

## CTF Import Issue with Pre-Admission Contacts (Version 2.2):

*Guidance issued 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018*

An issue was introduced into the SIMS software in the Autumn 2017 Release, made available to schools at the end of the Autumn term, in which importing a Common Transfer File (CTF) into a Pre-Admission Group could result in existing Contact records in the system being updated with another person's details and being associated to the Applicant record in error.

We have included in this document details that will provide schools with the information they need to ascertain if they may have potential data corruption and how to identify and correct such records. This is based on the information available to HfL from Capita as at 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 and replaces any previous advice issued to date, including Version 1 of this document. Items highlighted in **yellow** have been amended since version 2 of this document.

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### Which Schools could be affected

This issue will only affect schools that have imported a CTF into a Pre-Admission Group, **after** the SIMS Autumn 2017 upgrade had been installed or Patch 22527 was applied to the school's database, but **before** the SIMS Summer 2018 upgrade was applied, along with the subsequent Consolidated Workstation Patch 1 (see below). If you haven't imported such CTFs you will not have any data to check and correct, however, it is highly recommended that you do not import CTFs into Pre-Admission groups until after you have applied all the latest upgrades and patches (see below).

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### Which Contact records could be affected

If a Contact in the CTF has the same combination of **Forename (or Initial), Surname, Title, Gender** and **Relationship** as a Contact already in the SIMS database (i.e. on another applicant, an On Roll Student or a former Student), the import will have replaced the details on the existing Contact record with the information in the CTF and then linked that Contact record to the Applicant record.

One possible example would be:

- **Current Student in SIMS database**  
Student = Joanne Bradshaw, with a Contact/Parent = Wendy Bradshaw, Mother, Female (original)
- **New CTF applicant**  
Applicant = Jamie Bradshaw, with a Contact/Parent = Wendy Bradshaw, Mother, Female (new/different Wendy)

In this instance as both pupils have a parent called Wendy Bradshaw, identified also as being Female and with a relationship of Mother, the new CTF applicant would be linked to the original Wendy Bradshaw. The original Wendy Bradshaw address, telephone number and email would also be updated with the new/different Wendy Bradshaw's details.

## Potential Impact

If the CTF Contact is a different person to the existing Contact, albeit they share a name, the contact information that displays in the Family/Home panel on the existing Student record(s) will be incorrect. This may also apply to any Data Collection Sheets/reports that the school have generated following the CTF import, as well as any communication software the school may employ to text/email parents/guardians.

If the CTF Contact was a parent then a 'Sibling Link' will have been made between the Applicant and any existing Student(s) associated with the original Contact, for whom they were also a parent, which may be incorrect.

This could potentially result in the incorrect person receiving communications from the school regarding a Student, which could result in a data breach under GDPR.

If you believe you have sent a CTF containing incorrect information to another school, we recommend that you contact the recipient school to advise on the affected students or applicants. One method of identifying such students or applicants is to filter the Check 99 output (see Step 3 below) for leavers where these students may have been exported to another school via CTF.

## SIMS Online Services Suspended

As a precautionary measure, Capita have suspended several of their online services/modules, in part or in full, as per this table:

SIMS Product	Product Functionality Suspended	Product Functionality Still Available
<b>Online Services</b>		
SIMS Parent	Calendar   Access to Child's Dashboard (attendance, behaviour & achievement, assessment, timetable, reports, homework and the data collection)   Message generation   Homework	School Detail   School term dates
SIMS Parent Lite	Access to Child's Data Collection	School Detail   School term dates
SIMS Activities	All areas	No functionality, i.e. switched off
SIMS Student	All areas	No functionality, i.e. switched off
SIMS Options	All areas	No functionality, i.e. switched off
<b>Other modules</b>		
SIMS Agora	All areas	No functionality, i.e. switched off

Once schools have completed the data checking process outlined in this document they will be able to reactivate these services (detailed on page 6).

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## Advice on Messaging Contacts

It is advised that schools should only use InTouch or similar email/text messaging software (linked to SIMS) for generic communications to parents and contacts. Any communication which contains specific student information should not be sent until schools are confident they have validated their contact data, using the guidance contained in this document. This advice applies to written communications as well, such as letters and reports.

