M8 Solutions

DELIVERING TECHNICITY WITH INTEGRITY

Tabletop Exercise (TTX)

Strengthening preparedness, leadership, and confident Cyber Security incident response.

The true value of a TTX is not proving what works. It is exposing what does not - before a real incident does.

Delivered by M8 Solutions

TTX TAILORED TO YOUR NEEDS

This is not a generic tick-box exercise. Our TTX's are designed to reflect the pressure, ambiguity and operational realities NHS leaders face during real cyber incidents, designed to encourage honest engagement, collaborative learning, and meaningful organisational improvement.

Exercise Scenario Planning and Development

- Development of highly realistic, NHS-specific cyber incident scenarios of your choice, shaped by current threat intelligence and real-world incidents affecting Trusts, ICBs, Ambulance Services, and national NHS platforms.
- Scenarios designed to reflect the operational complexity and interdependencies of clinical systems, patient-facing services, legacy platforms, and modern cloud-based NHS applications.
- Grounding of scenarios in how incidents actually unfold within the NHS, informed by first-hand experience of NHS digital estates, governance structures, and operational pressures.
- Alignment with NHS policies, cyber incident response plans, and command structures, ensuring relevance at executive and operational levels.
- Explicit consideration of patient safety, clinical risk, service continuity, and operational disruption, alongside Cyber Security and information governance impacts.
- Incorporation of communications pressures, including internal staff messaging, executive assurance, and external engagement with national bodies and partners.
- Mapping of scenarios to NHS regulatory and assurance frameworks, including CAF, DSPT, ICO expectations, and NHS England guidance.
- Tailoring of exercises to challenge senior leadership decision-making, clinical and digital leadership engagement, and cross-organisational coordination under time-critical pressure.
- Design of scenarios to test the gap between documented process and real-world execution, providing honest insight into organisational readiness.
- Clear definition of NHS-relevant objectives, assurance outcomes, and learning priorities prior to exercise delivery, ensuring measurable value for executive teams.

Pre-Exercise Readiness & Leadership Alignment

- Optional internal leadership dry run (without M8 Solutions present) to validate baseline readiness, clarify roles, and surface early assumptions ahead of the formal exercise.
- Ensures senior leaders arrive aligned, confident, and prepared to engage meaningfully.

Delivery Format & Participation

- Exercises delivered face-to-face or virtually, enabling inclusive participation across executive, clinical, digital, communications, and operational teams.
- Format selected to reflect NHS working practices and maximise realism, engagement, and collaboration.

Structured Facilitation & Scenario Progression

- Expert facilitation using timed injects, scenario escalations, and decision points to replicate the pace and pressure of a real NHS Cyber Security incident.
- Scenarios evolve dynamically based on participant decisions, mirroring real-world uncertainty and consequence

Decision-Making, Escalation & Governance Testing

- Practical testing of command structures, escalation pathways, and executive decision-making under pressure.
- Focus on leadership confidence, clarity of ownership, and alignment between digital, clinical, and corporate response.

Live Capture & Observation

- Real-time capture of decisions, communications, escalation triggers, and areas of ambiguity throughout the exercise.
- Identification of gaps between documented policy and operational reality, without blame or disruption.

Immediate Debrief & Reflective Review

- Facilitated hot debrief immediately following the exercise, enabling honest reflection while insights are fresh.
- Focused on learning, assurance, and strengthening organisational resilience.

Formal Reporting, Assurance & Optional DSPT Alignment

- A comprehensive, executive-quality post-exercise report produced by senior, NHS-experienced Cyber Security practitioners - not automated outputs or generic templates.
- Clear, honest articulation of what worked well, where decision-making was strong, and where genuine risk exposure exists.
- Detailed identification of cyber, operational, clinical, governance, and communication gaps, viewed through an NHS delivery lens.
- Findings explicitly linked to patient safety, service continuity, and real-world NHS operational impact.
- Prioritised, practical recommendations designed to be achievable within NHS constraints of resource, funding, and maturity.
- Recommendations grounded in how NHS services operate 24/7/365, including out-of-hours risk and escalation pressures.
- A structured breakdown of gaps, impact, importance, and rationale to support clear understanding at executive level.
- Translation of complex Cyber Security findings into plain-English assurance language suitable for non-technical senior leaders.
- Clear distinction between quick wins, medium-term improvements, and strategic actions, supporting realistic planning.
- Actionable outputs presented as suggested actions, named owners, priorities, and indicative timelines to drive accountability.
- Explicit testing and validation of command structures, escalation thresholds, and decision authority.
- Detailed assessment of incident response, service desk readiness, communications capability, recovery planning, and third-party risk.
- Identification of tooling underutilisation and ownership gaps to ensure existing investments deliver real value.
- Evidence-based recommendations informed by current NHS Cyber Security threats, recent incidents, and sector-wide lessons learned.
- Optional DSPT alignment, including ready-to-upload evidence mapping findings to relevant DSPT outcomes.
- Reporting structured to support executive assurance, CAF evidence, internal audit, and external scrutiny, where required.

Why M8 Solutions

M8 Solutions delivers realistic, NHS-focused Cyber Security Tabletop Exercises built around the operational realities of frontline healthcare. Delivered by senior practitioners with NHS operational experience, our exercises are designed to reflect how cyber incidents genuinely unfold across complex healthcare environments, where patient safety, operational continuity, executive decision-making and public assurance are all placed under pressure simultaneously. This is not a generic tick-box exercise or a scripted workshop. We create psychologically safe, professionally facilitated environments that encourage honest engagement, collaborative learning, and meaningful organisational reflection without blame or disruption. Our scenarios are tailored to challenge leadership teams in a way that is practical, credible and directly relevant to the NHS.

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