting obligations set out in the Regulations for the specific report that they are submitting.

Copy and Paste functionality

2.16 Some reports have additional functionality for contractors to copy and paste data more than one field at a time into DefCARS to ease data entry. This functionality can be found in the following reports, and contractors should refer to the guidance within the pop-up prompt displayed when the copy and paste button is selected, which sets out the process and parameters for successfully importing data:

- DPS Input Values – CIR, ICR and CCR
- Actual Forecast DPS Input Values – ICR and CCR
- Analysis of Cost by Supplier Breakdown - QCR
- Actual Forecast Analysis of Cost – QCR
- Cost Recovery Rates – CIR, ICR and CCR
- Actual Forecast Cost Recovery Rates – ICR and CCR
- Milestones – CIR, QCR, ICR and CCR
- Sub-contracts – CIR, ICR and CCR
- Payments – CIR, ICR and CCR
- Variance, Events and Circumstances (QCR, ICR and CCR)
- Key Deliverables (CIR, QCR, ICR and CCR)
- Last Year Prior Year Estimates – QBUCAR
- Last Year Actuals – QBUCAR
- This Year Estimates – QBUCAR

2.17 When using copy and paste functionality, the information being uploaded must be in the format which DefCARS specifies otherwise the upload will not be successful.

Data validation

2.18 The parameters in Table 3 are applied within the system when reported fields are matched for validation purposes. These tolerances apply within a report but not when a check is being made between one report and another.

Table 3 - Validation tolerances to be applied when comparing fields within submissions

Comparison	Tolerance	Examples
Any percentages reported within a submission.	The two percentages should match to the second decimal point with a tolerance limit of +/- 0.01 percentage points.	<p>'Profit' page: Contract Profit Rate 10.75%</p> <p>'Summary Analysis of Price' page: auto calculated sum of the overall contract profit 10.76%. No validation warning.</p> <p>'Summary Analysis of Price' page: auto calculated sum of the overall contract profit 10.78%. Validation warning.</p>
Any financial values within a submission less than £100m.	The two values should match to one decimal point with a tolerance limit of +/- £0.1 million.	<p>'Contract' page: Total Contract Price £9.918m</p> <p>'Profit' page: Total Contract Price £9.926m No validation warning.</p> <p>'Profit' page: Total Contract Price £9.713m Validation warning.</p>
Any financial values within a submission which are £100m or greater.	The two values should match to the nearest million with a tolerance of +/- £1 million.	<p>'Contract' page: Total Contract Price £789.110m</p> <p>'Profit' page: Total Contract Price £790.01m No validation warning.</p> <p>'Profit' page: Total Contract Price £786.110m Validation warning.</p>

- 2.19 The system's validation function does not provide contractors with confirmation that their report is compliant with the Act and the Regulations. The validation checks in DefCARS however aim to assist contractors to provide a good quality report submission and the MOD to target their review of reports. For example, by ensuring data in reports are in the correct format, that totals sum correctly and that fields which are repeated within reports match. The validation errors and warnings in DefCARS support the [compliance methodology](#) applied by the SSRO to report submissions.
- 2.20 Contractors should be aware that some validation warnings within component level information may flag when they are not applicable to the component information being reported. Contractors should provide an explanation of where validation warnings have had to be ignored in the information they are providing. The contract reporting guidance explains that, where such validation warnings arise, they should be ignored by contractors when submitting component level information.

- 2.21 Users can validate the data input on each report in two ways. Firstly, on each report page, users can save the page and then click on the 'Validate' button. Alternatively, users can validate the whole report by clicking on the 'Review Validation Warnings' button in the left-hand navigation bar. If a page passes validation, a green tick will appear next to the page name in the navigation bar.
- 2.22 The system will highlight any validation 'errors' and 'warnings' to the user. Validation errors are displayed in red and require action before the report can be submitted in DefCARS. Validation warnings are displayed in yellow and highlight issues with the data inputted. These are shown in Exhibit 2. The current validation errors and warnings which apply in DefCARS can be found on the [reporting guidance page](#) on the [SSRO website](#).

