**FOI analysis**

CYBER SECURITY WITHIN THE NHS

NHS trusts reporting fewer data breaches and employing more qualified security professionals

To better understand the cyber security challenges facing the NHS, we submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to every trust in the UK.*

Compared to the results of a previous investigation made by Redscan in 2018, the latest findings provide insight into NHS trusts' preparedness to tackle the latest threats.

Fewer breaches reported by trusts

The average number of data breaches reported to the ICO by NHS trusts per year went down from 2019 to 2020

2.5
breaches

2
breaches

2019 ⟶ 2020
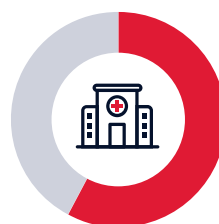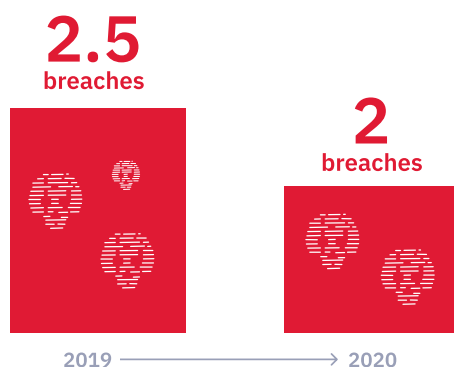
2/3 of trusts

reported the **same number or even more breaches** in 2020 than they did in 2019.
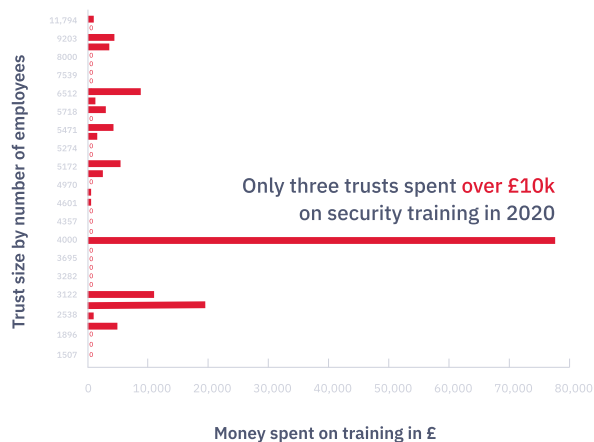
02

More qualified security professionals in the NHS

In 2020, the number of staff with professional security qualifications across NHS trusts improved significantly

1 security professional **per**

2,750 employees

1 security professional **per**

1,996 employees

2019 ————————→ 2020

03
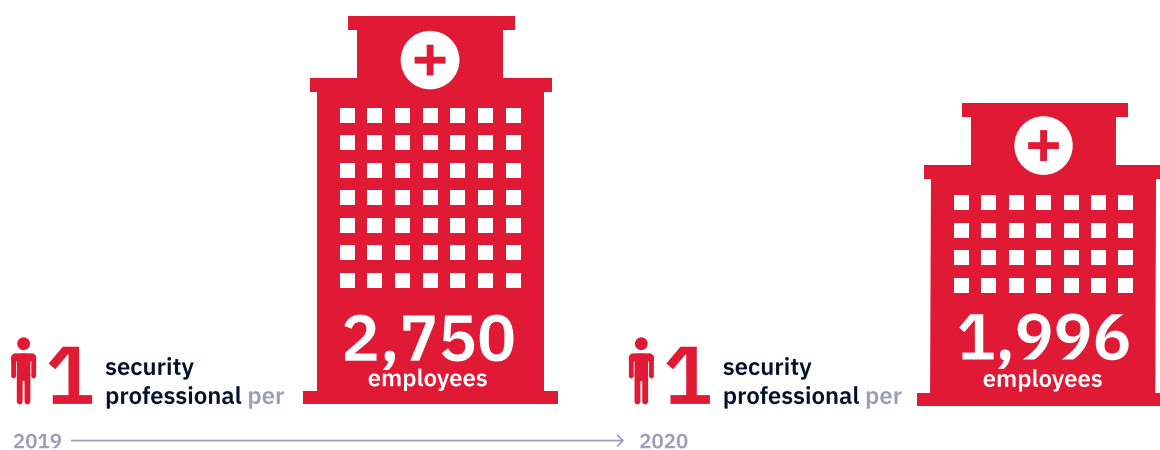
Disparities in training spend

There is still **little consistency** in terms of money spent on IT security training across NHS trusts

Trust size by number of employees

11,794
9203
8000
7539
6512
5718
5471
5274
5172
4970
4601
4357
4000
3695
3282
3122
2538
1896
1507

Only three trusts spent **over £10k** on security training in 2020

0   10,000   20,000   30,000   40,000   50,000   60,000   70,000   80,000

Money spent on training in £

58%

of trusts **spent nothing**, only requiring that employees complete free NHS Digital Information Governance training.

Infrequent independent penetration testing

Almost one in five (17%) trusts did not commission a single third-party pen test in the twelve months prior to 1 October 2020.

17%
of trusts **didn't commission a** third-party pen test

83%
of trusts **commissioned** a third-party pen test
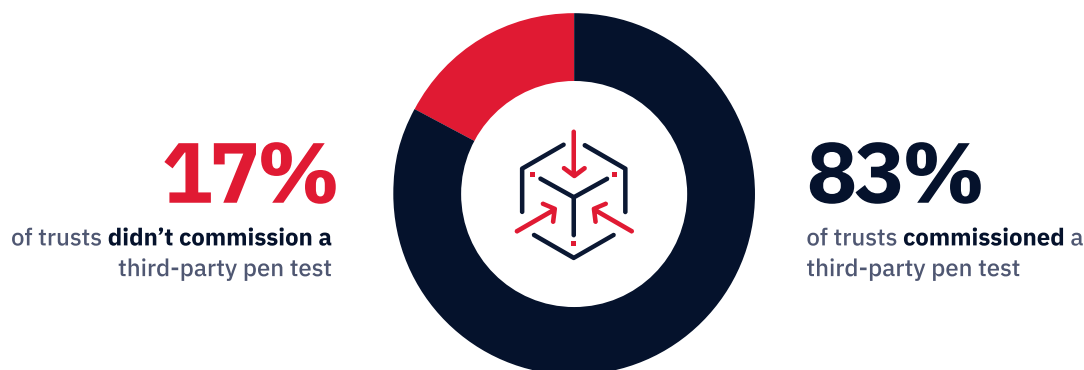
WHAT WE SAY

In 2018, our FOI revealed a large disparity in cyber security skills and training spend across the NHS. Fast-forward two years, and our latest report provides a valuable snapshot of how the situation has changed. It suggests that while disparities in training spend and penetration testing still exist, trusts are more likely to have qualified security professionals on staff and are also reporting fewer breaches compared to 2019.

With more and more healthcare organisations being targeted by attackers, every NHS trust needs to ensure it is prepared for the challenges ahead. To deliver an effective service, organisations must continuously improve their defences to protect the patient data and infrastructure they rely on to save lives.

Learn more about the results of our investigation

www.redscan.com/news/nhs-cyber-security-foi-analysis/

*Notes: Responses from 64/225 NHS trusts were received between 8 October 2020 and 4 February 2021. The number of data breaches reported to the ICO is data that covers only part of last calendar year (January 2020-October 2020), and is compared to the same period in 2019.