

**Herts Secure**  
**Guidance and FAQs for professionals, parents and carers**  
**Children's Services, Hertfordshire County Council**  
**March 2026**

**Who this guide is for**

This FAQ is for **external professionals, parents and carers** who have been sent a secure message or file by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) using **Herts Secure**. It explains what Herts Secure is, what to expect, and how to use it safely and confidently.

Full step by step guidance on how to use Herts Secure is provided from Page 4 onwards in this document.

**What is Herts Secure?**

**Herts Secure** is HCC's secure file-sharing service used to send and receive sensitive information safely with people **outside** the council. It replaces the previous HertsFX system and provides a simpler, more modern experience.

**Do I need an account or to register?**

No. **You do not need to create an account or password**. Access is provided through a secure link sent to your email, with a simple verification step.

**How will I know HCC has sent me something?**

You will receive an **email notification** telling you that a secure message or files have been sent to you from HCC. The email includes a link to open the secure message.

**How do I open a secure message or download files?**

1. Open the email notification you received.
2. Select the secure link in the email.
3. Complete the **email verification** step.
4. View and download the files securely.

You do not need to install any software. Full step by step guidance is provided in this document.

**Can I send files back to HCC?**

It is not possible to initiate sending a file to HCC without having a message from the intended recipient requesting the file you wish to submit.

You will need to email the intended recipient at HCC to advise that you wish to send files, who will then provide you with a message thread to attach the file to.

### Why can't I send files unless HCC asks me to?

Herts Secure is designed so that **every secure exchange is started by an authenticated HCC colleague**. This reduces the risk of information being sent to the wrong place and helps keep data safe.

### How long will my files be available?

Files are **not stored permanently**. Secure messages and files are available for a limited time only. The message with the attachment is in the system for 60 days and there is a count down on the number of days. If you need to keep a copy, download it as soon as possible.

### Is Herts Secure safe to use for sensitive information?

Yes. Herts Secure is specifically designed for **one-to-one secure file exchange** and is used when email is not appropriate for sensitive or high-risk information. Only the intended recipient can access the files.

### What types of information might be shared this way?

Herts Secure is commonly used to share:

- Personal or sensitive documents
- Safeguarding-related information
- Large files that cannot be sent by email

### I've clicked the link but can't access the message – what should I do?

Common issues include:

- Using a **different email address** than the one the message was sent to
- The link has **expired**
- Corporate email security blocking the verification email

If this happens, contact the HCC colleague who sent you the message and ask them to resend it.

### Can someone else access my files if they use my email address?

Herts Secure includes an **identity verification step** to reduce the risk of unauthorised access, even where email inboxes may be shared. This is one reason HCC may choose Herts Secure instead of standard email.

### Do I need special software or a work laptop?

No. Herts Secure works through a standard web browser on most devices, including personal computers, tablets and smartphones.

### Is this replacing other secure systems like HertsFX?

Yes. **Herts Secure replaces HertsFX.**

**Who do I contact if I'm worried about the information I've received?**

If you have concerns about:

- The content of the message
- Whether you should have received it
- Data protection or privacy

Contact the **HCC colleague named in the message** as soon as possible.

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## Guidance for External Users of Herts Secure

This guide explains how external users (organisations or individuals) receive and send files securely with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) using Herts Secure. External users do not need to register or create login details. Access is initiated by an HCC colleague and verified via a simple email authentication process.

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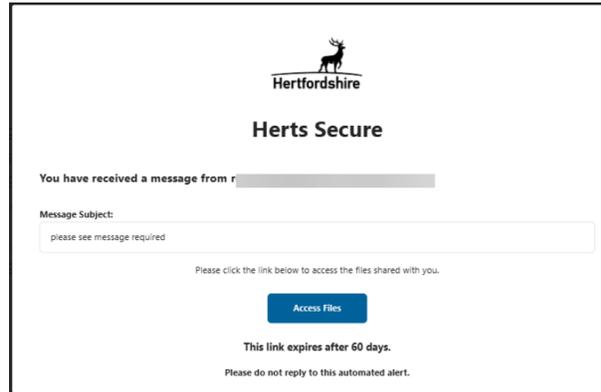
### Overview

- External users can both receive files from, and send files to, an HCC employee without needing to register or create login details.
- Every secure exchange is initiated by an authenticated HCC user. External users cannot start a new message thread without first receiving a request or message from HCC.
- When an HCC employee sends a secure message, the external recipient receives an email containing a secure link, which triggers a quick identity verification (no account required).

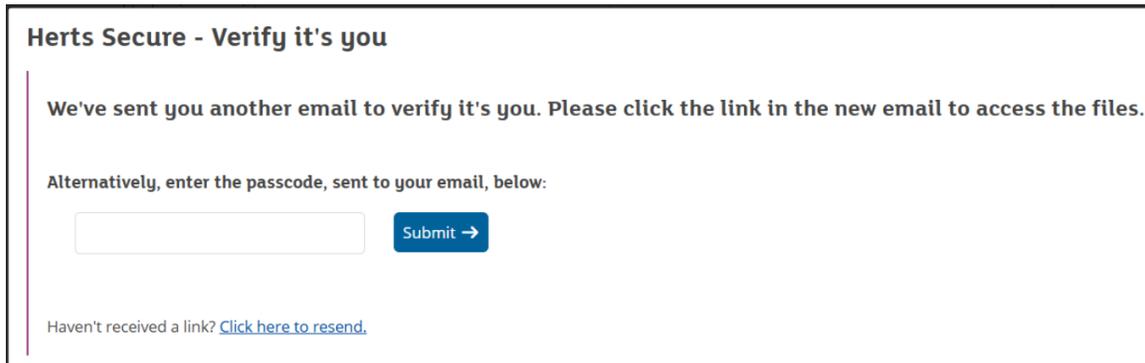
## Receiving Files

### Verify your identity and access the message

- Open the notification email and select **Access Files** to begin verification.