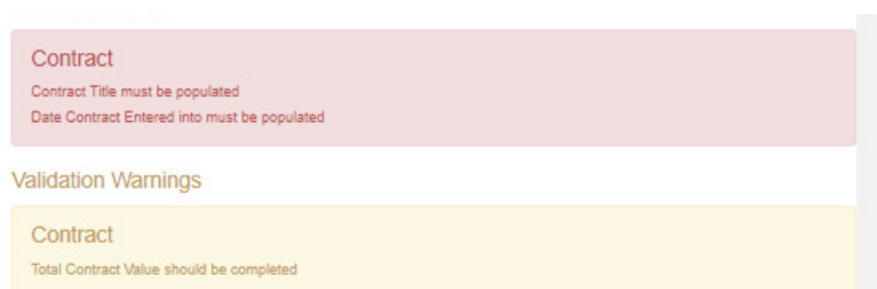


Exhibit 2 - Validation errors and warnings

Saving reports

- 2.23 Most pages have a save button at the bottom of them. Where they do not, entered content is saved as it is completed.
- 2.24 It is not possible for multiple users to update the same report at the same time, although progress in a report can be saved and a different user can then log in and continue with the same report. This is to prevent users from overwriting information by other users who may be completing the report at the same time.

Uploading Comments, Issues and Supporting Information in reports

- 2.25 Each page in DefCARS has a pop-up window accessible from the top right of the page which allows users to add comments and supporting information to a report and respond to issues. A screen shot of this pop-up is shown in Exhibit 3. When the pop-up is clicked the functionality becomes visible, which contractors and suppliers may use to provide additional information to meet the reporting obligations set out in the Regulations and to explain or supplement the data entered into the fields on the page.

Exhibit 3 - Comments, issues and supporting information pop-up

The screenshot displays three distinct sections within a pop-up interface:

- Issue Log:** A table with columns: Issue ID, Relevant Field, Description, Issue Status, and Response. It contains one entry with ID 423, status 'Active', and a response icon.
- Comments - add a supporting comment to your data:** Includes a 'Show/hide new comment' link and a table with columns: By, Relevant Field, Comment, Added On, and Approved Date. It shows a comment by 'SSRO' dated 12/07/2018.
- Supporting files - add a supporting file to your data:** Features an 'Upload a new file' button, a note about supporting information, and a table with columns: File, Relevant Field, Uploaded On, and Approved Date. It shows a file 'Test data.xlsx' uploaded on 12/07/2018 at 15:22.

Adding Comments and Supporting Files

- 2.26 To add a new comment, the system user can click on the pop-up, select any data entry field from the drop down menu (all fields on the page are listed) and click the 'Show/hide new comment' link. Comments can also be added without making a link to a data entry field. After typing a new comment in the box that is presented, the user must make sure they select 'Add new comment'. Comments added to reports need to be approved and notified externally before they are visible to the SSRO and the MOD.
- 2.27 Comments and supporting files that are added to a contract report or component level information, via the Comments and Supporting Information functions, will not transfer to any new report created for that contract or to an updated component level information. For example, comments and files in QCR1 will not transfer to QCR2 as the latter is a new report. If comments and files remain relevant, they will need to be uploaded again to the subsequent report. If the contractor is correcting a report or component level information, all data including comments and supporting files is transferred.
- 2.28 To provide supporting files, the user can select a data entry field from the drop-down menu as above and click on the 'Upload a new file' icon. In a new window, the user will be asked to confirm that the data to be uploaded is classed as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE-COMMERCIAL or lower. Users should browse for the document and select 'Upload'.
- 2.29 The file types below can be uploaded onto the system. There is a maximum file size of 100MB which should not cause problems for contractors. The SSRO would prefer Excel documents are submitted in this form rather than as converted pdf documents as this makes analysis more difficult.





- | | | |
|---------|----------|--|
| • .doc | • .xlsx | • .jpg |
| • .docx | • .xlt | • .png |
| • .txt | • .xltx | • .gif |
| • .pdf | • .xlm | • .bmp |
| • .ppt | • .xlsm | • .zip or .7z |
| • .pptx | • .ods | (containing one of the above types) ¹ |
| • .csv | • .mdb | |
| • .xls | • .accdb | |

2.30 General comments and supporting files can be added against a contract report or component level information. The same permission rules also apply. Editors can draft general comments and add supporting files but to submit them as part of a report will require approval by an Administration User or a Submitter. Comments or supporting files will not be visible to the MOD or SSRO unless they are individually approved by an Administration User or Submitter. There is no functionality to enable an approver to edit comments. Therefore, to amend a comment before approval, the comment text should be copied into a new comment window, edited and then approved. The previous comment will still be visible but can then be rejected by an Administration User, Submitter or Editor user to delete it.

