Why is Incident Response Needed?

Incident response benefits the wider business by reducing the impact of successful attacks and allowing business operations to remain as uninterrupted as possible. It's impossible to completely prevent any incident from occurring, so incident response helps to minimize the impact. Successful cyberattacks can have a number of adverse consequences, such as data breaches, events where information an organization stores is exfiltrated. Data breaches can cause immense damage in terms of lost customer trust and business, monetary losses from recovering damaged or infected systems, stock prices dropping, hiring external security teams to help contain the breach, and legal or regulatory fines such as those under legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (for EU countries, or organizations that process data belonging to EU data subjects). Just to give you an example of how heavy GDPR and regulatory fines can be, we have composed a list of some recent breaches:

- Uber fined £385,000 in November 2018 – read more.
- Equifax fined £500,000 in September 2018 – read more.
- Marriott proposed fine of £99m in July 2019 – read more.
- British Airways proposed fine of £183m in July 2019 – read more.

Legal and regulatory fines can be too much for smaller organizations and can result in them shutting down or having to change how they operate, such as no longer allowing customers from within EU countries.

Incident response isn't just about responding to data breaches, it involves responding to the aftermath of an attack such as:

- **Employee credentials being leaked online**
- **Database leaks**
- **Malware infections, such as ransomware**
- **A stolen employee laptop**
- **Website defacement**
- **An employee trying to smuggle sensitive data out of the company**

Having written plans to follow if these occur helps to reduce the risk by responding and containing the threat appropriately. We will cover incident response plans in the **Preparation: Incident Response Plan** lesson of the next section.