Your World

Derbyshire cyber security expert urges businesses to act

By Kevin Walker Contributor

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Kevin Walker, Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions | Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions

Following the recent Security Minister's speech to CYBERUK 2026, a

and care providers to rethink how they approach cyber risk - not as an IT issue, but as a core business responsibility.

Kevin Walker, founder of Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions, says the message from government is clear: cyber security is no longer optional and the risks facing small and medium-sized organisations are now directly linked to the UK's national security.

"The line that stood out to me was simple - the cyber security of British business is a matter of national security," said Kevin. "That changes the conversation. This isn't just about large organisations. It's about the small businesses, schools and care providers that keep our communities running."

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The Minister's speech highlighted a sharp rise in cyber attacks, with the National Cyber Security Centre handling over 200 nationally significant incidents in the past year alone, more than double the previous year. Many of these attacks, Kevin says, do not start with sophisticated breaches, but with everyday gaps that are often overlooked.

“In most cases, nothing looks obviously wrong,” Kevin explained. “We see email systems in place, multi-factor authentication switched on, backups configured. But when you look closer, there’s no visibility of suspicious activity, no testing of recovery and no one actively monitoring what’s going on. That’s where attackers find their way in.”

Drawing on nearly two decades of experience supporting organisations across Chesterfield, Sheffield and the wider Derbyshire area, Kevin believes the biggest risk is the gap between perception and reality.

“Most organisations assume they’re too small to be targeted. Attackers see them differently - as part of a supply chain, or as an easier route into something bigger. That mismatch is where incidents start.”

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The Government's announcement of a £90 million investment into cyber resilience, alongside a forthcoming Cyber Resilience Pledge and continued emphasis on Cyber Essentials certification, has been welcomed by industry professionals. However, Kevin warns that guidance and funding alone will not solve the problem.

"Government can set standards and provide support, but it can't make decisions for businesses," he said. "That responsibility still sits with the owner or leadership team. The organisations that do well are the ones that take ownership early."

A key theme of the CYBERUK address was the growing role of artificial intelligence in both attacking and defending systems. While much attention has focused on the risks, Kevin believes the bigger shift is operational.

"We're moving into a world where attacks happen at machine speed," he said. "If your response still relies on someone spotting an alert and deciding what to do next, you're already behind. Businesses need systems that reduce the chance of something going wrong, spot issues early and respond quickly when they do."

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or security resources.

“These organisations are doing critical work in their communities, but many don’t have the time or visibility to manage cyber risk properly. That’s not a criticism, it’s the reality. The question is how we support them to close that gap.”

Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions, based in Chesterfield, works with small businesses, schools and care providers across Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, providing managed cyber security services designed to improve visibility, response and recovery without adding complexity.

Kevin believes the conversation now needs to shift away from technology alone.

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“This isn’t about buying more tools,” he said. “It’s about understanding what’s happening in your business, knowing what ‘normal’ looks like and having a clear plan for when something isn’t right. That’s what resilience actually looks like.”

As the UK prepares for the publication of its full National Cyber Action Plan later this year, Kevin hopes local organisations will take the opportunity to act before problems arise.

“Most cyber incidents don’t start with a major breach,” he added. “They start with a small signal that gets missed. The businesses that stay ahead are the ones that build systems to catch those signals early and deal with them properly.”

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