National Cyber Security Centre
a part of GCHQ

Cyber Security
Small Business Guide

This advice has been produced to help small businesses protect themselves from the most common cyber attacks. The 5 topics covered are easy to understand and cost little to implement. Read our quick tips below, or find out more at **www.ncsc.gov.uk/smallbusiness** .

Backing up your data

Take *regular* backups of your important data, and *test* they can be restored. This will reduce the inconvenience of any data loss from theft, fire, other physical damage, or ransomware.

Identify what needs to be backed up. Normally this will comprise documents, photos, emails, contacts, and calendars, kept in a few common folders. Make backing up part of your everyday business.

Ensure the device containing your backup is *not* permanently connected to the device holding the original copy, neither physically nor over a local network.

Consider backing up to the cloud. This means your data is stored in a separate location (away from your offices/devices), and you'll also be able to access it quickly, from anywhere.

Keeping your smartphones (and tablets) safe

Smartphones and tablets (which are used outside the safety of the office and home) need even more protection than 'desktop' equipment.

Switch on PIN/password protection/fingerprint recognition for mobile devices.

Configure devices so that when lost or stolen they can be **tracked**, **remotely wiped** or **remotely locked**.

Keep your **devices** (and all **installed apps**) **up to date**, using the '**automatically update**' option if available.

When sending sensitive data, don't connect to public Wi-Fi hotspots - **use 3G or 4G connections** (including tethering and wireless dongles) or **use VPNs**.

Replace devices that are no longer supported by manufacturers with up-to-date alternatives.

Preventing malware damage

You can protect your organisation from the damage caused by 'malware' (malicious software, including viruses) by adopting some simple and low-cost techniques.

Use antivirus software on all computers and laptops. **Only install approved software** on tablets and smartphones, and prevent users from downloading third party apps from unknown sources.

Patch all software and firmware by promptly applying the latest software updates provided by manufacturers and vendors. Use the '**automatically update**' option where available.

Control access to removable media such as SD cards and USB sticks. Consider disabling ports, or limiting access to sanctioned media. Encourage staff to transfer files via email or cloud storage instead.

Switch on your firewall (included with most operating systems) to create a buffer zone between your network and the Internet.

Avoiding phishing attacks

In phishing attacks, scammers send fake emails asking for sensitive information (such as bank details), or containing links to bad websites.

Ensure staff **don't browse the web or check emails** from an account with **Administrator privileges**. This will reduce the impact of successful phishing attacks.

Scan for malware and **change passwords** as soon as possible if you suspect a successful attack has occurred. **Don't punish staff** if they get caught out (it discourages people from reporting in the future).

Check for obvious signs of phishing, like **poor spelling and grammar**, or **low quality versions** of recognisable logos. Does the sender's email address look legitimate, or is it trying to mimic someone you know?

Using passwords to protect your data

Passwords - when implemented correctly - are a free, easy and effective way to prevent unauthorised people from accessing your devices and data.

Make sure all laptops, MACs and PCs **use encryption products** that require a password to boot. Switch on **password/ PIN protection** or **fingerprint recognition** for mobile devices.

Use two factor authentication (2FA) for important websites like banking and email, if you're given the option.

Avoid using predictable passwords (such as family and pet names). Avoid the most common passwords that criminals can guess (like *passw0rd*).

If you forget your password (or you think somebody else knows it), tell your IT department as soon as you can.

Change the manufacturers' default passwords that devices are issued with, before they are distributed to staff.

Provide secure storage so staff can write down passwords and keep them safe (but not with the device). Ensure staff can reset their own passwords, easily.

Consider using a password manager, but only for your less important websites and accounts where there would be no real permanent damage if the password was stolen.

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