

“Your Organisation’s”

**Cyber Incident
Response Plan**

FIRST 60 MINUTES CHECKLIST

WHAT TO DO FIRST?

If you discover or suspect a cyber incident, the first hour is critical. The priority is to stop further harm, protect evidence, alert the right people and maintain essential services.

1. Stop further damage

- Disconnect affected devices from the network
- Do not use the affected device for email, internet access or further investigation
- Do not allow the user to log in using another device until advised by IT

2. Preserve evidence

- Do not wipe, rebuild or factory reset devices unless authorised
- Take a photograph of any messages displayed on screen
- Record times, names, devices, systems and what was observed
- Preserve logs where possible

3. Notify the right people

- Contact IT support or your managed service provider
- Notify the senior leadership team or business owner
- Notify the Data Protection Officer or person responsible for data protection
- Notify communications/media lead if customers, staff or suppliers may be affected

4. Start an incident log

- Record every action taken
- Record who made each decision
- Record the time and reason for each decision



5. Assess the business impact

- Which systems are affected?
- Which services are disrupted?
- Are customers, suppliers or staff affected?
- Is personal data involved?
- Is money at risk?

6. Consider reporting requirements

- Live cyber crime or fraud: report to the police via Report Fraud
- Personal data breach: consider ICO reporting requirements
- Regulated sector: consider sector regulator notification
- Cyber insurance: notify insurer early if cover may apply

7. Set up a safe communication channel

- Use a clean phone, separate conference call or secure alternative channel
- Do not rely on compromised email or Teams if they may be affected

8. Agree immediate priorities

- Protect people
- Protect critical services
- Contain the incident
- Preserve evidence
- Communicate clearly
- Plan recovery



CYBER INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN

This template has been developed to help organisations respond effectively to cyber incidents and disruption. It is designed for small businesses, charities, community organisations, sports clubs, and professional services firms.

This plan should be used alongside business continuity plans, data protection procedures, IT disaster recovery plans, and cyber essentials controls.

HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

You are free to use, adapt, and build upon this material, but you may not use it for commercial purposes. This was developed to support organisations in improving cyber resilience and incident preparedness.

We suggest reviewing the pack and editing names and numbers where necessary, before you distribute to your organisation. **Consider** printing appendix H to help staff with a clear reporting procedure in the beginning of any incident.

Use the checklist to provide a prompt response that will limit the damage of any attack, whilst communicating effectively through your channels to keep suppliers, customers, and staff onside. The checklist will help to calmly guide a response through a time of heightened stress and confusion.

REPORTING INCIDENTS

Business or charity suffering a live cyber attack? Contact Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

If you think it's suspicious, or a scam, report it...

- Forward Emails to report@phishing.gov.uk
- Report Websites at ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/report-scam-website
- Forward Texts or Calls to 7726
- If you have disclosed banking details or authorised a payment, call 159 immediately.
- Lost money or been hacked reportfraud.police.uk
- Emergency situations 999 if immediate danger to life/someone using/threatening violence
- Pass useful information to crime stoppers 0800 555111



CYBER SECURITY CONSEQUENCES

You should keep your organisation's computer systems and data safe and functional whilst maintaining a service provision. There are many ways in which cyber security incidents can negatively impact your organisation.

The main impacts can be broadly categorised into 5 areas:

1. **Physical/Digital** - infection of your computer systems and that of your supply chain, or loss of personal or private information leading to regulatory consequences.
2. **Economic** - the asset is compromised and must be replaced or repaired incurring a financial cost.
3. **Psychological** - confusion and disarray while the organisation regroups to work around the attack.
4. **Reputational** - unfavourable scrutiny, loss of confidence and goodwill or business.
5. **Social/societal** - negative changes in public perception and an adverse change in how the public engages with the organisation.

IT FAILURES OR CYBER ATTACKS?

Cyber attacks may initially present as computer system failures, glitches, or smaller losses of IT service.

