Business

# One major cyber incident every two days

By Kevin Walker Contributor

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Kevin Walker, Founder, Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions

**today reveals the National Cyber Security Centre handled 204 significant cyber incidents in just one year, equivalent to one major incident every two days, with the UK economy facing £14.7 billion in annual costs from cyber attacks.**

The independent research, commissioned by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), shows that 43% of UK businesses experienced a cyber security breach or attack in the past year, affecting over 600,000 organisations across all sectors.

For South Yorkshire's manufacturing sector, a cornerstone of the regional economy, the research shows particularly high vulnerability, with manufacturing businesses facing average costs of £330,000 per significant cyber attack.

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Kevin Walker, founder of Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions, which serves businesses across Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, said: "The scale of this problem is staggering. When the NCSC is dealing with a significant incident every two days, and 43% of all UK businesses are getting hit, this isn't a theoretical risk anymore. It's a business-critical reality that South Yorkshire companies need to address."

Kevin Walker, defending small businesses from cyber crime

### Manufacturing and financial services hit hardest

The government research identifies the sectors facing the highest average costs from cyber attacks:

- Information sector: £337,000
- Management sector: £334,000
- Entertainment: £331,000
- **Manufacturing: £330,000**
- Financial services: £309,000

"Sheffield has a proud manufacturing heritage," added Kevin. "These figures show that our most competitive, innovative sectors are prime targets. The research found that intellectual property and knowledge theft from cyber attacks cost the UK between £1 billion to £8.5 billion in 2024 alone. For manufacturers developing new products and processes, that stolen IP can be an existential threat."

Recent high-profile cyber attacks have disrupted major retailers including Marks and Spencer and the Co-op. The research also reveals healthcare sector vulnerabilities, with major hospitals facing cyber attacks an average of three times per year, and GP practices experiencing attacks 37 times annually.

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A ransomware attack on an NHS supplier in 2024 led to over 10,000 disrupted appointments and thousands of cancelled procedures across South London healthcare providers.

"These aren't just statistics," said Kevin. "These are real people unable to access their banking, their medical appointments, their insurance. The research estimates that a three-day banking outage could cost between £5.5 million and £231 million in consumer impact alone."

### The data breach chain reaction

Separate research within the government's commissioned studies reveals that 437,000 people became fraud victims in 2023 specifically due to data breaches at organisations. This represents 11% of all fraud victims in England and Wales, costing an estimated £755 million annually.

"When a South Yorkshire business suffers a data breach, the impact cascades," explained Kevin. "It's not just their problem - it's their customers, their employees, their suppliers who end up as fraud victims. That's a responsibility every business owner needs to take

## A proven solution exists

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Despite the stark figures, the research highlights an effective defence: organisations with Cyber Essentials controls in place make 92% fewer insurance claims than those without.

The government-backed Cyber Essentials scheme saw over 51,000 certificates issued in the 12 months to June 2025, demonstrating growing recognition among UK businesses of the need for baseline cyber protections.

"The encouraging message in this research is that we have proven, practical solutions," said Kevin. "Cyber Essentials isn't about becoming an IT expert, it's five basic technical controls that reduce your risk by 92%. For South Yorkshire businesses, that's the difference between survival and catastrophic loss."

The full government research, including five independent reports, is available at gov.uk/government/publications.

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