

# CYBER CRIME SENTINEL



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ROCU WM CYBER



RCCU WM

**ROCU** | CYBER  
WEST MIDLANDS REGION | CRIME  
UNIT



This newsletter has been collated by West Midlands Regional Cyber Crime Unit and is intended for wider distribution within the West Midlands Region among organisations and members of the public.

# Virus

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## Cyber Word of the Week

A computer virus is a malicious code or program designed to spread from one computer to another, similar to how a flu virus spreads from host to host.

Viruses can spread through various means, including email attachments, file downloads, and social media scams. When a virus infects your computer, it can cause unexpected and damaging effects, such as corrupting/destroying data and harming the system software.

Some signs your computer may be infected with a virus include:

- Sluggish performance.
- Unwanted popups or messages.
- Frequent freezes or crashes.

You can keep your devices safe by avoiding downloading any unfamiliar files or attachments, and using antivirus software.

Read more about antivirus software [here](#).



## Ditch The <Script>

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has launched their "Ditch The Script" campaign to educate and inspire children, parents, and teachers about careers in the tech industry and Computer Misuse related offences.

It is crucial that we guide and safeguard children, providing them with the necessary tools to navigate the digital world responsibly. The campaign not only highlights the repercussions of computer misuse but also showcases the abundance of positive career opportunities available in the tech industry.

Look out for our posts on LinkedIn ([@RCCU WM](#)) and X ([@ROCUWMCyber](#))

Learn more about Cyber Choices [here](#).



## What's On?

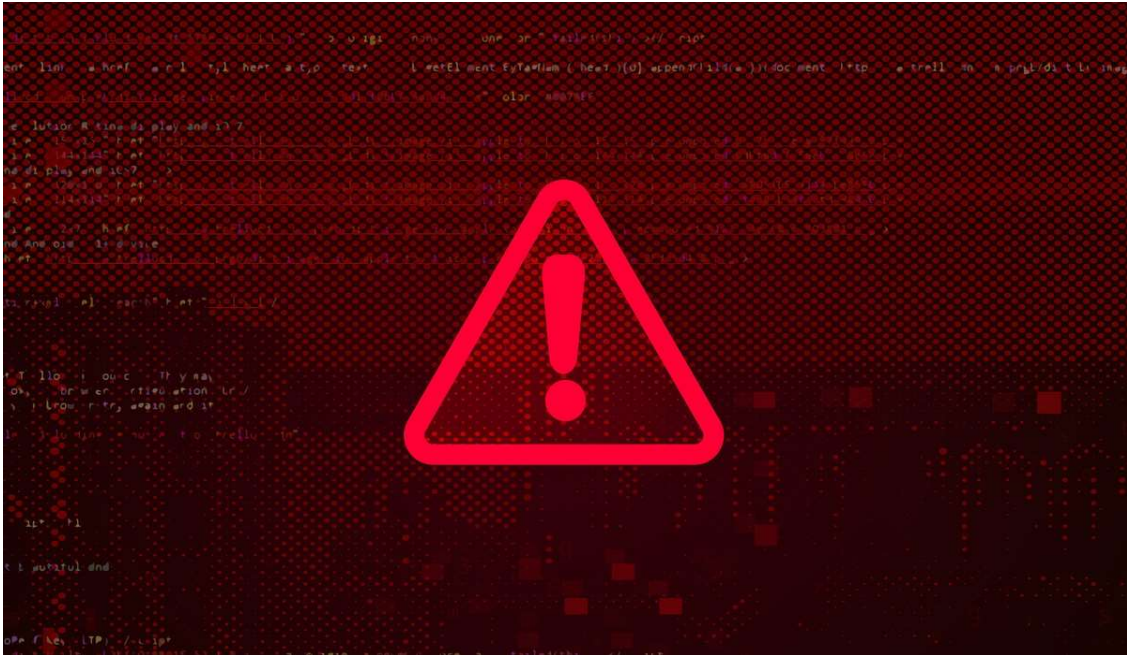
Would your organisation benefit from some free cyber training? We are currently running our interactive, table top exercise 'Criminal Minds'. Delivered by police professionals, we can help make your organisation more secure.

We tailor our delivery to your organisations needs, so if there's an area of cyber you'd like us to focus on, please get in touch.

Contact us via email on: [wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk](mailto:wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk) or on LinkedIn [@ RCCU WM](#)

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# Recent Cyber Headlines



## 75% of UK Businesses Experienced a Cyber

### Incident in 2023

Three-quarters of UK businesses and 79% of charities have experienced a cybersecurity incident in the past 12 months, according to new figures published by the UK government.

The survey found there was limited improvements in organisations' cyber security posture between 2022 and 2023.