Compliance Issues

2.31 Compliance issues can be raised on contract reports or component level information by the SSRO and MOD after a contractor has submitted their contract report or component level information. DefCARS functionality which supports compliance activities is explained later in this section. Issues which are attached to an individual page in a contract report or in relation to component level information will be displayed in the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up. The icons shown in Table 4 will show in the pop-up to indicate the number of comments, issues or supporting files which have been added to a page.

Table 4 – Icons

Area	Icon	Explanation
Field specific issues		In this example two issues are displayed.
Page level issues		In this example there is an issue related to a page rather than a field.
Comments		In this example no comments have been added.
Supporting Files		In this example no supporting files have been added.

¹ Archived files in this format are supported, but must contain one of the other accepted file types e.g. .xlsx, .ppt, .doc. When an archived file is uploaded, a file handler process will extract and check the file type contained within, then proceed to process it as normal if it is a supported file. This could be useful when uploading potentially large files to reduce the upload time.

Report Home page

- 2.32 The Report Home page will display summary lists added to reports via the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up. The following sections will be displayed in the Report Home page:
- a. Comments: This table will set out each comment that has been raised against the report along with the page and relevant field (if any) that the comment has been tagged against.
 - b. Current Issues: This table will set out all open issues in relation to the report, providing a description of the issue along with the page and relevant field (if any) that the issue has been logged against.
 - c. Current Resolved Issues: This table will set out all issues previously raised on a report which have been closed and require no further action. If an issue has been closed it will also appear in the Comments, Issues and Supporting Information pop-up in the relevant report page.
 - d. File Uploads: This table will list each file that has been uploaded to support the report along with the page and relevant field that the file has been tagged against and whether the upload is linked to an issue.
- 2.33 Clicking on a line in one of the summary tables will navigate the user to the relevant report page.

Downloading and printing reports

- 2.34 The Submission page of each report provides the contractor with the facility to view, download and print its reports in Excel format. This functionality is available to the contractor before and after submission to the SSRO and the MOD, provided that the user has had the Download Report and Print permission enabled by their Administration User. Contractors should be aware that existing Excel downloads in DefCARS do not contain new data fields added to the system as a result of legislative changes which applied from 1 April 2024.

Submission and re-submission

- 2.35 The SSRO or the MOD can only see contract reports or component level information once a contractor has submitted them. Once the contractor is satisfied that the report is ready for submission, it can save and submit the report via the Submission page. If there are remaining validation errors in the report, DefCARS will not allow submission. If there are remaining validation warnings in the report, DefCARS will alert the submitter to review these before confirming that they wish to submit. Unresolved validation warnings may result in an increased number of issues from the SSRO or the MOD to the contractor.

- 2.36 Once the contract report or component level information has been submitted, it can no longer be edited so the contractors should make every effort to ensure that they are content before submitting. Contractors are however able to make corrections or other amendments to the report once it has been submitted. In the case of the CIR, as well as a correction, there is the option to select 'On-Demand Report' where the contractor needs to submit a new Contract Pricing Statement or Contract Reporting Plan.
- 2.37 A correction report should be started in cases where a contractor is required to amend any of the existing submitted data to rectify an identified error, for example because of a compliance issue that may have been raised in the system, or to provide additional information in relation to that submission as required by the legislation which was not initially provided. Contractors should be aware that if the 'New Submission' report type is incorrectly selected, rather than 'Start Correction', a new report of that type will be created, rather than providing access to the previously submitted report for correction. A report that has been incorrectly started can be deleted by the contractor, but only before the report is submitted. An in-line message will appear when 'New Submission' is selected which will state "You are starting a new submission of this report type. If you intended to make a correction to a report that has already been submitted, please return to that individual submission on the report home page and press 'Start Correction'". This will prompt the user to check they intend to generate a new report rather than seeking to correct a previously submitted report.
- 2.38 To make a correction, the contractor should navigate to the Contractor Home Page. The contractor will see an icon labelled 'Start Correction' against each report migrated from the original system and submitted in DefCARS. This will open a new draft of the report populated with the information from the previously submitted report. This information can be edited by the contractor to correct an error(s) in the earlier submission, saved and submitted via the Submission page. Contractors should not amend the due date of the report when submitting a correction report. It would be helpful for the SSRO and MOD, if contractors attach comments to highlight the fields that have been edited in the correction report, and provide any additional information to explain why the amendments have been made.
- 2.39 The Contractor Home Page will display the original submission as 'S1' (if it is the first submission of its report type, 'S2' if the second and so on), and the corrected report as 'S1C1' (if it is the first correction of 'S1', 'S1C2' if the second and so on). The 'S' refers to the submission number for that type of report and the 'C' refers to the correction number for that specific report number. Active issues (see next section) will be carried forward in correction reports until they are resolved.