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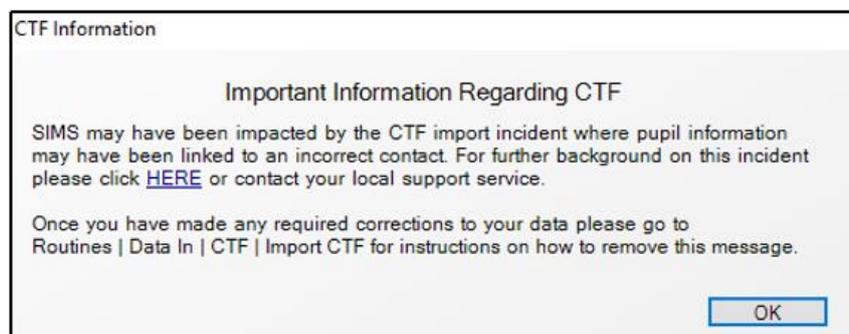
## Current advice from Capita / HfL

Capita have made 2 new Patches available, which are explained in more detail in the next section:

- **SIMS Summer 2018 - Consolidated Workstation Patch 1 – CTF Import & Check 99 Improvements**
- **Patch 24213 – On Demand Patch to remove links between admitted applicant record and contact**

These patches will update both the CTF Import routines and Database Diagnostic Check 99, which relates to identifying possible data errors as a result of the CTF Contact Import Issue. HfL have released these patches to all schools we support, via SOLUS<sup>3</sup>, and have emailed school admin accounts and known network staff.

**Note: The Workstation Patch also introduces warning messages that will appear when logging to SIMS, for any user with access to the CTF Import routine.**



**Until the steps in this process have been completed, schools will be unable to import or export any CTFs in SIMS.**

Capita have also provided a PowerPoint presentation that will guide school users through running the Database Diagnostics routine and creating a spreadsheet with the results from Check 99, facilitating the data checking process. We included this PowerPoint in the email to schools regarding the Patch, but a copy will also be made available on the HGfL, alongside this document, at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/data/news/>.

Schools that may have followed our previous advice, including the running of a bespoke SIMS report we created in consultation with schools, are advised to also run this routine, as it checks areas of SIMS that the reporting engine doesn't have access to and therefore may identify records that the previous report did not.



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## Actions for Schools to take

### **Step 1 – SIMS Summer 2018 Upgrade**

Ensure that this upgrade is applied to your SIMS system, as this will prevent any potential data corruption, as detailed above. You can check if this has applied by clicking on **Help > About** in SIMS - if the version number is 7.182, you are on the Summer 2018 release.

**Please speak to your usual IT/Network Support, be they internal staff in your school or technicians from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party company (HfL or other), with regards to any upgrades/patches, either to arrange for them to be applied or to check if they have installed. Please note however that the Workstation Patch may not install until the morning of Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> August, depending on the Auto-Deployment Schedule set up in your SOLUS<sup>3</sup> system. Upgrades/Patches can however be manually scheduled in SOLUS<sup>3</sup>, so that they install sooner, by following the steps in the ‘SOLUS<sup>3</sup> Common Tasks & Troubleshooting Guide’ found at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/mis/upgrades/>**

### **Step 2 – SIMS Summer 2018 - Consolidated Workstation Patch 1**

Ensure that this package is applied via SOLUS<sup>3</sup>. As it contains a database fix and an application update, this will run in a similar way to a full SIMS Upgrade, so please allow up to an hour for it to complete.

### **Step 3 – Database Diagnostics**

Follow the instructions in the PowerPoint provided by Capita (and amended by HfL, found at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/data/news/>). This will guide you through creating a spreadsheet that details the possible data errors, which you can then use to keep track of any corrections you make (see below). **You only need to look into any errors listed under Check 99 for this process!**

If you have a lot of entries on the spreadsheet you may benefit from turning on filtering in Excel. Click in cell A1 (the first column name cell) and navigate to **Data > Filter** on the menu. This will add the filtering dropdowns to the column headings.

### **Step 4 – Correct data errors (if any)**

The above spreadsheet will list the possible data errors. To check the Contact records for accuracy and make corrections (if needed), please do the following:

1. To ensure that you open the correct Contact record, use the **Quick Search** facility on the SIMS **Home Page** by entering the Contact ID from the output between braces { }, e.g. {123}, and press enter. This will display the contact name which you can double-click on to open the record.
2. Navigate to panel **4 Associated Students** and check that the details are correct.
3. If there is an Applicant/Student listed in this panel, for which the Contact should not be associated, click to highlight the Applicant/Student entry and then click on **Delete**. **DO NOT** delete any existing or previous students from this list, as they should still be associated with the Contact.

