IT Support and Escalation

Purpose
This document lays out the steps for gaining IT support and what to do if you do not get a timely response.

The Challenge
The Computer Officers who look after Department of Chemistry look after
- 800 onsite users and 700 collaborators with IT Access to the Departments systems.
- Over 200 servers in the building and the Scott Polar institute next door.
- Over 1400 different desktop devices that are centrally supported in addition to personally owned equipment that is attached to the network.
- Over 100 Tb of managed storage.
- A diverse range of Operating Systems and equipment types.
- Old equipment that drive instruments that can take a disproportionate time to support.

The Computer Officers on resolve on average 17 helpdesk tickets a day. These tickets range from trial requests to pieces of work that can consume days of man effort to resolve.

The automated health check systems deployed by the Computer Officers monitor roughly 20,000 items every 15 minutes. Many service threatening issues are detected and dealt with before they become service affecting. This is in addition to the user ticket requests.

Every week, Helpdesk tickets are analysed in an attempt to identify underlying systemic issues that need to be addressed. Sometimes improvements can be made by making fairly modest changes to existing systems. At other times a project is identified to address an issue. The Portfolio for 2013 contains 63 discrete projects. The COs focus on these projects when not dealing with support issues.

The challenge is to offer a responsive service to everyone in the department which includes implementing bespoke solutions for specific Research needs whilst trying to be responsive to the urgent requests of Administrators when they need immediate help.

Getting Support
The Computer Officers have gone to considerable effort to provide documentation on the services and solutions that they provide, including information for new users. This information can be found at:

http://www.ch.cam.ac.uk/computing

If you need IT support please send an email to support@ch.cam.ac.uk. Please remember to provide reasonable pertinent information such as:

- What the device is that you are having difficulty with.
- The Operating System and whether a specific Application is involved.
- A brief synopsis of your problem.
- All error messages.
- An indication of the impact that this issue is having on your work.
- If your support request is for a new piece of software or equipment please try and be specific about what your requirements are.

Things to do and not do include:

- Please make a note of the ticket number for your IT request as both you and the COs will need this to follow up on the support issue.
- Please do not send Email to individuals. They may be away, tied up or simply not reading Email. All reported problems to Support@ch.cam.ac.uk are "triaged" and assigned to someone with the appropriate skill set to resolve.
- Do not put multiple problems on one work request as this complicates the management of issues and sometimes results in elements being lost or forgotten.
- If you are discussing an existing problem please reply to original ticket or quote the tracker number.
- Please always where possible use your Cambridge Email address as the Spam filters may prevent delivery of your help request.
- Do not use this process to try and avoid using the ticket systems, and to try and jump to the front of the support queue.

If you are new to the department or wish to turn elsewhere for IT advice then your group IT rep might also be a good person to talk to. Most research groups have IT reps so please ask your colleges if you are unsure.

Urgent requests
Support for urgent requests or if you are not able to send email, please call 36506.

However, if you are a new user in the Department, please follow the instructions documented on the Computer Officers' website.

Escalation
If you feel that you need to escalate an issue, please send an email to:

it-escalation@ch.cam.ac.uk

If you do this please provide the following information:

1) The RT ticket number for your original request (very important)
2) A brief statement about the impact of your IT issue that you need to escalate
3) A telephone number on which to be contacted

Generally, IT escalations will be handled by the IT Manager or his nominated deputy in his absence.