Compliance activities

- 2.40 The SSRO and MOD raise issues in DefCARS about compliance by contractors with reporting requirements, which contractors may respond to on the system. The SSRO publishes its [compliance methodology](#) and is making changes to it to reflect the amendments to the legislation being introduced on 1 April 2024. This user guidance explains how contractors can review and respond to issues raised by the SSRO or the MOD within the system. This functionality supports a three-way dialogue about reports between the contractor, the SSRO and the MOD and enables issues with reports to be resolved in a timely and transparent way.

- 2.41 The DefCARS homepage shows the number of reports relating to a contract which have current open issues. All current open issues in a report will subsequently be carried forward in future correction reports (they are not carried forward into a new report submission) and the number of 'reports with open issues' counter will reflect this. The number of current open issues and the current SSRO/MOD review status relating to each individual report is also shown (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4 – Report Issues

Defence Contractor ↑↓	MOD Contract Number ↑↓	Contract Title ↑↓	Date of most recent submission ↑↓		
Contractor 1	Contract Reference	Contract Title	21/03/2019 15:47:25	Reports Due: 1	Reports With Open Issues: 1
CIR ^					
On-demand report 1					
S1	Start date: 21/03/2019	Submitted date: 21/03/2019	Start Correction	View	Open Issues: 3
Report status:		Issues identified by SSRO		Under review by MOD	

Identifying and reviewing issues

- 2.42 By selecting the view icon (see Exhibit 4) the user will be taken to the Report Home page for that report where the individual issues will be listed (see Exhibit 5). The Report Home page will display two blue status boxes which indicate the overall stage the report is at in the SSRO and the MOD review process. The page will also show both current open issues and current resolved issues. These issues will have separate headings with current open issues under a red heading and current resolved issues under an amber heading (see Exhibit 5). There is a column display on the 'Current open issues' table and 'Current resolved issues' table, labelled 'Issue forwarded to the MOD, issue priority' This column indicates the level of priority (High, Medium or Low) given to this issue by the SSRO. The user can also download the report to see a summary of current open and current resolved issues as shown on the Report Home page.

Exhibit 5 – Report Home Page Issues List

Current Open Issues								
Page	Relevant Field	Description	Issue Status	Date issue raised	Date of most recent activity	Draft Changes Requiring Approval?	Has been forwarded to MOD?	Raised by Organisation
Supplier	Town/City	Description 1	Active	19/03/2019	19/03/2019	✓	✗	SSRO
Contract	Contract Unique Reference	Description 2	Active	19/03/2019	19/03/2019	✓	✗	SSRO
Profit	BPR Value Selection	Description 3	Active	19/03/2019	19/03/2019	✗	✓	SSRO
Current Resolved Issues								
Page	Relevant Field	Description	Issue Status	Date issue raised	Date of most recent activity	Draft Changes Requiring Approval?	Has been forwarded to MOD?	Raised by Organisation
Profit	Statutory Guidance on Allowable Costs	Description 4	Resolved	19/03/2019	21/03/2019	✗	✗	SSRO