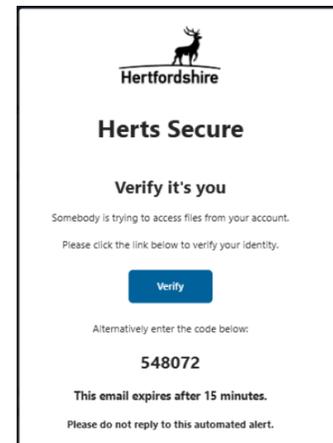
A verification code is sent to the same email address.



Verify using either method:

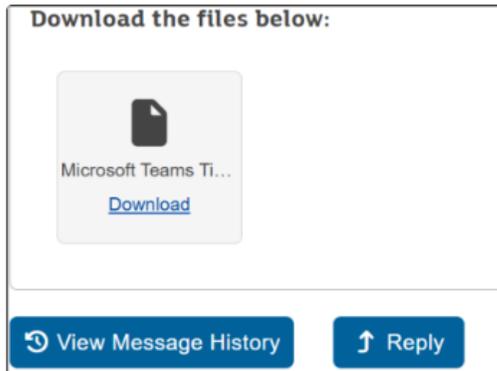
- Click **Verify your identity** in the email
- or
- Copy the **passcode** from the email and enter it in the **verification** window.

After verification, you are directed to HCC's secure environment where you can view the message and its attachments.



## View and download files

- Open the message; attached files will display with a **Download** option.
- Select **Download** and choose where to save the file.



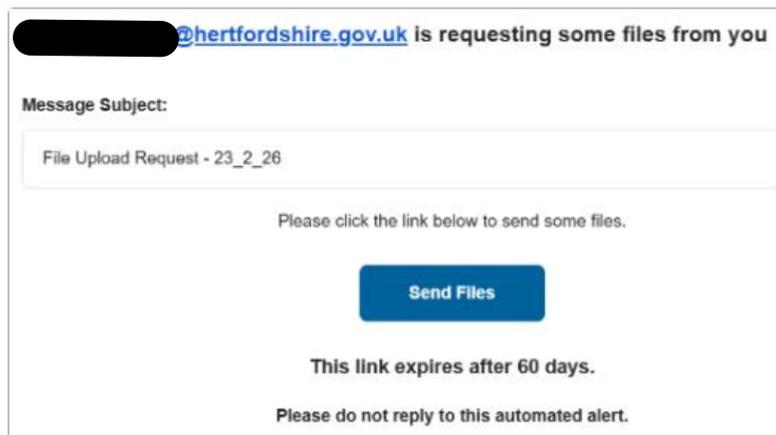
Messages and attachments are available for 60 days. The 60-day timer resets each time that there is new activity in the thread.

## Sending Files to HCC (via Request)

If you need to send files to HCC, ask your HCC contact to send you a **Request Files** message from Herts Secure. You cannot initiate a new message yourself and there is no log in option to the system to do this.

### Upload files in response to a request

- Open the request email and select **Send Files**.



A verification code is sent to the same email address.

**Herts Secure - Verify it's you**

We've sent you another email to verify it's you. Please click the link in the new email to access the files.

Alternatively, enter the passcode, sent to your email, below:

[Submit →](#)

Haven't received a link? [Click here to resend.](#)

Verify using either method:

- Click **Verify your identity** in the email
- Or
- Copy the **passcode** from the email and enter it in the **verification** window.



Hertfordshire

**Herts Secure**

**Verify it's you**

Somebody is trying to access files from your account.

Please click the link below to verify your identity.

[Verify](#)

Alternatively enter the code below:

**548072**

**This email expires after 15 minutes.**

Please do not reply to this automated alert.

After verification, you are taken to HCC's secure environment where you can see the request message details. You can view history here or Reply. Select **Reply**

**You have received some files via Herts Secure**

**Details**  
Sent on: Mon Feb 23 2026

From: [redacted]@hertfordshire.gov.uk

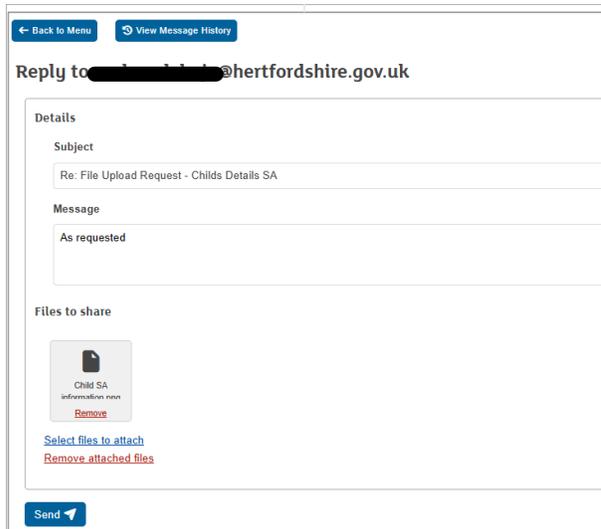
Subject  
Re: File Upload Request from [redacted]

Message  
Thank you I have received the doc now

**Download the files below:**  
No files shared with this message.

[View Message History](#) [Reply](#)

- Choose **Select Files to attach** and then navigate to the location of the files to upload.



- Upload the file and select **send**.

Your HCC contact receives an email notification and can download your files from their In Tray.

### Retention and Availability

- Files sent or received via Herts Secure are automatically deleted after 60 days of inactivity.
- If the message thread receives new replies or activity, the 60-day period resets.

For any issues accessing Herts Secure, please contact your HCC sender for assistance.