

Client Journeys: Impact in Action

Helping The West Group Achieve
Cyber Essentials and Cyber
Essentials Plus Certification



The Story

The West Group, with over 100 users and a complex IT infrastructure, already had a cybersecurity framework in place, including multi-factor authentication (MFA), strict access policies, and user awareness training. However, to meet industry security expectations and demonstrate compliance to insurance providers, third-party partners, and customers, they needed to successfully validate their security measures and achieve Cyber Essentials (CE) and Cyber Essentials Plus (CE+) certification.

These certifications would provide assurance that The West Group met government-backed cybersecurity standards, ensuring they remained above board, compliant, and a trusted partner in their industry.

The Problem

While The West Group had a strong security foundation, the certification process required a formal validation of their security controls, along with:

- A full review of existing security measures to ensure they met CE and CE+ standards
- Addressing vulnerabilities across a large number of devices to maintain compliance across the organisation
- Developing and refining written cybersecurity policies to provide documented proof of compliance for audits and future security governance
- Ensuring a smooth, issue-free external audit for CE+ certification

The challenge was not just about passing an assessment but about ensuring The West Group's security controls were fully aligned with compliance requirements and audit-ready

The Challenges

The West Group faced a few key hurdles in achieving certification:

- Validating security across 100+ devices, ensuring each system met the required standards
- Addressing potential vulnerabilities, including device encryption, privileged access controls, and endpoint security hardening
- Formalising cybersecurity policies, ensuring compliance was properly documented and audit-ready

Navigating the CE+ audit process, ensuring security measures passed real-world testing without delays.



The Solution

To ensure The West Group successfully achieved Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus certification, we led a structured assessment and remediation approach, focusing on compliance validation and policy refinement.

1. Conducting a Full Cybersecurity Compliance Review

- Reviewed existing security configurations, network infrastructure, and privileged access controls
- Audited all devices, user accounts, and security protocols to ensure they met CE and CE+ standards
- Identified any outstanding vulnerabilities, prioritising fixes before certification assessments

2. Refining and Implementing Security Enhancements

While The West Group already had multi-factor authentication (MFA), strict access policies, and user training in place, we ensured additional compliance requirements were met by:

- Strengthening device encryption across all endpoints where required
- Enhancing patch management processes to meet compliance requirements
- Validating firewall and network security settings to align with Cyber Essentials best practices



3. Developing and Documenting Required Cybersecurity Policies

Although The West Group had security controls in place, they needed formal, audit-ready policies to demonstrate compliance. We developed and refined:

- Access Control Policy – Defining user roles, privileged access restrictions, and authentication standards
- Patch Management Policy – Ensuring updates were systematically applied across all systems
- Incident Response Plan – Establishing structured procedures for handling security breaches
- Data Encryption Policy – Outlining encryption standards for both stored and transmitted data
- Cybersecurity Awareness & Training Policy – Formalising the existing staff training programme for continued compliance

These policies provided the necessary documentation for auditors, insurance providers, and regulatory bodies, ensuring The West Group maintained compliance beyond certification.

4. Successfully Achieving Cyber Essentials Certification

- After reviewing security controls and finalising policies, we guided The West Group through the Cyber Essentials self-assessment process
- The company successfully passed CE certification, confirming compliance across its IT infrastructure
- 5. Preparing for and Passing Cyber Essentials Plus on the First Attempt
- Conducted internal security testing to ensure all controls met CE+ standards
- Worked closely with The West Group's IT team to simulate the CE+ external audit, addressing any final gaps before assessment

The company underwent the CE+ external audit and passed on the first attempt with no issues, demonstrating the strength of its cybersecurity framework



The Value of Compliance

Successfully achieving Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus certification provided significant business value for The West Group:



Stronger cybersecurity governance, ensuring continued compliance with evolving regulations



Regulatory compliance for insurance and third-party providers, reinforcing their credibility and reducing risk exposure



Enhanced trust from customers and suppliers, demonstrating a proactive approach to cybersecurity



First-time CE+ pass with zero audit failures, confirming that security measures were robust and effective



A future-proofed cybersecurity framework, ensuring long-term security and compliance readiness

Conclusion

The West Group had already built a strong cybersecurity foundation, but achieving formal certification was a critical step in demonstrating compliance, trust, and resilience. By ensuring their security controls were fully validated, documented through formal policies, and aligned with CE and CE+ standards, the company successfully obtained both certifications—passing Cyber Essentials Plus on the first attempt with no issues.

This achievement not only reinforced The West Group's commitment to cybersecurity but also provided assurance to insurers, third-party providers, and customers that they operate to the highest security standards.

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find out how we can
help your business**