Any member of staff may report or escalate a suspected cyber incident. Formal declaration should be made by the most appropriate responsible person available.

These plans contain initial actions to address IT loss, including actions to isolate potentially compromised computers and reporting of the incident to the IT service desk.

All plans should be held in paper copy as well as electronically, so they are independent of IT access and easily found when required.



WHAT IS A CYBER SECURITY INCIDENT?

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) defines a cyber security incident as:

- A breach of a computer system's security policy to affect its integrity or availability.
- The unauthorised access or attempted access to a computer system.

Activities commonly recognised as security policy breaches are:

- Attempts to gain unauthorised access to a computer system and/or to data.
- The unauthorised use of computer systems and/or data.
- Modification of a computer system's firmware, software, or hardware without the computer system owner's consent.
- Malicious disruption and/or denial of service.

The attack methodology for a cyber security incident varies greatly, as will the associated response.

The scale of a cyber security incident will not always be determined or obvious from the outset.

The nature of cyber-attacks evolves very quickly, some typical cyber-attack methods are outlined below.

Current Examples:

- Business Email Compromise
- MFA fatigue or repeated approval requests
- Unauthorised access to Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace
- QR code phishing
- Supplier or supply chain compromise
- Deepfake voice or video-enabled fraud
- Malicious forwarding rules in email accounts
- Cloud account compromise
- Data theft before ransomware deployment



CYBER SECURITY INCIDENT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Cyber security incidents should be assessed on its severity at an early stage. This assessment will also be completed by other organisations who may have more of an informed view of what is occurring regionally and nationally.

It is important to understand how the assessment process works so you know when to activate your Cyber Security Incident Plan. Once a cyber security incident is declared the following roles overleaf should be established to deal effectively with the incident.

The Incident Lead should:

- Establish a Cyber Incident Response Team.
- Ensure the First 60 Minutes Checklist has been completed.
- Confirm the severity level of the incident.
- Maintain an incident log.
- Allocate clear responsibilities.
- Schedule regular situation updates.
- Ensure communications remain accurate and consistent.
- Support recovery and restoration activities.
- Capture lessons learned following resolution.

Any member of staff may report or escalate a suspected cyber incident. Formal declaration of a cyber incident should be made by the most appropriate responsible person available, normally:

- Business Owner
- Senior Leader
- IT Provider / MSP
- Information Security Lead
- Incident Lead

EARLY HELP

Appendix I is a template wall poster to use in offices to assist staff in the reporting of a cyber incident and providing early guidance. Consider editing and affixing these in common areas.

ALERT STANDBY AND ACTIVATION TRIGGERS

The notification of a cyber security incident may come from several possible sources:

- Self-identification by IT, Information Security, or other internal user.
- Notification via the national structures of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- or intelligence from another partner organisation.

TASKS

The initial responder should refer to Appendix B - Action Card for a manager receiving a report of cyber incident.



Role	Responsibility
Incident Lead	Overall coordination of the incident. Chairs meetings, allocates actions, monitors progress and ensures the response remains focused on recovery and business priorities.
Business Owner / Chief Executive / Senior Leader	Sets overall strategy and priorities. Makes key decisions regarding service continuity, communications, regulatory reporting and expenditure.
IT Lead / MSP	Leads the technical investigation, containment, eradication and recovery of affected systems. Preserves technical evidence where required.
Information Security Lead	Assesses cyber risks, advises on containment measures, supports investigation and provides security guidance throughout the incident.
Data Protection Officer (DPO)	Assesses potential impact on personal data, determines reporting requirements and coordinates any notifications to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
Communications Lead	Coordinates communications with staff, customers, suppliers, partners and media. Ensures messaging is accurate, timely and approved.
Business Continuity Lead	Coordinates continuity arrangements to maintain critical services and minimise disruption whilst systems are recovered.
Finance Lead	Assesses financial impact, authorises emergency expenditure and liaises with banks where fraud or financial compromise is suspected.
Human Resources Lead	Supports staff welfare, manages internal communications and assists where employee accounts, devices or insider threats are involved.
Legal Adviser	Provides advice on legal obligations, contractual issues, regulatory requirements and evidence preservation.
Cyber Insurance Provider	Provides incident support, specialist response services and guidance in accordance with policy conditions.
External Specialists	May include forensic investigators, incident response companies, legal advisers, PR consultants or sector specialists depending on the nature of the incident.

