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WEBINAR

Cyber Ready:

Prepare, Prioritise, Protect

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The real cyber threats facing SMEs right now and what's predicted for 2026 – any why this region is a growing target

How to set smart, strategic priorities when budgets and time are limited

Quick wins to strengthen your defences immediately, whether you've got IT support or not

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Cyber Security Challenges and Solutions for SMEs in 2026

Understanding and Defending Emerging Threats including AI-Powered Attacks, Ransomware, and Social Engineering

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The Real Cyber Threats Facing SMEs Now

Why Attackers Target SMEs

Attackers don’t target SMEs because of their size – they target access: to your customers data, supplier networks, and financial systems

Emerging AI-Powered Tactics

Increasingly sophisticated AI-powered tactics are being used to breach these access points

Global and Local Impact

Globally, 43% of all cyber attacks now focus on SMEs, including many right here in Greater Manchester

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Why SMEs Are Attractive Targets

Surge in Cyber Attacks on SMEs

- Cyber attacks on SMEs surged dramatically in 2025
- Attackers are shifting away from large enterprises with strong security, focusing instead on SMEs with weaker defences

Key Reasons for Targeting SMEs

- Valuable data and connections to larger networks and supply chains
- Legacy systems and limited security budgets
- Small IT teams often managing everything alone

Cyber Attack Stats in England

- 73% of SMEs faced at least one cyber attack in 2023. This figure continues to rise

Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

- Almost one-third of data breaches involve third-party or supply chain attacks
- SMEs act as a gateway to bigger targets

Focus Shift in Cyber Threats

- Attackers are increasingly targeting SMEs due to their weaker defences
- Large enterprises are often avoided due to their strong security measures

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The BIG Cyber Threats

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Threat #1: Phishing and Business Email Compromise (BEC)

Phishing is the most common attack vector

84%

In the UK, 84% of breaches involved phishing attempts

Traditional warning signs like poor grammar no longer apply – AI-generated emails are almost indistinguishable from genuine ones

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Threat #1: Phishing and Business Email Compromise (BEC)

Financial Impact of Phishing

The financial impact of phishing can be tens of thousands of pounds per incident

Staff Training as Defence

Essential defences include evolving staff training with simulated phishing campaigns

Technical and AI-Powered Controls

- Technical controls like DMARC, SPF, DKIM to prevent spoofing
- Advanced AI-powered email filtering to detect suspicious patterns

Discover here how the Apex Cyber Security Sphere can support you with Phishing Training

Threat #2: **Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS)**

Ransomware is now democratised – available as low-cost kits on the dark web, accessible to attackers of all skill levels

51%

Ransomware accounts for 51% of average cyber attack costs for SMEs and is increasing

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Threat #2: **Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS)**

Double Extortion Tactics

Data is stolen before encryption, with ransom demanded to prevent leaks

Targeting Recovery Systems

Attackers focus on backup and cloud sync points to eliminate recovery options

Critical Infrastructure Attacks

Attacks on critical infrastructure are rising, increasing stakes and ransom demands

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Threat #2: **Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS)**

Defence Essentials Against Ransomware

- Immutable backups that cannot be altered or deleted
- Network segmentation to limit lateral movement
- Pre-established incident response plans to act swiftly when attacked

Discover here how the Apex Cyber Security Sphere can help protect you from Ransomware

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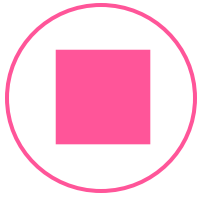
Threat #3: Cloud Misconfigurations and Data Theft

Many SMEs have migrated to cloud platforms like Microsoft 365, Azure, and AWS, but cloud security is a shared responsibility

Common Misconfigurations

Storage buckets or SharePoint files set to overly broad permissions



Third-party apps granted excessive access

Former employees' accounts left active

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Threat #3: **Cloud Misconfigurations and Data Theft**

Impact of Remote Work

Remote and hybrid work increase the attack surface through personal devices and unsecured networks

Lack of Basic Protection

Only about half of organisations have implemented basic protections like multi-factor authentication (MFA)

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Threat #3: Cloud Misconfigurations and Data Theft

Key Mitigation Strategies

- Strong access controls and conditional access policies
- Regular permission audits
- Continuous monitoring of data access and usage

Threat Overview

Cloud misconfiguration and data theft post significant risks to SMEs leveraging cloud platforms

Discover here how the Apex Cyber Security Sphere can help protect you from Data Theft

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Threat #4: **Deepfake Voice Fraud and AI Engineering**

Deepfake voice fraud uses AI to clone company leaders' voices for fraudulent calls or voice notes requesting urgent financial actions. E.g. A finance team receives a perfect voice message from their CEO asking for an immediate wire transfer

Documented Cases and Financial Impact

Confirmed cases in 2024 and 2025 include losses of hundreds of thousands of dollars

Exploitation of Human Vulnerabilities

This attack type exploits authority, urgency, and emotional manipulation, bypassing many traditional defences

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Threat #4: **Deepfake Voice Fraud and AI Engineering**

Implementing Verification Protocols

Establish strict verification protocols for urgent requests

Training Staff for Awareness

- Train staff to treat unexpected urgent demands with scepticism
- Recognise this as primarily a human challenge, not just a technical one

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Real-World Case Studies and Key Takeaways

2023: Collapse of SNP Logistics

A 150-year-old company collapsed after ransomware from a single guessed password led to network-wide encryption

2025: Marks & Spencer's 46-Day Disruption

Major retailer suffered a 46-day online ordering disruption due to ransomware

2025: Jaguar Land Rover - ongoing

Costliest cyber attack in UK history. Requires government intervention of £1.5 billion

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Key Cyber Security Trends to Watch for in 2026

AI-Powered Spear-Phishing Attacks

By 2026, AI-powered spear-phishing attacks will become more sophisticated, increasing the risk of targeted breaches

Ransomware Targeting Backup and Cloud Systems

Ransomware will increasingly focus on backup and cloud systems, threatening data recovery capabilities

Tightening Supply Chain Security

Supply chain security demands will tighten, requiring stronger vetting and monitoring of third-party vendors

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Key Cyber Security Trends to Watch for in 2026

Vulnerabilities in Hybrid and Remote Working

Hybrid and remote workforces will present heightened vulnerabilities due to dispersed access points

Rising Insider Threats

Insider threats will rise, driven by complex access controls and insider knowledge exploitation

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Quick Wins for SMEs

Cyber attacks are a real and present threat to businesses like yours

While advanced threats grab headlines, most damage stems from basic vulnerabilities rather than sophisticated attacks

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

Implement MFA across all critical systems to add a strong layer of security

Backup Strategy

Develop and regularly test backup strategy that includes offline, immutable backups to ensure data recovery

Vulnerability Audit

Conduct a thorough vulnerability audit to identify and address weaknesses before attackers do

Download your free copy of our Cyber Security Checklist here

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Quick Wins for SMEs

Team Training

Train your team regularly to recognise threats and follow best security practices

Incident Response Planning

- Prepare an incident response plan in advance to respond swiftly and effectively when needed
- Remember, cyber security is not about achieving perfection, but building resilience
- By 2026, by ready to take the next step in strengthening your security posture

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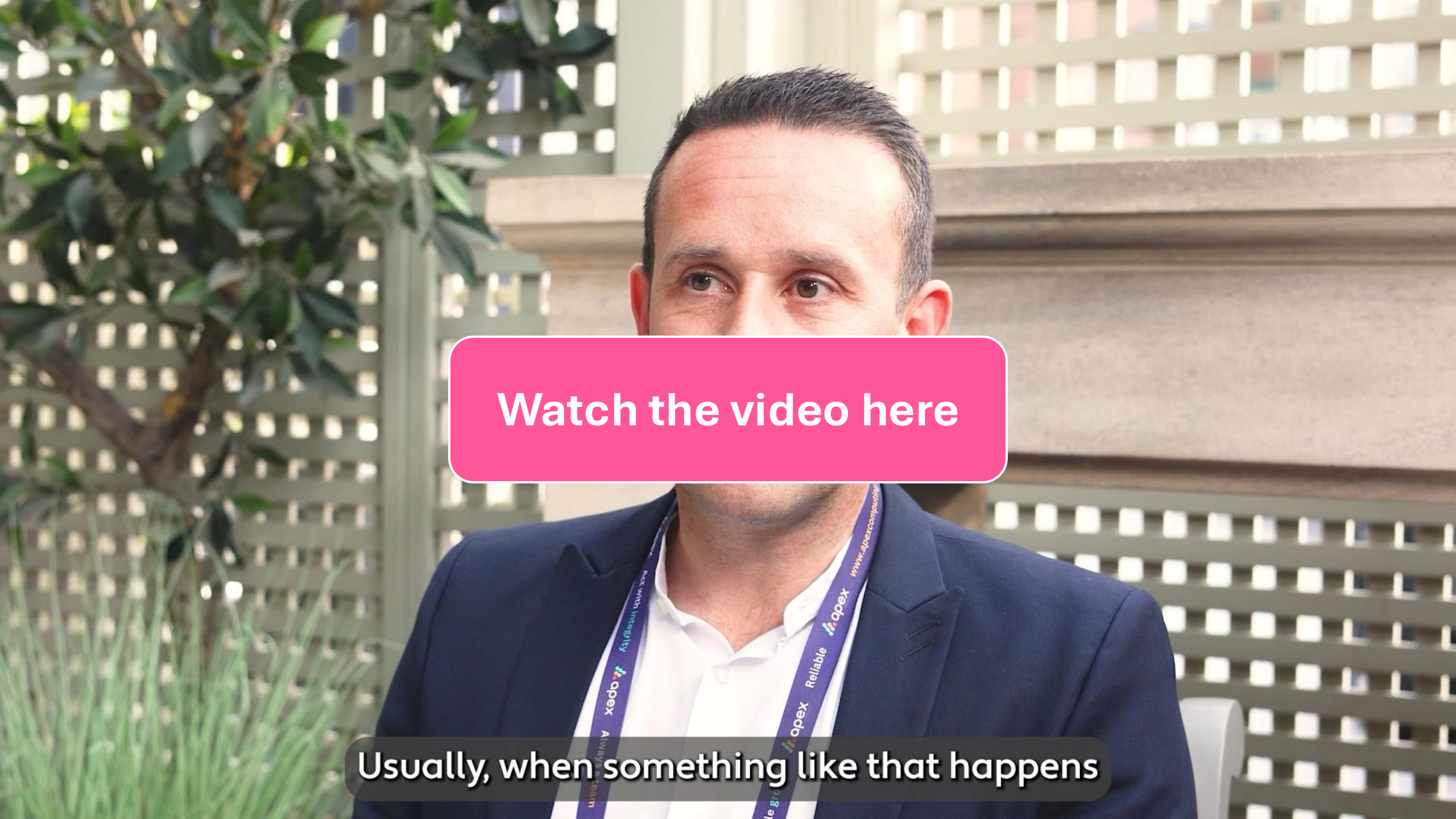
Watch the video here
Usually, when something like that happens

