



CRIMINAL PRACTICES POLICY



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1. Introduction

Nominet does not tolerate criminal activity in our domain namespaces (.UK, .cymru, .wales).

When you register a domain name you agree to our *Terms & Conditions of Domain Name Registration (.UK)* and/or *Domain Name Registration Policy for .Cymru and .Wales* which include:

- A requirement to provide accurate and up to date contact data
- A promise not to use a domain name for any unlawful purpose
- A promise not to infringe intellectual property rights
- A proscription against domains which promote serious sexual offences

Our policies are available at nominet.uk/policies

2. Overarching principles

The following principles guide our approach to addressing criminal activity:

Public benefit: Domain name registration is a public resource, and it is a public benefit that the .UK, .cymru and .wales namespaces are both: (a) safe for users, and (b) accessible and affordable for the vast majority of legitimate users without undue interference.

Collaboration: As the registry running .UK, .cymru and .wales, Nominet does not have the expertise to assess alleged criminal activity. Our ability to address criminal activity is underpinned by collaboration with UK law enforcement agencies.

Accountability: The agencies we collaborate with have prosecution powers for the criminal offences they investigate. They are held accountable for their decisions by public administrative processes in the UK.

Harm prevention and proportionality: Registry intervention is an imperfect solution to the removal of content on the internet but can disrupt criminal activity to prevent harm. We provide a mandatory technical induction to all agencies to ensure they understand the consequences and limitations of registry intervention and can assess proportionality.

Alignment to UK law: The .UK, .cymru and .wales namespaces should reflect expectations of behaviour as defined by the laws of the United Kingdom. Criminal activity is as unacceptable online as it is offline.

3. Addressing criminal activity in .UK, .cymru and .wales

Certification

If Nominet receives an official written certification from one of the UK law enforcement agencies listed in section 4 stating that a .UK, .cymru, or .wales domain name is being used for criminal activity, Nominet will place the domain into special status following the successful completion of administrative checks and notice period, unless satisfactory action has already been taken (for example, through the operation of a parallel policy). Special status includes suspending the domain name or redirecting the domain name to an information/help page.

Notice

Prior to placing the domain name into special status, we will provide at least 48 hours notice to the registrant. If there is significant evidence of imminent harm to the public Nominet may suspend the domain name with immediate effect. These exceptions are extremely rare and require approval from senior management.

Notice to the registrant will include contact details for the relevant UK law enforcement agency making the assessment of criminal activity. If the registrant disagrees with the agency's assessment, they can contact the agency to make a complaint.

If the relevant agency confirms to Nominet that the domain name is no longer being used for criminal activity Nominet will stop the process of placing the domain name into special status.

Duration

Domain names placed in special status will remain in special status for: (a) In the case of .UK names a minimum of 24 months, (b) In the case of .cymru/.wales until expiry. At the end of the special status period the domain will be cancelled and become available for re-registration.

Reporting

Nominet [reports](#) annually on our work to address criminal activity in the .UK namespace.

Complaints

If you disagree with the assessment that a domain is being used for criminal activity, your first point of contact is the agency who made the certification. UK law enforcement agencies are accountable for their decisions through public administrative processes. If you disagree with their assessment you can use the relevant complaints and appeal mechanisms for the agency concerned. For example, the relevant sector ombudsman, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, or a judicial review process.

If you disagree with how Nominet has applied this policy, please use our complaints procedure: nominet.uk/complaints

4. UK Law Enforcement Agencies

Agency	About	Example of online criminal activity	More information
Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU)	CTIRU is a unit within the Metropolitan Police.	Terrorist propaganda and information.	www.counterterrorism.police.uk
Environment Agency	The Environment Agency is a non-departmental public body, established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment.	Operation of illegal waste management and hazardous waste disposal services.	Environment Agency enforcement and sanctions policy www.gov.uk/environment-agency
Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	The Financial Conduct Authority is the conduct regulator for financial services firms and financial markets in the UK.	Engaging in regulated activities without authorisation. The provision of misleading information and falsely claiming to be authorised.	FCA Mission: Approach to Enforcement www.fca.org.uk
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)	The MHRA regulates medicines, medical devices and blood components for transfusion in the UK.	The sale of unlicensed or fake medicine for human use or consumption.	Medical devices: the regulations and how we enforce them www.mhra.gov.uk fakemedics.campaign.gov.uk
Metropolitan Police – Central Specialist Crime	Central Specialist Crime is unit within Metropolitan Police Service.	Online fraud and cyber crime, including identity theft and online transactions.	www.met.police.uk