2.43 There are three ways to view the details associated with an issue:


- a. Issues which appear in the issues list on the Report Home page are 'clickable' and will take the user to the relevant report page and, where pop-ups are enabled in a user's browser, a pop-up window will appear which contains all the information relating to that issue (see Exhibit 8).
- b. Where pop-ups are not enabled in a user's browser, clicking on an issue on the Report Home page will take the user to the page where the issue has been raised. If the issue relates to a particular field an issues icon  will appear in the relevant field (see Exhibit 6). This icon can be clicked to open a window showing all the details relating to an issue (see Exhibit 8). If the issue has been raised at page level, there will be no issue icon next to any field. The 'Comments, Issues and Supporting Information' pop-up on the relevant page will indicate how many issues, comments and supporting files have been added. The issue information can be accessed through the 'Comments, Issues and Supporting Information' pop-up as explained in (c).
- c. Every issue on a page can also be accessed by clicking the 'Comments, Issues and Supporting Information' pop-up at the top right-hand corner of the page (see Exhibit 3). Clicking this pop-up opens a new window (see Exhibit 7) which contains the Issue Log for that page where all the issues relating to the page will be visible along with any comments and supporting files relating to the data entered on that page. The two icons on the right-hand side of the issue in the 'Response' column (see Exhibit 7) indicate whether any comments have been raised against the issue or whether there are any supporting files attached. Users should note that this is the same window as that shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 6 – Issues Icon on Individual Fields

Contract Profit Rate

Value

Statutory Guidance on Allowable Costs in force at the time of agreement

VERSION 1.0 26 JANUARY 2015 

Exhibit 7 – Issues, Comments and Support files window

Issue Log

Issue ID	Relevant Field	Description	Issue Status	Response
1182	Statutory Guidance on Allowable Costs	Description 4	Active	0 1
1181	BPR Value Selection	Description 3	Active	0 2

Comments - add a supporting comment to your data

[Show/hide new comment](#)

By	Relevant Field	Comment	Added On	Approved Date
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Supporting files - add a supporting file to your data

Upload a new file

Note: This section is to provide supporting information to your report. To add a file in relation to an issue please click on an individual issue in the Issue Log.

File	Relevant Field	Uploaded On	Approved Date
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- 2.44 When a contractor opens an issue on the issue log another window will open (see Exhibit 8) which will display all the details associated with the issue such as:
- a description of the issue;
 - whether the issue is linked to an automated validation rule in DefCARS;
 - the issue 'category' (whether it is a reporting or pricing issue);
 - the status (e.g. open or resolved);
 - the person who raised the issue;
 - when the issue was released; and
 - the person who released the issue.

Exhibit 8 – Issue fields

Relevant Field	
Issue Description:	
Linked to validation rule:	
Issue Category:	
Category:	
Raised by:	
Status:	
Notices Issued:	
Release Date:	
Released By:	

Responding to an issue

- 2.45 Contractors will be able to review issues raised in a contract report, supplier report or component level information and provide a response in DefCARS. The response can be provided in the same submission. If the contractor wishes to correct a contract report, supplier report or component level information to address a compliance issue they may do this via a correction report.
- 2.46 Contractors will be able to add their response to the MOD or SSRO issue by clicking show/hide new comment in the Comments Log, entering a comment in the box and clicking the 'add new comment' button (see Exhibit 9). The system will then automatically set the issue to being with a specified organisation: the SSRO or the MOD, depending on who initially raised the issue. Paragraph 2.53 explains how responses are approved.
- 2.47 If a contractor wishes to provide a correction report in response to any issue raised by the SSRO or the MOD, the contractor can provide a comment against an individual issue (via the show/hide new comment button in the issues pop-up window) to highlight that the data has been updated, or where they consider a comment would be useful in providing further clarification to the SSRO/MOD.

- 2.48 All comments on an issue, whether made by the contractor, SSRO or MOD will be included in a list in the Comments Log which appears below the issue details once they have been added, with the most recent comment shown first. The comments log enables the contractor to see a full audit trail of the information relating to each issue.
- 2.49 All current open issues in a contract report, supplier report or component level information will subsequently be carried forward in future correction reports, this includes current resolved issues which will be shown under the 'current resolved issues' heading. Any new issues raised in subsequent correction reports will not be retrospectively applied and therefore will not be visible in earlier reports.

Exhibit 9 – Responding to an Issue



The screenshot displays the 'Comments Log' section of the DefCARS interface. At the top, there is a header 'Comments Log'. Below it is a link 'Show/hide new comment'. Underneath is a label 'Comment:' followed by a large, empty text input box. At the bottom of the input area is a blue button with a white speech bubble icon and the text 'Add New Comment'.

