



The ultimate guide to Cyber Essentials

Everything your business needs to know about becoming Cyber Essentials Certified.



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The threat to your business

On a scale from 1-10, what score would you give your business in terms of its approach to cyber security?

Cyber security has become a critical component of any business's IT infrastructure in today's digital landscape. Cyber security threats are always evolving and over the past few years, businesses of all sizes have been faced with complex and advanced exploits.

There are new attacks being designed and utilised each day for only one reason: to cripple businesses.

Cybercrime has dramatically increased during the past ten years.

39% of UK businesses reported cyber breaches in the last 12 months, and those are only the incidents that were reported, according to statistics from the UK Government's Cyber Breaches Report.

Unfortunately, these figures are only going up.

As cyber criminals technology advances, your business's security should too.



What are the biggest threats to businesses?

Malware

Malicious software designed to interfere with your computer, network or server. Once systems have an infestation of malware, it can gain unauthorised access to data and can potentially leak sensitive information.



Ransomware

Ransomware simply blocks you from gaining access to your files. Users will make you 'pay the ransom' in order to get them back. Even after payment, there's no guarantee they'll be sent back to you.



Phishing

Phishing attacks use fake communication, such as an email, to con the recipient into opening it and following the instructions contained within. This is usually done to either install malware on the victim's computer or steal personal information like credit card numbers and login credentials.



Password Attacks

One of the most frequent ways that personal and corporate data is stolen is through password attacks. If a hacker cannot correctly guess a password, they will use password attack tools that can speed up the algorithm to crack a password.



How are businesses responding to threats?

Most businesses are being proactive about their cyber security. However, the majority of businesses naively settle for the bare minimum security requirements. The minority who are yet to implement any security measures or policies tend to choose not to because they just simply don't believe they're a target for cybercrime.

No matter the size of a business or industry it operates in, the risk remains the same.

Think of this as buying a car and driving it without being insured. Quite risky, wouldn't you agree?

All may seem fine until the day when something goes wrong. Or you get caught. And more so than not, this can be more expensive to resolve than it was to sort in the first place.

You have to ensure the security measures and policies you have implemented or are looking to implement are sufficient and checked upon regularly.

So, what is the best way to ensure that businesses fulfil their security protocols?

Well, UK organisations are seeing the benefit of aligning their security to the requirements of Cyber Essentials. It is these efforts that are largely responsible for the decline in successful breaches over the years.



What is Cyber Essentials?

Cyber Essentials is a Government backed program designed to help businesses protect themselves from cyber threats. It provides a set of essential security controls that when implemented, significantly reduce the risk of suffering a cyber attack.

By achieving a Cyber Essentials certification, you'll show that you're actively improving the overall security posture of your business, ensuring the continuity and integrity of your operations.

It's comparable to a driving test.

Your assessor will determine whether you match the standards for passing successfully by looking at your performance.

When it comes to Cyber Essentials, the "assessor" is referred to as a Certification Body, and provided your organisation checks off all the boxes, they will certify you for Cyber Essentials. You will pass or fail the evaluation based on your responses to a questionnaire.

Once you can demonstrate that you have all the appropriate procedures, guidelines, and controls in place, you'll be given a certification. You can then display this to all of your clients, partners and suppliers.

The certification must then be renewed annually to reflect any changes to the infrastructure of your own business as well as the broader security landscape over the course of 12 months.

Achieving Cyber Essentials

There are two assessments you need to complete in order to be fully certified for Cyber Essentials.

The 'Basic' certification must be obtained first (you must submit the assessment within 6 months of earning it), and then the 'Plus' assessment, which is longer and more in-depth (*More information about Cyber Essentials Plus can be seen on Page 10.*)

A self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) known as Cyber Essentials 'Basic' is a type of DIY certification. It is typically finished by an organisation's internal IT team or an outside IT supplier, but it must subsequently undergo an independent evaluation by a recognised certification body.

If you wish to pass without stress, take advantage of the expert advice that many Certification Bodies truly provide!



What are the benefits of Cyber Essentials?

- Reassure your customers that you're working to secure your IT against cyber attacks.
- Attract new business with the promise that you have cyber security measures in place.
- Show current and potential customers that you take data protection seriously.
- Some Government contracts actually require a cyber essential certification.
- Your business will be listed in the directory of organisations awarded cyber essentials.

By obtaining a Cyber Essentials certification, you automatically demonstrate your concern for data and set yourself apart from your rivals who have not yet made cyber security a top priority. Your company joins a select group of businesses in your field that can show they care for their data by displaying the Cyber Essentials logos on your website and other marketing materials.



Getting started: The controls

So what exactly does Cyber Essentials test to ensure that it can confidently defend your company against cyberattacks?



