

Cyber Security and Information Governance Services

Comprehensive, Expert-Led Cyber Security and Information Governance Solutions



Our Services at a Glance

Academia and Smartdesc deliver flexible, expert-led cyber security and information governance services, including vCISO, vDPO, audits, training and 24/7 managed SOC. Our tailored, cost-effective solutions provide immediate access to senior expertise, support for certifications and ongoing compliance – reducing risk, improving security posture and ensuring seamless, proactive protection for your organisation.



Virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) as a Service

What is it?

A specialist service providing immediate access to experienced information security leaders who take ownership of your organisation's security strategy, risk management and improvement projects.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Security Leadership:** Expert guidance and accountability for your security posture.
- ✓ **Fast Access to Security Guidance:** Expert advice on responding to threats and strengthening security measures.
- ✓ **Best Practice Alignment:** Implementation of recognised frameworks (NCSC CAF, Cyber Essentials Plus, ISO27001).
- ✓ **Risk Management:** Maintenance of risk registers and oversight of key risk areas.
- ✓ **Technical Audits:** Infrastructure assessments and vulnerability management reporting, with management and procurement assistance for penetration testing, including scoping and remediation.
- ✓ **Security Awareness:** In-person user training to supplement existing platform-based learning, with ongoing advice to strengthen organisational resilience.
- ✓ **Vendor Management:** Oversight and coordination of security vendors and projects.



Information Security Audit

What is it?

A comprehensive audit that benchmarks your organisation against relevant industry standards such as Microsoft best practice, Cyber Essentials, NCSC CAF and ISO 27001, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Security Awareness:** Confidence in your current security position.
- ✓ **Risk Management:** Expert advice on addressing significant risks.
- ✓ **Improvement Roadmap:** Clear, actionable recommendations and improvement roadmap.
- ✓ **Stakeholder Management:** Collaborative approach with technical testing and stakeholder interviews.
- ✓ **Reporting:** Executive report and Q&A session to guide next steps.
- ✓ **Risk Reduction:** Practical advice on reducing the risk of data breaches and regulatory penalties.
- ✓ **Best Practice Alignment:** Advice on selecting the most suitable standards and frameworks – such as NCSC CAF, Cyber Essentials Plus and ISO/IEC 27001 – and driving their implementation.



Data Protection Officer (DPO) as a Service

What is it?

An outsourced solution providing expert support to ensure your organisation complies with UK GDPR and other associated legislation. The service includes board-level reporting, policy reviews, incident management and ongoing advice.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Compliance Assurance:** Independent, objective oversight of data protection requirements.
- ✓ **Expert Guidance:** Access to specialist advice and support for complex data protection issues.
- ✓ **Policy & Process Review:** Regular assessment and improvement of data protection policies and procedures.
- ✓ **Incident Management:** Rapid response and support for personal data breaches.
- ✓ **Flexible Service Levels:** Reactive and proactive options to suit your organisation's needs.
- ✓ **Board-Level Reporting:** Clear, actionable insights for senior management.



Information Governance Support

What is it?

A fractional resource model providing dedicated Information Governance specialists to help organisations comply with data protection law. The service includes a curated Information Governance framework and ongoing consultancy.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Support:** Expert guidance and support for ongoing compliance.
- ✓ **Flexibility:** Flexible engagement (days per week/month).
- ✓ **Value:** ROI through reduced risk and improved confidence.



Information Governance Audit

What is it?

A detailed analysis of your organisation's compliance with UK GDPR, delivered via interviews with staff across departments. Outputs include an executive report with prioritised actions to increase compliance and reduce risk.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Reassurance:** Peace of mind and reduced risk of enforcement action.
- ✓ **Expertise:** Plain-English advice from data protection experts.
- ✓ **Recommendations:** Actionable recommendations and prioritised improvement roadmap.
- ✓ **Collaboration:** Collaborative support to achieve organisational objectives.
- ✓ **Reporting:** Executive report and stakeholder Q&A session.
- ✓ **Clarity:** Clear understanding of data protection challenges.
- ✓ **Roadmap:** Roadmap of actions to improve compliance.
- ✓ **Efficiency:** Minimal internal resource required.