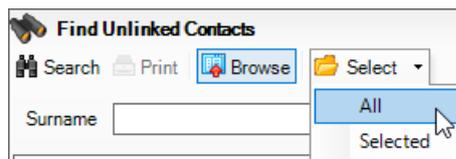
4. Check/correct the other details in the Contact record (address, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc.); any previous address should be detailed on the Check 99 spreadsheet, however the other details will not be available from within SIMS any longer. If you have previous Data Collection sheets to refer back to that would help you in this task, otherwise you may need to ask the Contact to provide their correct details again and then make the changes.

Note: Once you have made these corrections, re-running Database Diagnostics may very well provide the same information as was shown before making the corrections. Capita have commented that “*we can only draw attention to the strong possibility of a data error and we can't always determine if the school has already resolved the issue to their satisfaction*”.

### Step 5 – Housekeeping and Patch 24213 (Clean-up Script)

Ensure that the above steps have been completed and any identified contact data has been checked (and removed or updated manually), and any incorrectly associated applicants/students have been removed. Then:

- Navigate to **Tools > Housekeeping** and select **Delete Unlinked Contacts**. Click on **Search**, then on the dropdown down arrow next to **Select** and click on **All**.



This will add all of the unlinked contacts into the bottom panel. Click on **Delete**, confirming **Yes** to the message that appears. Once completed the panel will appear empty and you can close out of that screen.

- Navigate to **Tools** and select **Validate Memberships**. Once this process has completed the progress window will close (without a confirmation message) and you will be able to interact with SIMS again.
- Deploy/re-deploy Patch 24213 via SOLUS<sup>3</sup>, by contacting your Network Manager/Network Support Provider or by following the steps in the ‘SOLUS<sup>3</sup> Common Tasks & Troubleshooting Guide’ found at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/mis/upgrades/>. This script will clean-up back-end applicant data associated with steps 4 and 5. This Patch **must** be run at this stage, regardless of whether it has been run previously.

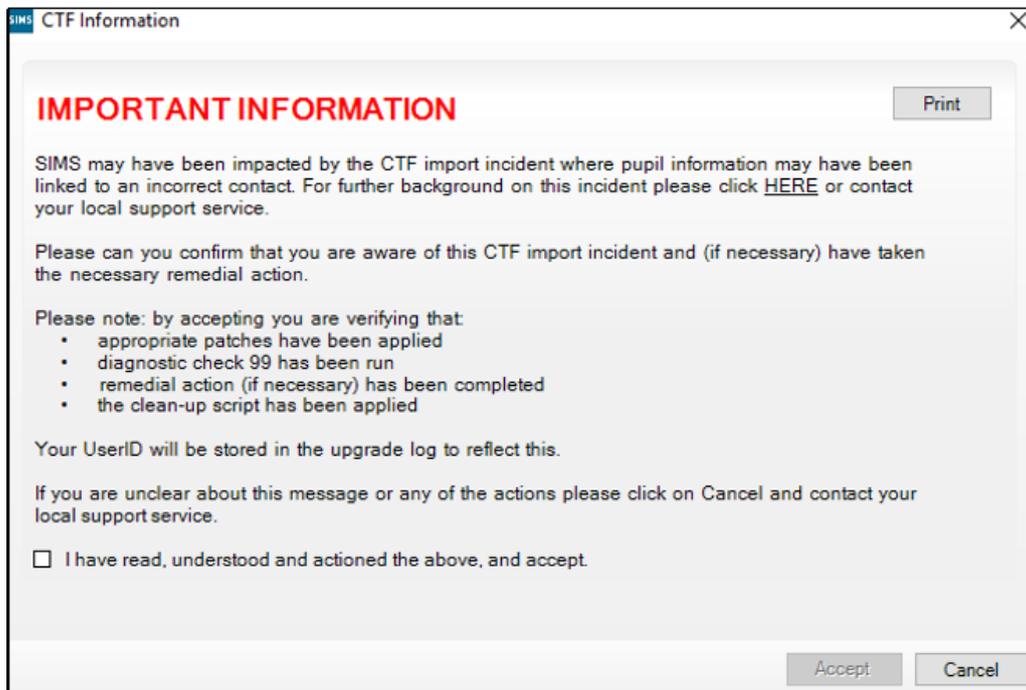
### Step 6 – Add missing Contacts to Applicants

If you do need to delete Applicants/Students from a Contact record it will mean that you are left with missing Contacts on the Applicant/Student records affected. The quickest way to add these would be to re-import the original CTF(s), after completing Step 7.

