

# Data Security - Avoiding Data Breaches

Leeds GP Confederation has experienced two breaches of data security recently. Both involving emails to larger groups of internal and external staff where the Carbon Copy (CC) function in Outlook has been used rather than the Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc).

These breaches are amongst the most common within organisations and unfortunately there are few options that can be automatically applied within Outlook to prevent this happening. It is therefore essential to undertake additional care when sending emails of this type.

The following list provides some best practice examples that should be adopted when sending emails to groups where the email addresses need to be concealed. This applies specifically to the Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc) option in Outlook. Please apply extra care and attention when circulating emails using this feature.

For information on how to add the Bcc icon to the Outlook ribbon see our [quick guide](#) available on the [Document Store](#).




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## Practice and Awareness

Regularly remind yourself and your colleagues about the importance of using BCC for privacy and data protection. Encourage a culture of double-checking recipient fields before sending sensitive emails.



## Empty CC and To Fields

Before adding recipients, clear the CC and To fields. This minimizes the chance of accidentally copying recipients from those fields to the BCC field.

## Use BCC-Only Email Templates

If possible, create email templates that include only the BCC field. When using these templates, you won't need to worry about transferring recipients between fields.



## Confirmation Prompt

Configure your email client to show a confirmation prompt before sending emails with a large number of recipients or when certain fields are populated.




## Use Email Templates

Create and use email templates that already have the appropriate recipients in the BCC field. This reduces the chances of accidentally placing them in the CC field.



## Use Email Rules or Filters

Set up email rules or filters that automatically move emails with certain recipients from the CC field to the BCC field.



## Limit Auto-Complete

Disable or limit the auto-complete feature in your email client. This can prevent accidentally selecting the wrong recipient.

## Use BCC First

When composing an email, start by adding recipients to the BCC field before adding recipients to the CC or To fields. This ensures that you don't accidentally reveal BCC recipients when filling out other fields.



## Third-Party Plugins

Some third-party email plugins or add-ons offer enhanced features for managing recipient fields and avoiding errors. Research and consider using such tools if they meet your needs.



## Use alternative messaging system

Consider using Lantum built in messaging functionality, managed by the Admin Team




## Colour Coding or Highlighting

Modify your email client's settings to use distinct colours or visual cues for the BCC field. This makes it easier to differentiate and identify the BCC field while composing an email.



## Confirmation Prompts

Configure your email client to show a confirmation prompt if the BCC field is populated with multiple addresses or if the number of recipients exceeds a certain threshold. This can give you an extra opportunity to review before sending.



## Separate Composing and Adding Recipients

Compose the email first without adding any recipients. Then, go back and add recipients to the appropriate fields, ensuring that BCC recipients are added to the BCC field only.



## Double-Check Before Sending

Always double-check the recipient fields before clicking "Send." Take a moment to review and verify that the recipients are correctly placed in the appropriate fields.