Ministry of Defence Police	<p>The Ministry of Defence Police is a statutory civilian police force. They deliver operational policing services using a range of specialist policing capabilities.</p>	<p>The prevention, detection, disruption and investigation of crime against Defence interests and assets. This includes crime areas such as Bribery, Fraud, Corruption and theft, and sale of ACTO (Attractive to Criminal and Terrorist Organisations) stores.</p>	<p>Ministry of Defence Police: policing plan 2019 to 2020</p> <p>www.mod.police.uk</p>
National Crime Agency (NCA)	<p>The NCA is an operationally independent non-ministerial government department.</p>	<p>Serious and organised crime.</p>	<p>NCA Annual Plan 2020/21</p> <p>www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk</p>
National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)	<p>The National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) is a dedicated law enforcement function of the Food Standards Agency (FSA).</p>	<p>Misrepresentation of food through marketing a product to wrongly portray its quality or safety.</p>	<p>Understanding food crime and how to report it</p> <p>www.food.gov.uk</p>
National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB)	<p>The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) sits alongside Action Fraud within the City of London Police, the national policing lead for economic crime.</p>	<p>Fraudulent activity by businesses operating online.</p>	<p>www.actionfraud.police.uk</p>
Office of Communications (Ofcom)	<p>Ofcom is the regulator and competition authority for the UK</p>	<p>Criminal offences related to spectrum interference, including the sale of illegal and non-</p>	<p>Spectrum enforcement</p> <p>www.ofcom.org.uk</p>

	communications industries.	compliant RE and EMC products.	
Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS)	OPSS is the national regulator for all consumer products (except for vehicles, medicines and food) and weighing / measuring instruments.	The supply of dangerous consumer products that do not meet essential safety requirements and pose a risk to UK consumers, including vulnerable consumers such as children.	Website Product Safety Alerts Enforcement Policy
Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)	The Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) is a department of the City of London Police, the national lead force for fraud.	Serious and organised intellectual property crime.	Operation Ashiko Suspension Policy www.cityoflondon.police.uk
Trading Standards	Trading Standards are local government authorities that investigate unfair trading and illegal business activity.	Illegal online trading practices.	www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office
Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)	The VMD, an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), aims to protect animal health, public health, and the environment by assuring the safety, quality, and efficacy of veterinary medicines.	The sale of unauthorised medicine for animal treatment.	Enforcement strategy for animal medicines www.gov.uk/vmd

5. Terminology

A domain name **registry** is the technical operator and manager of a Top Level Domain (TLD). Nominet is the domain name registry for .UK, .cymru and .wales, we maintain the database of domain names – the **register**.

When a member of the public registers a domain name, they do so through a **registrar** – an organisation or individual that sells domain names to the public. They enter into a contract to register the domain name for a specified period of time and become the **registrant** of the domain name. The registrar will act on behalf of the registrant and instruct the registry to make changes to the register. Registrars will usually also provide associated services e.g. hosting or web design.

Special status includes suspending the domain name or redirecting the domain name to an information/help page. Suspension and redirection do not remove content but do disrupt access. In both cases the original content of the website the domain name was pointing to may remain on the computer where it is hosted and therefore be accessible by other means.

Criminal activity means a criminal offence as defined by the laws of the United Kingdom.

Version	Description	Details
02.07.2020	First version published.	
1.12.2020	No consequential changes. The name of a unit within one UK law enforcement agency was updated to reflect current organisational structure.	Metropolitan Police – Fraud and Linked Crime Online (FALCON) updated to Metropolitan Police - Central Specialist Crime.
26.11.2021	New law enforcement agency.	The Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS)