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Organisations paying off post-pandemic compliance debt in 2021, according to NCC Group

Budget cuts, redundancies, delays to cyber resilience projects and increased remote working in the last 12 months could all have increased organisations' risk of a cyber attack in 2021, according to new research into cyber security decision makers from NCC Group.

To read the full results of the research, download our summary [here](#).

The results show that 40% of respondents froze recruitment in cyber, 29% made redundancies and one in five furloughed staff responsible for cyber

resilience programs in 2020. Three in ten experienced delays or cancellations to their cyber resilience projects and 27% reported cuts to their cyber resilience budgets. However, the data suggests that these measures could have negatively affected security postures: over 70% of organisations that cut budgets, made redundancies or delayed or cancelled their cyber projects reported an increase in cyber attacks.

Meanwhile, half of the decision makers reported an increase in remote working, with 66% of those that did so witnessing an increase in phishing and ransomware attacks. This operational shift also exposed concerns around the impact of people on cyber resilience: of the 39% that reported an increase in insider threats, 51% believed that an increase in remote working was the cause.

Encouragingly, two thirds of decision makers claimed that they would increase the total amount spent on cyber security this year, with 'making security improvements' the highest priority area for investment.

Respondents also recognised the role that people play in maintaining cyber resilience, with 66% admitting that an internal skills shortage was their main challenge for the next 6-12 months. To address this shortage, two thirds of organisations plan to increase their amount of outsourced cyber resilience work in 2021.

Although the majority plan to increase cyber budgets, challenges around investment decisions remain: over 90% of respondents struggle to accurately assess or quantify the cost vs benefit of cyber security measures. Of those that claim cyber security is not a high priority, 23% said they don't have the buy-in of senior management and 19% claim investment is focused in other areas.

Ian Thomas, Managing Director at NCC Group, said: "The operational challenges that organisations faced in the last 12 months have resulted in a compliance debt that must now be paid off. While it is encouraging to see that organisations recognise that they must make up lost ground by investing in cyber, it is crucial that this investment is used in the right areas. By addressing internal skills shortages and validating cyber investment against recognised benchmarks, organisations can build a secure platform for growth and maintain cyber resilience in this difficult period."

Webinar

We will also discuss this research in more detail in our upcoming webinar on 23rd March from 12-12.45pm.

We'll ask the 'Big Three' questions about actions that decision makers can take and invite you to join the discussion.

Register [here](#) to secure your place.

About NCC Group

NCC Group exists to make the world safer and more secure.

As global experts in cyber security and risk mitigation, NCC Group is trusted by over 15,000 clients worldwide to protect their most critical assets from the ever-changing threat landscape.

With the company's knowledge, experience and global footprint, it is best placed to help businesses identify, assess, mitigate and respond to the evolving cyber risks they face.

To support its mission, NCC Group continually invests in research and innovation, and is passionate about developing the next generation of cyber scientists.

With over 1,800 colleagues in 12 countries, NCC Group has a significant market presence in North America, continental Europe and the UK, and a rapidly growing footprint in Asia Pacific with offices in Australia and Singapore.

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