

# Cyber Hygiene Checklist

## Essential daily, weekly, and monthly actions for SMEs

### Core Security Foundations

**Download the Apex Cyber Hygiene Checklist**

Whenever created

Use strong, unique passwords (or pass-phrases) of 12+ characters and a reputable password manager

Review monthly

Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) on all business-critical accounts (email, cloud services, remote access)

Review weekly

Keep all devices patched and updated (operating systems, browsers, apps)

Review weekly

Install and regularly update endpoint protection (antivirus/EDR)

### Email and Account Safety

Review monthly

Activate advanced email filtering to block phishing and malicious attachments

Frequently

Train staff to spot phishing emails (hover over links, check sender addresses) - ensure full training annually

Check weekly

Immediately disable access for leavers and rotate shared account credentials as soon as a staff member leaves

### Data Protection and Backups

Daily (automated)

Back up all critical data daily (on-site and off-site/cloud)

Monthly

Test backups monthly to ensure quick and clean recovery

Review weekly

Apply least privilege access: staff only see what they need - review permissions

Review monthly

Encrypt sensitive files and devices (laptops, USB drives)

### Secure Devices and Networks

Check weekly

Ensure business-grade firewalls are in place and regularly updated

Review quarterly

Lock down WiFi networks with strong encryption (WPA3) and unique passwords/pass-phrases

Review monthly

Deploy Mobile Device Management (MDM) to control and wipe stolen/lost devices

Monthly

Remove unused hardware and decommission old equipment securely

### People and Training

Annually

Provide annual cyber security awareness training to all staff; also do frequent reminders

Frequently

Run regular phishing simulations to keep vigilance high

Review monthly

Establish a clear Incident Response Plan and make sure everyone knows how to report issues

### Compliance and Oversight

Review Annually

Review and update cyber security policies at least once per year, plus monthly quick reviews

Review Monthly

Check that you meet GDPR and industry-specific compliance requirements

Review weekly

Keep a log of all security incidents and responses for auditing as they occur

**Optional:** Work towards achieving a Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus certification



### Quick Win Actions

- Change any weak or reused passwords **today**
- Set up MFA for all email accounts **this week**
- Verify that backups are working and accessible **this month**

### Why This Matters

Cyber attacks on UK SMEs are rising sharply. Good cyber hygiene reduces the risk of ransomware, phishing, and data breaches - protecting your customers, reputation, and bottom line.

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