

ACCESS TO BUSINESS

A Cyber Essentials Journey in the Charity Sector



Introduction

During the Spring lockdown, A2B managed to put their services online in a record time in order to continue supporting their clients and in the same year became Cyber Essentials certified.

In the year COVID 19 forced businesses to close their doors to their customers and operate entirely online, Access to Business managed to very quickly turn things around and find new ways to support their clients.

About Access to Business

Access to Business (A2B) is the Wolverhampton based charity that supports disadvantaged people in the Black Country towards training, employment and self-employment and enterprise.

The charity is an **independent and authoritative advocate** for those with health problems and disabilities, offering intensive one to one support and running training courses in IT and finance.

In 2017, A2B were awarded the 'Queens Award for Voluntary Service' which is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK.

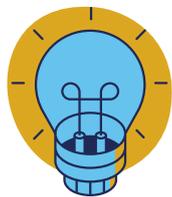




The Problem

"We are quite a medium size charity, with 22 employees, and it is important for us when procuring contracts to demonstrate the quality of our work. We already have ISO 9001, Matrix quality standards, and also Disability Confident Leader quality framework. Last year our website was badly hacked and we were unable to clean it out so we had to totally re-write the whole website.

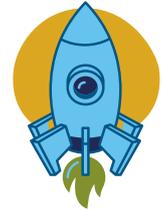
It was a difficult exercise and a very worrying experience. Cyber security and data protection was always very important to us but it was difficult to know if we were doing everything that we should. We also started to notice that contracts were increasingly asking for Cyber Essentials certification and we realised that this pathway really fitted in very well with what we needed to do."



The Solution

"We had a look at different schemes, but Cyber Essentials was affordable and it also included cyber insurance. We felt positive when we logged on to the Cyber Essentials questionnaire for the first time in February, and although we didn't satisfy everything straight away, we took our time to try to improve systems and work through different processes, for example, enabling some dual authentication.

Of course, half-way through this process, we all had to work from home so things were even more difficult. When we started to work from home, we had to provide staff with IT equipment to work from home."



The Experience

"Cyber security essentials checklist helped us to understand what we have to put in place to ensure compliance while working from home. We engaged with our IT Consultants, Pedmore Computer Services Ltd and Tinsley NET IT Support Services to obtain specialist advice and support.

It was useful to go through the Cyber Essentials Self-Assessment questionnaire to ensure you are consistent in your approach and do not do too much or too little. When we submitted our assessment, we received the feedback that our router was out of date!

We only had a couple of days to make changes and with the support of our IT consultants we managed to upgrade the router to a new compliant one. Overall, we made several important changes to systems and procedures and also received a Cyber Security Insurance cover as part of our accreditation. I feel confident to know that we comply with essential standards and our data/systems are safe.

I felt that the whole process was very helpful. Our Chief Executive and the board were very supportive, everyone understands how important it is and validated the money and time invested." Elvira Wilson, the Business, Finance and Compliance manager at A2B

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