Apex Cyber Security Sphere

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Hand-Picked, Aligned Products, Tailored to Your Business

Discover the Apex Cyber Sphere here

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Hand-Picked, Aligned Products, Tailored to Your Business

- ✓ **24/7/365 Security Operations Monitoring**
  Continuous threat detection, instant automated response, and expert investigation - your business never stops, and neither does our security.
- ✓ **Next-level Threat Detection and Response**
  Goes beyond traditional antivirus to protect office, IoT, and mobile devices with intelligent threat hunting and instant isolation.
- ✓ **Advanced Phishing Protection, Simulation and Training**
  Real-world simulations, one-click reporting, and continuous staff education turn your people into your first line of defence.
- ✓ **Zero Trust Application Control**
  Only trusted applications run - everything else is blocked, unlike traditional "let everything in unless it's blocked" tools; maintaining compliance without slowing productivity.
- ✓ **Ransomware Protection**
  Real-time detection, automatic isolation, and rapid recovery protocols to minimise downtime.
- ✓ **Dark Web Monitoring**
  Continuous scanning for exposed credentials/personal data, alerting you before attackers can act.
- ✓ **Security-Optimised Microsoft 365 Tenancy**
  Advanced threat protection for email and collaboration tools, geofencing, data loss prevention, and mobile device management.
- ✓ **Email Authentication and Anti-Spoofing**
  Cryptographically verifies all emails sent from your domain to prevent impersonation and protect your brand.

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Hand-Picked, Aligned Products, Tailored to Your Business

Benefit	What is Means for Your Business
All-around Defence	Combines threat detection, Zero Trust, ransomware detection, phishing simulation and training, reporting analytics, dark web monitoring, and more, working in unison to cover vulnerabilities that single tools can't touch
Stronger Data Protection	Your sensitive information is shielded from malware, ransomware, and accidental breaches
Built-in Confidence	Layers like staff training and Zero Trust support GDPR and Data Protection Act compliance while enhancing your credibility
Minimal Downtime	With continuous, proactive monitoring, threats are stopped before they disrupt operations
Effortless Management	The Apex Team handle all updates, management, and system tuning – no extra workload for you. Plus, our dedicated Cyber Security specialists ensure that our Sphere always has the best products working together to give our customers true value and protection
Scalable, Future-Proof Defence	As threats evolve, so does the Sphere – new products and improvements made to stay ahead

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Hand-Picked, Aligned Products, Tailored to Your Business

The Result for Your Business

You gain complete protection, peace of mind, and resilience. With Apex's Cyber Security Sphere, your business isn't just reactive – it stays ahead of threats. You get security that works, so you can concentrate on growth.

Our customer choose Apex and our Cyber Security Sphere because it's:

- ✓ **No Security Theatre, Just Real Protection:** integrated security that works together, not against itself.
- ✓ **Build for Modern Business:** remote teams, cloud-first operations, Bring-Your-Own-Device - we adapt to your reality.
- ✓ **Proactive, Not Reactive:** we identify and neutralise risks before the become headlines.
- ✓ **No More Vendor Juggling:** one trusted partner, complete protection.
- ✓ **Transparent, Predictable Pricing:** no surprise bills, or hidden costs.
- ✓ **Local Expertise, Global Protection:** UK-based team with world-class knowledge.

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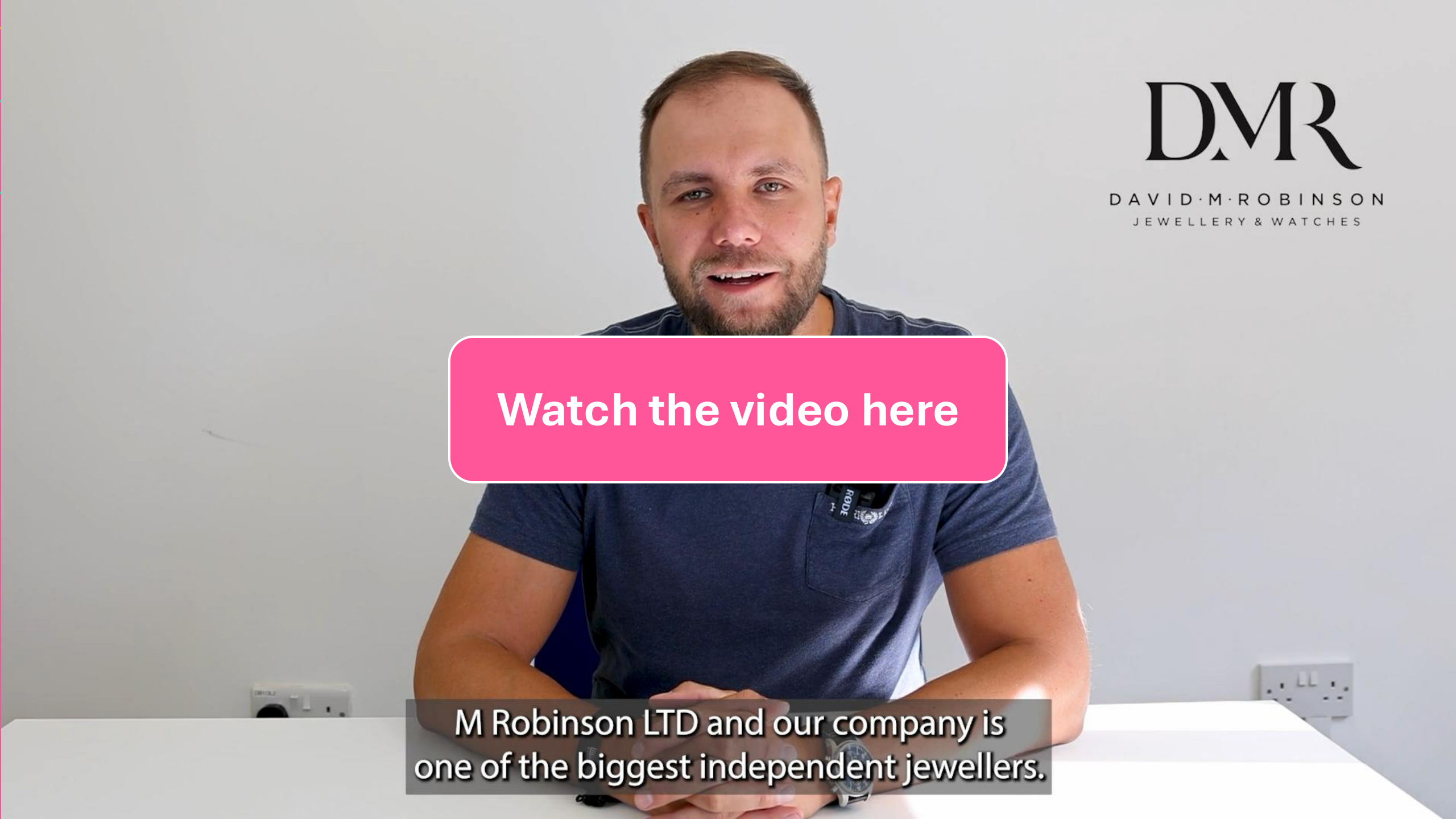
DMR
DAVID·M·ROBINSON
JEWELLERY & WATCHES
Watch the video here
M Robinson LTD and our company is
one of the biggest independent jewellers.

Useful Resources

- Apex Website: https://www.apexcomputing.co.uk
- Apex Cyber Security Awareness Hub: https://www.apexcomputing.co.uk/cyber-awareness-hub
- The Apex Service Desk Difference: https://www.apexcomputing.co.uk/service-desk-difference
- Apex Switching Hub: https://www.apexcomputing.co.uk/switching-hub
- Downloadable Content from Apex: https://www.apexcomputing.co.uk/downloadable-content

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