INCIDENT SEVERITY LEVELS

Cyber incidents should be assessed early and reviewed regularly. The severity may increase or decrease as more information becomes available.

Severity 1: Critical Incident

A critical incident is likely to cause major disruption, serious financial loss, significant data compromise or major reputational damage.

Examples:

- Ransomware affecting multiple systems.
- Loss of access to core business systems.
- Confirmed unauthorised access to sensitive data.
- Fraud involving significant financial loss.
- Incident attracting media, regulator or law enforcement interest.
- Major supplier or customer impact.



Immediate actions:

- Activate the Cyber Incident Response Team.
- Notify senior leadership or business owner immediately.
- Consider business continuity activation.
- Notify cyber insurer if applicable.
- Consider external legal, PR, forensic and law enforcement support.
- Consider ICO or regulator notification where relevant.

Severity 2: Significant Incident

A significant incident has a noticeable impact but is currently limited in scale.

Examples:

- Single department affected.
- One or more users compromised.
- Suspected but unconfirmed data exposure.
- Malware detected on a small number of devices.
- Business email compromise attempt.
- Supplier compromise with possible impact.



Immediate actions:

- Notify IT support or MSP.
- Notify senior manager.
- Start an incident log.
- Assess whether escalation to Severity 1 is required.
- Monitor for spread or further indicators of compromise.

Severity 3: Minor Incident

A minor incident appears isolated and has limited immediate impact.

Examples:

- Suspicious email reported but not clicked.
- Single device showing unusual behaviour.
- Failed login alerts.
- Suspected scam contact.
- Lost device with low risk and suitable protections in place.

Immediate actions:

- Record the incident.
- Notify IT or responsible person.
- Preserve evidence.
- Review whether further action is required.
- Use as a learning opportunity for staff awareness.



Ransomware Considerations

- Do not rush to pay
- Paying does not guarantee recovery
- Notify insurers immediately
- Preserve evidence
- Seek advice before taking action
- Consider legal and regulatory implications.



Communications

Effective communication is critical during a cyber security incident. If your organisation, a supplier, or another organisation within your supply chain is affected, normal communication methods may become unavailable or untrusted.

A successful cyber attack can impact email, Microsoft Teams, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony, intranet services, websites and internet connectivity. This can significantly affect your ability to coordinate internally and communicate with customers, suppliers, regulators and other stakeholders.

Organisations should have a resilient communications plan that identifies alternative methods of communication should primary systems fail. Consider including:

- Offline contact lists for key personnel and critical suppliers.
- Dedicated or alternative mobile telephone numbers.
- A pre-approved out-of-band communication method (such as WhatsApp or Signal) for the Incident Response Team, where this has been risk assessed and authorised.
- Alternative conference call facilities or meeting locations.
- A nominated spokesperson responsible for all external communications.
- Pre-prepared internal and external holding statements.

Where critical suppliers provide key business services, understand how they will communicate with you if they experience a cyber security incident and their normal communication channels are unavailable.

Internal Communications

Staff should:

- Use only approved communication channels.
- Report anything unusual immediately.
- Avoid discussing the incident externally or on social media.
- Follow instructions from the Incident Response Team.
- Await verified updates rather than relying on rumours or speculation.



External Communications

Communications with customers, suppliers, regulators, insurers and the media should be coordinated through a nominated spokesperson or Incident Management Team.

Communications should always:

- Be timely, accurate and transparent.
- Clearly distinguish confirmed facts from ongoing investigations.
- Never speculate on the cause, attribution or impact of the incident.
- Provide regular updates, even if there is little new information.