Information Governance Training

What is it?

A comprehensive Information Governance training service delivered by experienced specialists, designed to ensure staff understand and comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and associated legislation. The training covers the principles of UK GDPR and other key areas essential for compliant data processing. Sessions are tailored to the organisation and delivered virtually or in person, with opportunities for Q&A and follow-up support. After the session, the training materials are provided as a PDF for future reference.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Confidence:** Ensures staff are equipped to process personal data confidently and compliantly
- ✓ **Legal:** Meets legal requirements for staff training under UK GDPR.
- ✓ **Sector-specific:** Sector-specific content for not-for-profit organisations.
- ✓ **Interactive:** Interactive sessions with opportunities for staff to ask questions relevant to their roles.



Penetration Testing

What is it?

Simulated security exercises performed by ethical hackers to identify and remediate vulnerabilities in your systems. Includes web application, internal network and external infrastructure testing.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Security:** Assurance of system security for sensitive/confidential information.
- ✓ **Compliance:** Required by insurance providers and compliance frameworks.
- ✓ **Expertise:** CREST-accredited testers and fresh perspectives each year.
- ✓ **Reporting:** Customised reporting and remediation advice.



Cyber Essentials Services

What is it?

Government-backed certification scheme demonstrating adherence to minimum cyber security standards. Includes Fast Track certification (BASIC and Plus) and ongoing Compliance managed service.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Certification:** Official certification and annual compliance.
- ✓ **Protection:** Protects against up to 80% of internet-based attacks.
- ✓ **Requirements:** Required for insurance, funding and regulatory mandates.
- ✓ **Monitoring:** Ongoing monitoring, monthly reports and automatic re-certification.
- ✓ **Support:** Cost-effective consultancy and support.



Managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) SIEM

What is it?

24/7 monitoring, instant detection and rapid response by a CREST-accredited UK-based SOC. Tailored to customer requirements, with fixed-price options and no spiralling data costs. Covers MDR, EDR/XDR and managed SOC/SIEM options.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Protection:** Round-the-clock protection and expert response.
- ✓ **Efficiency:** Closes the skills gap without hiring in-house.
- ✓ **Simplicity:** Simplifies security with a single managed service.
- ✓ **Compliance:** Aids compliance with GDPR, Cyber Essentials and industry standards.
- ✓ **Risk Reduction:** Reduces risk, downtime and reputational damage.
- ✓ **Predictability:** Assured budgeting with fixed annual pricing.



Why choose Academia & Smartdesc

Choosing the right partner for cyber security and information governance is critical. Academia & Smartdesc combine strategic leadership, hands-on delivery and deep sector expertise to strengthen your security posture while keeping compliance simple and cost-effective.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Sector Expertise:** Deep experience across diverse sectors, backed by recognised partnerships and awards – so recommendations are pragmatic, proportionate and mission aligned.
- ✓ **Strategic Leadership:** Virtual Chief Information Security Officers and Information Governance Officers act as accountable, inhouse experts – driving roadmap, risk reduction and stakeholder confidence.
- ✓ **Certified & Accredited:** ISO 27001 certified, Cyber Essentials Certification Body, Microsoft Solutions Partner and Apple Business & Education Partner status – giving you confidence in compliance and best practice.
- ✓ **Security & Governance Together:** A dedicated inhouse security and IG capability that blends cyber, data protection, training, policies and process – delivering cohesive outcomes rather than siloed tasks.
- ✓ **Integrated Portfolio:** End-to-end services—vCISO, vDPO, audits, training, penetration testing, Cyber Essentials and managed SOC/SIEM – delivered as flexible, fractional engagements or 24/7 managed services
- ✓ **Trusted Relationships:** Longstanding customer partnerships built on transparency, integrity and measurable results – not hype.

How to Engage

Contact us via solutions@smartdesc.co.uk

Please ensure you reference the GCloud Service ID number in all communication.



Get in touch!

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