CHALLENGES FOR SMES

Small businesses can suffer the consequences of a cyber security breach in the same way as large multi-national companies. However, it's unlikely you have the same level of technical capability to prevent, detect, and respond to incidents. With new data protection legislation in the UK, and the potentially large fines introduced with the GDPR, small organisations need to have a sound and practical approach to the challenges of cyber security.

ECSC has over two decades of experience in helping organisations of all sizes with their cyber security challenges. We help you protect yourselves, detect breaches and where the worst happens respond promptly and effectively.

In 2020, we took our experience and developed an SME Cyber Security Roadmap to help the smallest organisations develop effective cyber security protection.

We started this project by understanding the particular challenges faced by the very smallest organisations, characterised by:

1. Having no internal IT personnel, and no significant local IT outsourcing. These very smallest organisations struggle to understand the most basic technical protections that they need.

2. Having a single (often junior) internal IT specialist, or the most basic outsourcing to a local IT provider (usually whoever sells them IT hardware and/or software)

In both cases, there are no cyber security specialists available either internally or within their outsourced provider.

We ran a series of events, in collaboration with our Partner network, taking organisations through the SME Cyber Security Roadmap with practical steps that you can take to prevent breaches – all within the reasonable resources you can manage.

As part of this recommended approach for SMEs, our Partners asked if we could take the specialist services and wrap them up into a simple, monthly subscription service that they could either sell directly to their clients, or integrate into other managed IT offerings.

Hence, ECSC ProtectSME was developed and launched at the start of 2021.

WHAT ProtectSME GIVES YOU

The ECSC Cyber Security Roadmap contains many elements that you can do yourself.

For example:

1. Ensuring you have up-to-date anti-virus protection on each of your devices.
2. Achieving effective separation of business and personal cyber security, by not mixing devices for both.

However, some elements of the Roadmap require significant cyber security expertise. So, let's explain each of these in turn.

Vulnerability Scanning

Hackers do this constantly. They run automated scans against any device connected to the Internet, office and home connection, and cloud-based services. They are looking for (usually quite basic) mistakes, that they can exploit, or for newly discovered vulnerabilities in systems that you use. Over the last few years, these newly discovered vulnerabilities have been running at about 40 per day.

To counter this, we do the same.

Yes, our certified Security Operations Centres in Yorkshire, UK, and Brisbane Australia, scan your external Internet connections each quarter. We then instantly alert you on any dangerous changes that hackers might try to exploit, and give you expert guidance on both the risks and how to correct the mistakes.

In addition, when we highlight potentially catastrophic mistakes to your Internet defences, once you fix them, we re-scan to confirm the fix has worked. All within the standard service.

PhishingNet

With the main source of technical mistakes corrected with the regular scanning service, we then move on to your other main risk – your people.

The biggest growth in hacking activities in the last 10 years have been hackers targeting your users with an increasingly varied set of phishing techniques. Whilst wider cyber security awareness and training can have value, the number one area you should focus on is phishing training.

ECSC's PhishingNet service manages the process for you.

We conduct monthly exercises for your staff to help them spot phishing and not be fooled into dangerous actions that can compromise your cyber security.

WHAT ProtectSME GIVES YOU

Cyber Essentials (CE)

Although you may not wish to gain a certification, either self-assessed or full external certification to 'plus' level, CE lives up to it's name with pragmatic and achievable technical goals for your IT.

Whether you manage things yourself, or outsource to your local IT supplier, adopting the Cyber Essentials control framework makes sense.

So, as part of ProtectSME we build in an annual review with an ECSC CE specialist to help you and/or your IT outsourced provider:

1. Understand the technical requirements of CE

2. Identify your gaps, and where your biggest risks are likely to be

Incident Response

Although all breaches are preventable, as an SME, you won't be deploying every possible preventive measure – that just isn't cost effective. So, there is always going to be a risk of a breach. That is why you always need a prompt, effective response to contain an incident and prevent a more costly breach.

That is why we build a 24/7/365 incident response retainer into your ProtectSME service. You can contact us at any time, day or night, week day, weekend, and public holidays.