- 2.50 Contractor users with Administration User, Submitter or Editor permissions can draft responses in DefCARS to issues raised by the SSRO or MOD. Exhibit 12 details the different actions a user can undertake based on their permission level. DefCARS requires all draft responses to be approved by an Administration User or Submitter. Responses to issues which have been drafted by an Editor, or by an Administration User or Submitter and not yet approved, will be indicated with a tick in the 'Draft changes requiring approval' column of the issues list in the Report Home page (see Exhibit 5). Individual draft responses can also be seen in the comments log where the approval date will show as N/A. Administration Users and Submitters can draft responses but will need to approve their own responses (see next paragraph). All responses will remain in draft and can still be deleted without being visible to the SSRO or MOD until they have been approved.
- 2.51 To seek approval for a draft response an Editor will need to click on the 'Notify Approver' button which is located at the bottom of the Report Home page (see Exhibit 11). Clicking this button will send an email notification to the Administration User and Submitter, informing them that responses require approval. If the Editor is making draft responses on several issues at the same time, they may wish to consider only clicking on the 'Notify Approver' button after all responses are drafted.
- 2.52 Once an Administration User or Submitter wishes to approve a response they will need to access each individual issue from the Report Home page. The draft response will be visible in the Comments Log and to the right of the draft comment there will be a green tick and a red cross icon. To approve the draft response, click the green tick button. A pop-up window will appear, the user should click the 'Approve Response' button (see Exhibit 10).

- 2.53 Once approved the response will be visible to the SSRO and MOD. In order to make the SSRO and MOD aware that the contractor has responded the Administration User or Submitter will need to select 'Notify Externally' on the Report Home page. This will send an email to notify the SSRO and MOD.
- 2.54 To reject a draft response, approved users will need to click the red cross button to the right-hand side of the draft comment in the Comment Log. A new window will appear, and the user will need to click the 'Reject Response' button. Rejected comments will remain visible to contractor users in the Comment Log but will not be visible to the MOD or the SSRO. Up to that point of approval, comments can be edited by Editor, Administrator or Submitter users, using the 'edit' button.

Exhibit 10 – Approving draft responses

By	Relevant Field	Comment	Added On	Approved Date	
Defence Contractor	Comment	Comment to be approved.	13/11/2019	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

↓

Approve Issue Response ? ×

By

Recipient(s)

Fields and Values set

Date Added

Exhibit 11 – Notifying approver button



- 2.55 Issues that have been forwarded by the SSRO to the MOD, in accordance with its [compliance methodology](#), will be indicated in the 'Has been forwarded to the MOD?' column of the issues list on the Report Home Page with a tick (see Exhibit 5). The contractor is still able to create correction reports and raise comments against these issues after they have been forwarded to the MOD.

- 2.56 The SSRO will refer unresolved reporting and pricing issues to the MOD in line with its [compliance methodology](#). In doing so, the SSRO will note whether the issue is high, medium or low priority for the MOD to consider, based on its potential impact on operation of the regulatory framework. We will categorise issues based on the MOD's responses as explained in the [compliance methodology](#).

Exhibit 12 – Contractor permissions relating to DefCARS data and activities

	Action	Administrator	Submitter	Editor	Reviewer
Compliance	Respond to issues/queries	●	●	●	
	Approve responses to issues/queries	●	●		
	Delete responses to issues/queries prior to approval	●	●	●	
QDC/supplier report data	View report data	●	●	●	●
	Create/edit report data	●	●	●	
	Submit reports	●	●		
	Download report	●			
	Download reports in DefCARS1	●			
	Draft general comments	●	●	●	
	Add support files	●	●	●	
	Approve general comments	●	●		
	Approve supporting files	●	●		
	Delete (reject) general comments prior to approval	●	●	●	
	Deleting supporting files prior to approval	●	●	●	
	Delete approved comments, responses and supporting files prior to report submissions	●	●		
Administration	Create/manage users (own organisation)	●			