Holding Statements

Internal

We are currently investigating a potential cyber security incident.

- As a precaution, please do not use any systems identified as affected until further notice.
- Report anything unusual to **[insert contact details]** and please do not discuss the incident externally or on social media.
- Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

External

We are currently investigating a technical issue affecting some of our services. Our teams are working to establish the cause and understand any potential impact. We will provide further updates as soon as verified information becomes available.

Recommendation

Assume that your primary communication systems may not be available during a significant cyber security incident. Ensure alternative communication methods are documented, tested regularly, and understood by those responsible for managing the incident.

Having a trusted, independent means of communication can significantly improve coordination and decision-making during the critical early stages of an incident.



RECOVERY, STAND DOWN, AND LESSONS LEARNED

RECOVERY

Once the immediate threat has been contained, attention should turn to the safe recovery of services and normal business operations. Recovery activities should be prioritised according to business need and risk. The following recovery priorities should be considered:

- Protect life, welfare and safety.
- Maintain critical business services.
- Restore safe communications.
- Protect and recover key data.
- Restore finance, payroll and customer-facing systems.
- Restore remaining systems in a controlled manner.
- Confirm systems are secure and free from compromise before reconnecting.
- Monitor systems for any signs of further malicious activity.

Recovery should be coordinated by the Incident Lead in consultation with IT support, business leaders and any external specialists involved in the response.

STAND DOWN AND INCIDENT CLOSE

The Cyber Incident Response Plan should only be stood down once:

- The incident has been investigated.
- Appropriate recovery actions have been completed.
- Critical business services have been restored.
- Any required reporting has been completed.
- Senior leadership are satisfied that risks have been reduced to an acceptable level.

Relevant stakeholders, partners, suppliers and external agencies should be informed when the incident is formally closed.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Every cyber incident provides an opportunity to improve resilience. As soon as reasonably practicable following the closure of an incident, a review should be conducted to identify:

- What happened.
- What worked well.
- What challenges were encountered.
- What actions could have been taken sooner.
- Whether plans, procedures or training require improvement.
- Any lessons that should be shared across the organisation.

Where possible, a short "hot debrief" should take place immediately after the incident, followed by a more detailed review at a later date. Any recommendations should be recorded, assigned to an owner and monitored through to completion.

A template Lessons Learned Report is provided in Appendix H.



APPENDICES

At the end of this document, you will find several appendices in the index that form resources for you to use. They are titled:

Appendix A - Contacts Directory

Appendix B - Action Card for a manager receiving a report of cyber incident

Appendix C - Incident Log to record initial actions

Appendix D - Strategic Decision Log

Appendix E - Advice to give to staff reporting a Cyber Security Incident

Appendix F - Tactical Manager Action Card

Appendix G - Strategic Manager Action Card

Appendix H - Lessons Learned Report

Appendix I - Cyber Security Incident Plan

Appendix J - Device out of action posters

Appendix K - Cyber Action Wall staff Posters

Appendix L - Version Control Information



Appendix A Contacts Directory

Organisation	Notes	Contact Details
Information Security Officer		
Data Protection Officer		
Insurance Company		
Insurance Cyber Company		
Incident Response Company		
Solicitor / Legal Adviser		
IT Point of contact	Office hours: Out of hours:	
MSP		
IT Company		
Cloud Provider		
Website Provider		
Microsoft 365 Administrator		
Domain Registrar		
Banks		
PR / Crisis Comms		
Accountant		
Payroll Provider		
Critical Suppliers		

Appendix A Contacts Directory (Continued)

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Appendix B

A Cyber Security Incident has been declared by IT, information security, senior leadership team, or the business owner

Duty Manager to ensure initial actions are completed

What has happened?
How many people / devices affected?
What is the exact description of what has occurred?

Make a record in initial action on APPENDIX C
Give advice to staff APPENDIX E

What type of attack?