Within 1hour, you'll be engaged with our incident response team, ready to guide you remotely or, for major breaches, travel to your site and manage all aspects of the incident for you.

Subscription Model

For simplicity, all four of these essential cyber security services are delivered in a simple monthly subscription service, based on your company employee count. So, if you have less than 200 people, you can have peace of mind with a specialist cyber security partner ensuring you are protected.

For larger organisations, customised services incorporating the above can still be developed. Just speak to your ECSC Partner for more information.

EXTENSION SERVICES

ProtectSME is designed to help you achieve the essential elements of the ECSC Cyber Security SME Roadmap.

However, not all SMEs are the same. You might have particular risks and requirements, due to the data you hold or the technologies you routinely use.

Therefore, where you need more support, ECSC has a range of 'extension' services that take you beyond the ProtectSME service. These can include:

Penetration Testing

If aspects of your business are 'Internet-facing', such as running an online shop, or customer portal, then regular scanning is probably not enough to replicate the activities of hackers in probing your defences. Here you need more in-depth testing by the ECSC specialists to uncover vulnerabilities that hackers can find, and help you fix them promptly.

CE PLUS Certification

Perhaps you need the full certificate to show prospective customers, or to give you more re-assurance that your outsourced IT provider is delivering effective cyber security. In addition, this gives you a great defence if you have a breach that you have not only tried to do the right thing, but had your efforts independently verified and certified.

Nebula Breach Detection

The ECSC Nebula service takes the ECSC leading Artificial Intelligence technology Kepler, and gives you 24/7/365 breach detection alerts across your IT systems, either office, hosted or cloud-based.

Gold Incident Response Retainer

This service extends your 24/7/365 incident response cover with an initial (and annual thereafter) help in incident planning and preparation. We understand your environment in depth, and store vital system information in our secure repository – all designed to speed up incident response and resolution.

Virtual Chief Information Security Office (vCISO)

This is a part-time specialist, helping you navigate the potential complexities of developing your cyber security further. They can act as an effective bridge between your technical team and/or external providers and the management team. They can also play a vital role if you intend to build an internal specialist cyber security function as you grow.

DO YOU NEED CERTIFICATIONS?

Probably not!

There is no legal requirement SMEs have to be certified for cyber security. However, being aware of some options might be useful.

GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires all organisations storing or processing personal data to protect it, with significant fines for failing to do so, including for SMEs.

If you gather, store, or process, significant amounts of personal data, and if a cyber security breach could lead to significant harm to individuals, then you really need to take this very seriously. The UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has helped by publishing their GDPR 'Security Outcomes' – a document that helps you build a minimum set of documents, processes and technologies to meet GDPR. We recommend you working towards this having done the breach prevention activities described in this brochure.

Cyber Essentials

Demonstrating you're serious about cyber security can be achieved by gaining full certification to this UK-government designed standard. It also gives you a good 'defensible position' with the ICO if you do suffer a breach.

PCI DSS

The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) is mandated for all organisations processing card payments. If you take card payments, it will be a contractual obligation with your bank. Breaches of card data can also carry significant fines, so it needs to be treated seriously. Fortunately, for most SMEs, you only have to self-assess and report your compliance to the bank. ECSC are certified Qualified Security Assessors (QSAs) for this standard, so can advise you and help you achieve compliance.

ISO 27001

Finally, you might consider gaining certification to the international standard ISO 27001 for your wider information security (including cyber security). Generally, SMEs do this where it becomes a useful sales tool to demonstrate your competence in this area of growing importance.

ProtectSME

With over two decades of experience, ECSC is the UK's longest running, 'full service' information and cyber security service provider, offering a complete range of cyber security solutions and services to all sectors.

Our ever-expanding client list ranges from e-commerce start-ups to global organisations, and our consultative, business-focused approach has led us to proudly count 10% of the FTSE 100 among our clients.

Please feel free to get in touch to see how we can help you.

☎ +44 (0) 1274 736 223 ✉ info@ecsc.co.uk 🖱 www.ecsc.co.uk