Changes to report status

- 2.57 The MOD and the SSRO can set the status of the report independently to reflect the overall stage the report is at in their respective review processes. Once a report has been submitted there are three different stages in the review process that will be shown by the status boxes on the Report Home page.
- 2.58 On submission of a report, the status will change from 'Draft' to 'Under review by SSRO' and 'Under review by MOD'. If issues are raised by the SSRO or the MOD, the status will change to 'Issues identified by the SSRO' or 'Issues identified by the MOD' respectively. When the MOD/SSRO is satisfied that an issue it has raised has been fully addressed, it will mark respective issues as resolved. Resolved issues will move from 'Current Open Issues' on the Report Home page to 'Current Resolved Issues'.
- 2.59 When there are no issues to be addressed in a report (either because the issues raised in a report have been addressed, or because there are no issues to raise on the report) the SSRO and MOD can set their own status of the report to 'No Current Issues identified by the SSRO' or 'MOD verification complete' respectively. The current status of a report will be visible on the Report Home Page.
- 2.60 If no issues have been raised by the SSRO or the MOD, the status will be changed to 'No current issues' by the SSRO, and 'MOD verification complete' by the MOD. When a correction report has been submitted, reviewed, and set to 'No current issues' by the SSRO, and 'MOD verification complete' by the MOD, any previous submissions will automatically be updated to reflect the status of the correction report set.
- 2.61 The compliance functionality in DefCARS follows a workflow for each issue, which is used to identify the party who should take the next action on each issue. Exhibit 13 and Table 5 details the workflow for compliance issues raised by the SSRO and Exhibit 14 and Table 6 details the workflow for compliance issues raised by the MOD.

Exhibit 13 – Compliance workflow for issues raised by the SSRO

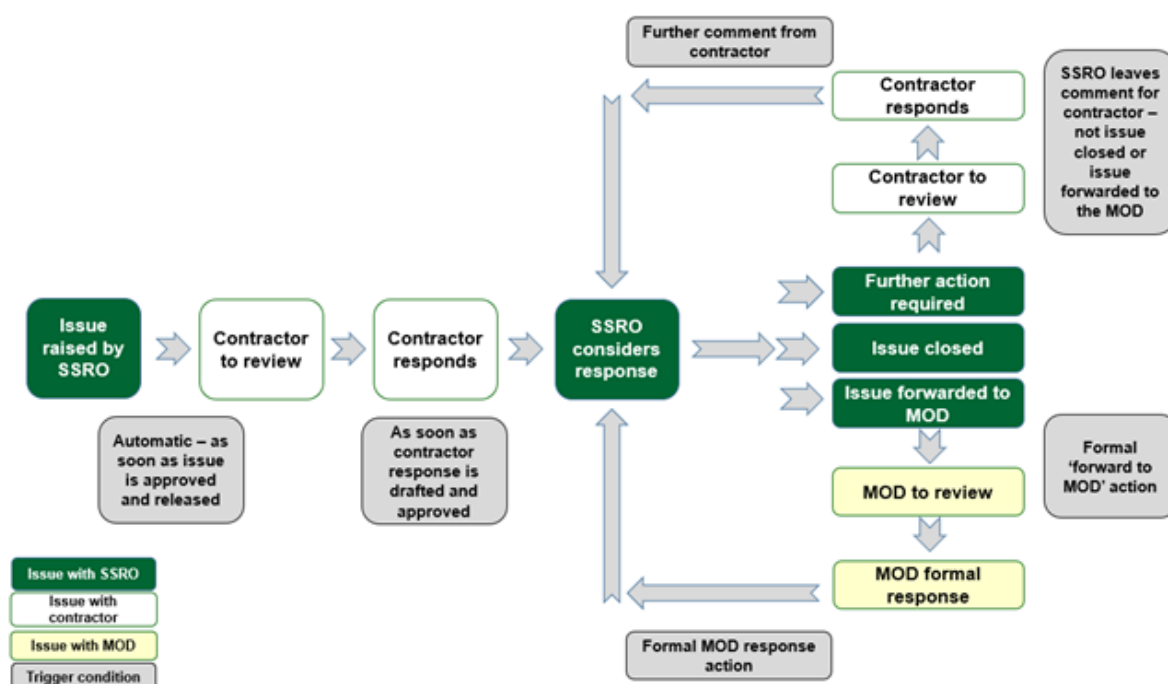
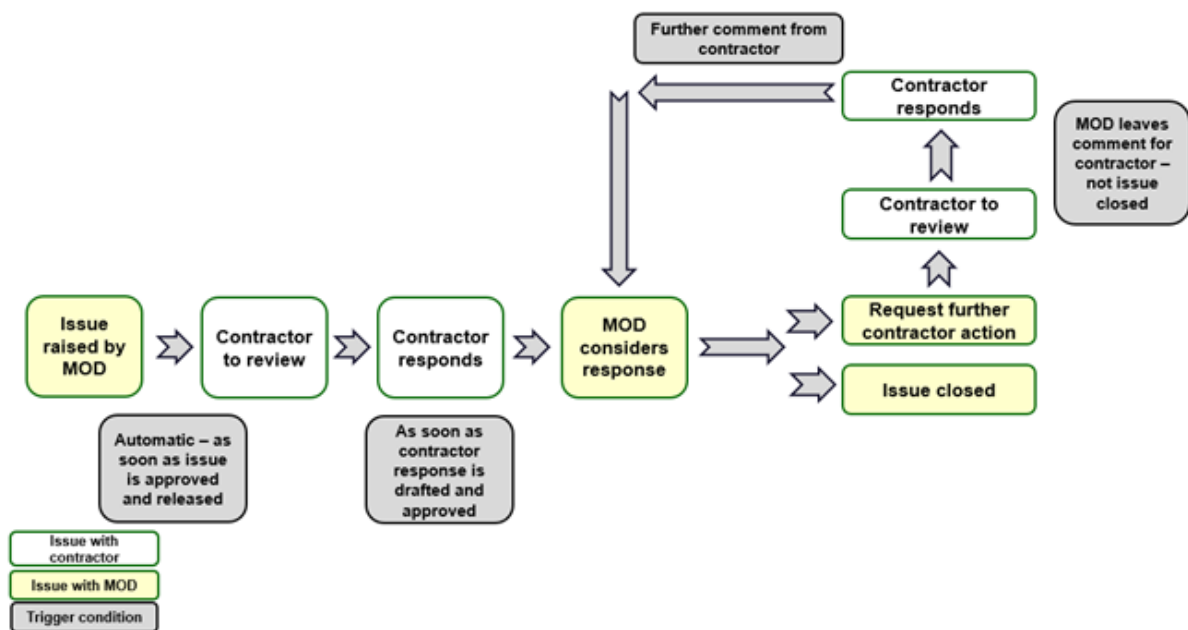