Alternatively, you can add the Contacts manually via the **Focus > Admission > Application** or **Focus > Student > Student details** menu routes, under **Panel 5 Family/Home Details**), ensuring that you select **New** and do not match to any existing contact record.

## Step 7 – Confirm process complete in SIMS

Navigate to **Routines > Data In > CTF > Import CTF**. You will be presented with a message regarding this process, which you will need to confirm has been completed in order to enable the CTF Import process again:



## Step 8 – Reactivate Online Services (if applicable to your school)

Schools will be able to reactivate directly their SIMS Online Services (listed on page 2) through the Product Admin Site (<https://admin.sims.co.uk>). Schools will be asked first whether they have completed the data clean-up and will need to acknowledge they are happy to reactivate their services. Similarly, schools will be able to reactivate Agora through its admin site (<https://www.simsagora.co.uk>).

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## History of this issue and advice given

*Mid-May 2018* – Capita were made aware of data issues in SIMS as a result of the SIMS Autumn 2017 upgrade.

*17<sup>th</sup> May 2018* – HfL emailed all schools to advise them to run 2 patches (23971 and 23974) in relation to fixing issues in the CTF Import routine in SIMS.

*21<sup>st</sup> May 2018* – Following further information provided by Capita, HfL emailed all schools with an explanation of the issue and included a custom SIMS report to assist schools in identifying Contact records that could contain potential data corruption. Also included were instructions on how to correct any errors found.

*24<sup>th</sup> May 2018* – Following further investigations and discussions with Capita and schools, HfL emailed all schools to provide additional clarification on the issue and a new custom SIMS report to better assist schools in the data corruption identification process, as well as updated guidance on correcting the data records.

*Throughout May & June* - HfL were in discussions with Capita and SIMS Support Units around the country, collating information and providing Capita with feedback on the possible solutions they were looking to make available to schools in relation to this issue. As no reliable solution was made available, it was decided not to further confuse schools by providing updates on an ever-changing review process and to wait until pertinent information was available.

*27<sup>th</sup> June 2018* – Capita made available a script for SIMS Support Units to test that could identify any potentially corrupted records and provide a possible correction, whilst also developing a Patch that would apply those possible corrections to the Contact records automatically.

*10<sup>th</sup> July 2018* – Capita made Patch 24040 available to automatically apply the suggested corrections the previously mentioned script detailed. This required extensive testing before it could be made available to schools, given that the patch would be changing data.

*11<sup>th</sup> July 2018* – Capita withdrew Patch 24040 as they received reports that the correction made could not be 100% relied upon for accuracy and as such they decided that they would instead provide a patch to make the identification report available through Database Diagnostics rather than an external script, making it more accessible to school users.

*11<sup>th</sup> July 2018* – SIMS Summer 2018 upgrade was released by HfL to the schools we support. The email notifications regarding this upgrade included a reminder of our previous advice on how to identify and fix potential data corruptions.

*16<sup>th</sup> July 2018* – Capita released Patch 24157 to add Check 99 into Database Diagnostics, along with a PowerPoint presentation, to better facilitate schools with the data corruption identification. These materials required testing and some adaptations/corrections made to the PowerPoint in order to streamline the process as much as possible for schools.

*19<sup>th</sup> July 2018* – HfL emailed all schools we support for SIMS, to the main admin/office account and any known network staff, with version 1 of this document, the amended PowerPoint from Capita regarding Check 99 and details of Patch 24157 that had been released to schools via SOLUS<sup>3</sup>.

*20<sup>th</sup> July 2018* – HfL published version 1 of this document to the HGfL, along with the supporting PowerPoint presentation, and a link placed on the HGfL Homepage.

*13<sup>th</sup> August 2018* – Capita found further issues in the CTF process and decided to suspend several Online Services/Modules, as a precautionary measure, however the patches required to complete the necessary checks to reactivate the services were still in development.

*17<sup>th</sup> August 2018* – Capita released the required patches and updated PowerPoint. These materials required testing, which led to discussions between Capita and SIMS Support Units across the country regarding the correct processes to follow and to seek clarification on what the patches actually do. The PowerPoint required some amendments before it could be used by schools.

*23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018* – HfL emailed all schools with the updated documentation, including version 2 of this guidance, and released the new patches issued by Capita via SOLUS<sup>3</sup> to all schools.