The research also identified that charities tended to take a less formalised approach to cyber security than businesses. For example, they were much more likely to allow their staff to access their systems using a personal device (56% vs. 35%). The research also identified that businesses are significantly more likely to require staff to use VPN for remote access than charities (81% vs. 69%).

Furthermore, only a third of businesses (38%) and charities (36%) adhere to at least one of the three key cyber security certifications: Cyber Essentials Standard, Cyber Essentials Plus and ISO 27001.

Read more [here](#).



## **Criminal Investigation Launches into Leicester**

### **City Council Cyber Incident**

A criminal investigation has launched into a cyber-attack that has disrupted Leicester City Council's systems for more than a week.

It is currently undetermined whether a data breach related to staff or residents' personal information had occurred. Despite some services being up and running, some systems and phone lines have been down since 7th March.

The authority said last week it was working with "cyber-security and law enforcement partners" to try to get them up and running again.

Similarly, at the start of this year three Kent councils were hit by almost simultaneous attacks, knocking systems offline.

Read more [here](#).



## Latest Study Identified 27% Spike In Ransomware

New data has unveiled a 27% rise in ransomware attacks in 2023, with 8% of affected organisations resorting to paying ransoms.

The figures, extracted from the '*2024 Thales Data Threat Report*', also suggest that less than half of organisations have established formal ransomware response plans.

In addition to the surge in ransomware attacks, the report identifies malware as the fastest-growing threat, with 41% of enterprises reporting incidents in the past year. Phishing and ransomware attacks targeting cloud assets such as SaaS applications and cloud-based storage are also on the rise, posing significant challenges to organisations' data security efforts.

Moreover, human error continues to be a leading cause of data breaches for the second consecutive year, highlighting the importance of employee training and awareness in maintaining data security protocols.

Read more [here](#).

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## In Other News:

[Greggs Experience](#)

[Significant IT Glitch](#)

[Ivanti Releases  
Urgent Fix for  
Critical Vulnerability](#)

**Latest from the  
NCSC:**

[New Cloud Guidance  
Released](#)

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**This Weeks Top Tip**



## QR Codes: What's the Risk?

QR codes gained popularity during the COVID lockdowns where they were integrated into everyday life, from ordering food to indicating vaccination status. However, QR codes are increasingly being used in phishing emails. This technique is referred to as 'Quishing'.

The NCSC recommend that you scan QR codes using your phone camera, as opposed to using downloaded apps. Most QR codes in restaurants will be safe, however QR codes in open spaces (for example car parks) may be riskier. You should always exercise caution when scanning a QR code you're unsure of.

Read the NCSC guidance on using QR codes safely [here](#).

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## Engagement in the Community

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This week, our team had the pleasure of attending the first ever 'CyberFirst MEGA' event in the West Midlands. Hosted at Aston Villa Football Club, the event aimed to inspire girls interested in technology to pursue a career in cyber security. We also exhibited at the Photography & Video show 2024, to spread awareness of cyber crime within the industry.

If you have an event you would be interested in the Regional Cyber Crime Unit attending, please contact us at [wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk](mailto:wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk) or via [LinkedIn](#).

In other news, our Sentinel newsletter has been growing over the years and reaching larger audiences. Last week we were contacted by Graham.

Graham from Cross-Sector safety and Security Communications Project Director said:

**“You are currently the only UK Police Service unit that is producing and cascading such a useful, valuable and relevant cyber security bulletin.”**

Graham, thank you for your kind comments.

**Would your employees benefit from some free cyber training?** Get in touch at [wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk](mailto:wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk) or via [LinkedIn](#).

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## Cyber Escape Room

Would your team benefit from an interactive, team building activity? If so, our Cyber Escape Room might be for you.

This interactive exercise requires your employees to solve the clues to successfully crack the case, whilst simultaneously learning vital cyber hygiene practices. These practices can then be adopted into their work life, to enhance their cyber awareness.

**Would your employees benefit from some free cyber training?** Get in touch at [wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk](mailto:wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk) or via [LinkedIn](#).



## **Are you a micro charity or legal business?**

Applications for the funded Cyber Essentials scheme has reopened for charities and legal microbusinesses. The focus is on supporting small organisations who have a low level of cyber maturity and work with data that is sensitive. The programme will offer Cyber Essential Plus to these specific sectors for no cost.

Get in touch with us at [wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk](mailto:wmcyber@westmidlands.police.uk) if you think your business fits the criteria and we can assess your eligibility.



## **Improve your business's cyber security with free membership at the Cyber Resilience Centre for the West Midlands.**

With membership at the WMCRC, you will receive regular tips and guidance on how to firm up your business's cyber security.

Register to become a member (for free) today at [www.wmcrc.co.uk/membership](http://www.wmcrc.co.uk/membership)

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