



Llais Cyngorau Cymuned a Thref yng Nghymru

The Voice of Community and Town Councils in Wales

Digital Information Document: Windows 10 - End of Support

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Overview

Microsoft has announced that support for Windows 10 Home and Pro Operating Systems for PCs will end on 14 October 2025. After this date, Microsoft will no longer provide security updates or technical support for Windows 10. While existing Windows 10 PCs will continue to function, it is advisable for councils to plan for a transition away from Windows 10 by this date to avoid operational and security risks caused by running on an unsupported Operating System.

Consideration should be given to all devices owned or directly managed by the council. Councillors who are using their own equipment for council business should also be advised to plan for this end of support date.

There are **three steps** to correctly manage this transition.

Step 1: Assess

Councils should start by assessing their current equipment:

- **Inventory:** Create an inventory of all devices using Windows 10 within the organization. To check the version of Windows being used then look in **Settings -> System**.
- **Check:** Execute the following checks for each device
 - **Windows 11 Compatibility Check:** Microsoft are offering free upgrades to Windows 11 for devices which meet the necessary technical specifications. There is a PC Health Check app from Microsoft which can be used to determine if existing hardware meets Windows 11 system requirements. Details are available here ([PC Health Check](#)). Devices may need an upgrade of specific components such as memory or graphics cards to meet the system requirements for Windows 11, they may need some configuration changes, or they may be incompatible.
 - **Application Compatibility:** This would be unusual for Community and Town councils but if organisations are using applications which have been specifically developed for their use, then these may not run on Windows 11 or other operating systems. Applications which councils use can cover areas such as financial packages, facilities management, or burial administration. These applications should be evaluated individually.
 - **Vendor Information:** Contact software vendors to inquire about Windows 11 compatibility and if updates would be needed.

- **Manual Testing:** Test existing software applications by installing them on a Windows 11 computer if one is available. Check for any compatibility issues, such as crashes, errors, or missing features.

Step 2: Plan

When the assessment is complete, councils can consider the following options for devices using Windows 10:

a. Upgrade to Windows 11 where the devices are compatible.

Pros:

- **Seamless Transition:** Upgrading existing Windows 10 devices ensures continuity.
- **Access to New Features:** Microsoft claim that Windows 11 offers improved performance, widgets, and a fresh interface.
- **Free Upgrade:** Eligible Windows 10 PCs can upgrade to Windows 11 for free.

Cons:

- **Learning Curve:** Staff may need time to adapt to the new interface.

b. Replace the Devices

Pros:

- **New Hardware:** Upgrading to new devices ensures compatibility with Windows 11.
- **Warranty and Support:** New equipment comes with warranties and technical support.

Cons:

- **Cost:** Purchasing new devices can be expensive.
- **Migration:** Access to existing applications and files will need to be migrated to the new devices
- **Environmental Impact:** Consider sustainability when replacing hardware.

Refurbished devices can provide a more cost-effective and sustainable option.

c. Alternative Operating Systems

Other Operating Systems are available for PCs currently running Windows 10. Some of these are provided on a community basis (typically called an Open-Source approach) without any charge. Key examples are Ubuntu Linux and Chrome OS Flex.

These alternatives can provide some benefits over Windows 10 depending on how councils are operating and a means to extend the lifetime of existing equipment. However, this approach often has complex support implications which will bring many risks for small organizations. It is not recommended for Community and Town councils.

An outline of considerations for this option is given below. A few technical terms are used by necessity. If you are not familiar with these terms, then this option is not suitable for you to consider.

Pros:

- **Web-Centric:** Many alternative operating systems are suitable for organizations heavily reliant on web-based applications.
- **Diverse Options: Lightweight and Secure:** Linux distributions and Chrome OS Flex can provide simplicity, security, and fast boot times.

Cons:

- **Limited Support:** Open-Source operating systems are not usually supported by commercial organizations. Council staff would need to have very strong technical skills to support this approach.
- **Learning Curve:** Staff would need to be trained to use a different operating system.
- **Application Compatibility:** Some specialized software may not be available for different operating systems.
- **External Device and Peripheral Compatibility:** Many external devices such as printers and scanners are not supported by operating systems other than Windows and Apple's MacOS.
- **Limited Offline Functionality:** Some operating systems such as Chrome OS Flex heavily depend on internet connectivity.

Step 3. Implement

The following items should be considered as part of the implementation of the remediation plan.

- **Prompt Action:** Act early to allow time for implementation before Windows 10 support ends. Suggested to start Summer 2024
- **Budget:** Include costs for upgrades, replacements, or other changes in the council's budget. Possible upgrades to memory should cost less than £100. A refurbished laptop suitable for council use should cost less than £500. Autumn 2024 Ready for budget approval in 2025

- **Communication:** Inform staff, councillors, and stakeholders about the transition plan. Early 2025 but can be started in the previous steps.

If there are any concerns or queries about this note, please contact Justin Horrell jhorrell@onevoicewales.wales.



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