Table 5: Trigger conditions for issues raised by the SSRO

User	Condition	Action
SSRO	Issue(s) initially released to contractor.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with contractor'.
Contractor	Contractor response to individual issue is drafted and approved.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with SSRO'.
SSRO	Comments left against individual issue(s) for the contractor.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with contractor'.
Contractor	Comments left against individual issue(s) for the SSRO.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with SSRO'.
SSRO	Issue(s) are 'forwarded to the MOD' by the SSRO.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with MOD'.
MOD	MOD provides a formal response to the issue to the SSRO by selecting 'respond to the SSRO'.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with SSRO'.

Exhibit 14 – Compliance workflow for issues raised by the MOD**Table 6 – Trigger conditions for issues raised by the MOD**

User	Condition	Action
MOD	Issue(s) initially released to contractor.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with contractor'.
Contractor	Contractor response to individual issue drafted and approved.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with MOD'.
MOD	Comments left against individual issue(s) for the contractor.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with contractor'.
Contractor	Comments left against individual issue(s) for the MOD.	Issue(s) automatically set to 'next action with MOD'.

Email notifications

- 2.62 DefCARS will communicate changes to the status of a report to all parties associated with a contract via an automatic email notification. Where issues have been raised in a report by either the MOD or the SSRO, an automatic email notification will be sent out entitled 'Feedback Available'. The feedback will not be listed in the email. To access and respond to the feedback the user must login to DefCARS and open the specified report. The email will detail:
- a. which organisation has completed its review;
 - b. the contract name;
 - c. the type of report;
 - d. the submission number which the feedback relates to. If feedback was provided on the first correction of submission 1, the email would detail the submission number as 'S1C1'; and
 - e. the date and time the review was completed.
- 2.63 Where the MOD sets its status to 'MOD Verification Complete', DefCARS will automatically generate a 'MOD Report Status Change' email. The email will detail (a) – (e) as above and the status 'MOD Verification Complete'. Where the SSRO sets its status to 'No Current Issues Identified by the SSRO', an 'SSRO Status Change' email will be automatically generated. The email will detail (a) – (e) as above and the status: 'No Current Issues on report'.
- 2.64 Where issues have remained open for over 30 days since initial release, DefCARS will send automated email notifications to the SSRO, MOD and contractor as a reminder to those parties who are required to take action. This email notification will contain a consolidated list of unresolved issues for each contract and/or supplier report that the DefCARS user has access to. The notification will also identify the party or parties responsible for taking action in relation to each unresolved issue. It will continue to be sent every 30 days until the issue is resolved.