Attack on your systems

Notify IT point of contact

Activate IT Cyber Security Incident Plan

Notify Senior Leadership Team

Assess incident using Appendix F

Notify Information Security Officer

Activate Information Security Plan

Notify Data Protection Officer

Assess Incident

Notify Media Relations

Support internal and external messaging

Notify Report Fraud of live cyber crime incident

Activate Cyber Incident Response Team

Brief Strategic Manager using Appendix G

Appoint lead to mitigate impact on business

Set recovery, strategy, investigation

Activate business continuity plans

Attack on supply chain

Notify IT point of contact

Assess possible impact

Notify Information

Notify Data Protection Officer

Notify Media Relations

Support internal and external

Notify Senior Leadership Team

Any impact?

Monitor and review regularly

Appendix C Incident Log

Appendix C Incident Log Maintain a log of initial actions which will assist the senior leadership team and other supporting resources when allocated.

Brief circumstances:

What exactly happened?

How many affected?

What is the impact?

Time / Date	Person Completing	Log Note
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Appendix D Strategic Decision Log

During a cyber incident, decisions may need to be made quickly with incomplete information. This log should record key decisions, who made them, why they were made and what information was available at the time. Examples of decisions to record:

- Decision to disconnect systems.
- Decision to invoke business continuity plans.
- Decision to notify customers, suppliers or regulators.
- Decision to report to ICO, police, insurer or other bodies.
- Decision to restore from backup.
- Decision to delay restoration to preserve evidence.
- Decision to issue internal or external communications.

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 - Decision to restore from backup.
 - Decision to delay restoration to preserve evidence.
 - Decision to issue internal or external communications.

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Appendix E Advice to staff reporting cyber incident

Action for managers to follow this checklist if staff report a cyber incident direct

	Give this advice to staff who report what you think might be a cyber incident. Always direct them to the IT support. If out of hours, consider calling the IT emergency contact number.	
	Who else has been affected? Is it just you or other people around you reporting the same or similar problems?	
	Do not turn off the computer, leave it turned on to ensure evidence is preserved.	
	Tell the staff member to log off the computer and put a sign on it to stop others using it, providing the sign in this pack if necessary.	
	Isolate the computer by removing the network cable or put it in airplane mode if connected by Wi-Fi.	
	Secure any memory sticks, discs, DVDs, or any other media connected to or used in the computer.	
	Do not allow the user to take any remedial action or access their emails from another device.	
	Do not let the user log onto any other devices.	
	Do not post on social media or discuss the incident with anyone outside of your organisation.	
	Encourage the caller to start thinking about what they can do to continue their role and direct them to business continuity plans.	

Appendix F Incident Lead / Manager Action Card

Incident Lead / Tactical Manager / Senior Leadership Team / Duty Manager

1	Coordinate the organisations response to a cyber incident. You will arrange and chair an internal meeting to achieve this.
2	What is the scale of the reported incident? Has it formally been declared cyber incident by IT, Information Security, senior leadership team, or business owner? Any member of staff may report or escalate a suspected cyber incident. Formal declaration should be made by the most appropriate responsible person available.
3	Has contact been made with the person responsible for IT? Has IT support or your MSP been engaged and have appropriate technical response actions been started? Has contact being made with the Information Security Officer and the Data Protection Officer?
4	Has Report Fraud been notified? If so, what feedback or intelligence has been passed?
5	Brief the duty media officer to prepare communications to staff as well as partners and the media.
6	Have any partners been notified that share IT systems that could also be infected?
7	Appoint leads for areas of operational business that may be impacted. This may be one person or many depending on the scale refer to business continuity plans.
8	Arrange an internal Cyber Incident Response Team meeting as soon as possible. It should include representatives from IT, Information Security, Data Protection, Communications, and Business Impact staff.
9	Brief strategic lead / Chief Executives ensuring there is a clear strategy set which balances the recovery systems against investigation.
10	Has the organisation's cyber insurance provider been notified? Many policies require notification within specific timescales. This is one of the most commonly missed actions during exercises.