Access Controls

Users should only use the data they actually need and handle administrator rights in the proper way.



Gateways

All devices that are online must comply with Cyber Essentials' requirement that they be firewall-protected.



Configuration

Avoid default settings on all devices and make sure everything is configured properly.



Patch Management

To guarantee that vulnerabilities can be detected and fixed, it is essential to keep your devices updated.



Malware Protection

Cyber Essentials makes sure that you are adequately protected against viruses, malware, and other risks.

Go A Step Further With Cyber Essentials Plus: How is it different?

You are already showing your clients and stakeholders that you care about your cyber security and preserving their data by earning Cyber Essentials.

Achieving Cyber Essentials Plus signifies that you are going above and beyond to make sure you manage all of your crucial data in a secure setting.

Cyber Essentials Plus is the next step which mandates that the Certification Body assess your infrastructure for flaws and confirm that all the responses you submitted in your SAQ are reflected there. It's vital to remember that you **MUST** obtain the Plus certification within 90 days after finishing Cyber Essentials Basic.



How Breeze Logic Can help

With one small firm in the UK being successfully hacked every 19 seconds, organisations must make every effort to avoid becoming just another statistic.

At Breeze, our security practitioner can help your organisation prepare to meet the Government approved and National Cyber Security Centre managed Scheme.

We will work with the person responsible for your company's cyber security to get you Cyber Essentials accreditation for £999 + VAT. This will include the initial audit, advice on any actions required to pass as well as completion of the portal application. For any corrective actions post-submission, there may be an additional charge.

On the next page, we outline the process we undertake to get businesses Cyber Essentials Certified.



The Cyber Essentials Process At Breeze Logic

1

Step 1: Get in touch

In order for us to provide you with the best advice regarding our Cyber Essentials service options, please contact us by phone or email and tell us more about your company. To provide you with an exact quote, we will need to know how many people work for your company.

2

Step 2: Achieving Cyber Essentials

There is a questionnaire of between 60-80 questions that will see how you handle and deal with Cyber Security within your business, we will take your business through the questionnaire and then advise and assist with any changes, updates, policies and procedures that are needed to be put in place to assure that your business will pass Cyber Essentials accreditation. Once this is completed, a certificate is issued and can be searched for by company on the IASME website (<https://iasme.co.uk/>).

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Step 3: Achieving Cyber Essentials Plus (Assured Pass)

This is the next step up from Cyber Essentials, where Cyber Essentials is essentially a checklist, here we will make sure that whatever has been documented within a Cyber Essentials certification is being adhered to within your business.

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Step 4: Achieve Cyber Essentials Plus Certification

Once we have put you through the Cyber Essentials Plus (Assured Pass) we then hand this over to a registered IASME assessor to go through the entire process, during this time, they will ask for access to a random selection of machines where they will check for things like latest software, vulnerabilities, MFA challenges and user access levels are some of the elements that are looked at to make sure that they all pass. Once this has been completed and all areas passed, a certificate is issued and can be searched for by the company on the IASME website (<https://iasme.co.uk/>).

FAQs: Giving your business more clarity

Q: My IT team handle my security so why should I bother with Cyber Essentials?

A: Although your IT team is undoubtedly a valuable asset to your company, their primary objective is to keep everything running smoothly so as not to interfere with your company's operations. Cyber security experts, however, seek to defend those systems from external attacks, and Cyber Essentials is a fundamental step that must be taken to do so.

Q: Does Cyber Essentials expire?

A: Because it's an ever-changing landscape, Cyber Essentials requires an annual review (every 12 months) so it's important to check that you're still compliant.

Q: How quickly can my business become certified?

A: This depends on the size of your business and its technical infrastructure. However, achieving Cyber Essentials can take as little as 24 hours. Cyber Essentials Plus can be done in the same time frame if your business has the right resources to quickly remediate any issues identified. However, it's important to keep in mind that Cyber Essentials Plus is more extensive so it usually takes longer.

Q: Do I need Cyber Essentials to bid for a Government contract?

A: Some Government contracts may require you to be Cyber Essentials certified or to be able to demonstrate that the technical controls are in place.

In the first instance please confirm with the Government department their expectations with regards to Cyber Essentials. Requirements and exemptions may vary between departments, so it is important that you are able to seek clarification for each contract.

Q: My organisation is not based in the UK. Can I still obtain Cyber Essentials certification?

A: Yes, organisations overseas are able to get certificates.



Thank you for reading.

For more information about Cyber Essentials, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

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Your IT roadmap needs to be a priority.

Let our passion for technology and enthusiasm for delivering a first-class service help keep your business secure.

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