Appendix G Business Lead Action Card

Business Lead / Strategic Manager / Senior Leadership Team / Chief Executives

1	Appoint leads for areas of operational business that may be impacted. This may be one person or many depending on the scale refer to business continuity plans.
2	What is the current impact of this incident on the company? Is this a widespread national incident or restricted to you only? Are there any other partners also affected?
3	There are often competing demands between ITs desire to restore IT systems and the investigatory desire to secure and preserve evidence ensure you are clear in your strategy where primacy lies.
4	Has a Cyber Incident Response Team meeting been formed to manage this incident? This is the group that should be chaired by the senior leadership team to drive your response.
5	Has contact been made with Report Fraud / National Cyber Security Centre? They coordinate / investigate a response to cybercrime. What is their assessment and what support have they offered?
6	Your information management department should consider the reporting of any incident to the Information Commissioners Office which is time critical. They should also brief the Senior Information Owner. They may not be a 24/7 department so check their functions are being carried out within the time scales.
7	Does this incident have any impact on your supply chain? Is it likely that the cyber-attack will attract their oversight?
8	Co-locate your team ASAP at a single, safe, and easily identified location near your incident.
9	Agree a lead, identify priorities, resource, and capabilities for an effective response, including times of further meetings. Communicate using plain English, try to avoid jargon.
10	Jointly understand the risk, share information about the likelihood and potential impact, to agree control measures and risk reduction.

Appendix H Lessons Learned Action Card

Submission of this report will instigate a review of the plan by the senior leadership team which is vital for continuous improvement.

- What happened? When did it start? How was it discovered?
- What worked well? Were communications effective?
- What caused delay or confusion?
- Were contact details correct? Were staff clear on what to do?
- Were backups available and usable? Were backups tested before the incident?
- Were third-party suppliers involved and did they respond effectively?
- What needs changing within 7 days, 30 days and 90 days?

Name of Plan implemented	
Date and time implemented	
Person implementing	
Brief Circumstances	
What went well	
What could be improved within the plan to help you next time?	



Cyber Action

Discover or suspect a Cyber Incident?

Confirm infected devices are disconnected from network?

Have you disconnected network from the internet?

Utilise a secure separate conference call to understand what has happened and review the impact

Insert Conference Call Number

Insert Chair persons & participants dial in code

Consider representatives from Insurance, Legal, PR, IT, HR & Law Enforcement?

Allocate someone to track incident/actions/maintain a written log

Preserve all device / server logs

Confirm containment steps and contingencies?

Identify source and ensure other users are not exposed?

Consider password resets (users / administrators / systems)

Confirm availability of CLEAN back-ups?

Consider steps to eradicate?

Plan your recovery phase?

Law Enforcement involved, have you secured evidence?

Keep an infected device powered off and disconnected for police

Complete final wipe & reinstall of a clean operating system

Run anti-virus check / malware protection on all devices

Reconnect to network

Report incidents to the Police via Report Fraud 0300 123 2040

Consider your disclosures?

Voluntarily - Internal / External / Press Releases

Mandatory - Data breach? Report to ICO

Regulatory - E.g. Dept of Ed. / Charities Commission / FCA / CQC

Review lessons learned



Cyber Action

Discover or suspect a Cyber Incident?



Disconnect affected device from network:

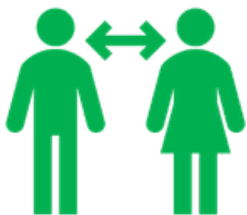
Wireless connections (Wi-Fi / Bluetooth / place in airplane mode)

Wired connections (Ethernet / USB)

Consider turning off Wi-fi network (routers / switches)

Place sign on device to stop others using it

Secure any connected memory sticks, media



Contact IT support/provider

Insert Name & number

Insert Name & number

Contact Senior Leadership Team

Insert Name & number

Insert Name & number



Make a note of what you were doing leading up to this incident

Take a picture of screen



IT Informed Date:

Reference No:



IT Informed Date:

Reference No:

Appendix L Version Control

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