

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



THE
**BUSINESS
RESILIENCE
CENTRE**

FOR THE NORTH EAST

YORKSHIRE
THE HUMBER

INTRODUCTION



From Chair of the Advisory Board, Simon Newton. ITPS

I am delighted to share our Fourth annual report, which details another fantastic year for the award-winning North East Business Resilience Centre (NEBRC) and outlines the priorities for 2024.

It is my first year as chair and I'm delighted to join the centre as it seeks to meet new challenges and expand its membership to 12,000

12,000 members by 2026. I would like to thank Brian Dilley for handing over a well-appointed and structured Advisory Board and look forward to working with our newest members, Ed Renwick from Acronis, Liz Murray from Cybsafe, Joy Allen the PCC for Durham along with new replacement members for Lloyds, Lee Bradley and CGI, Adam Pickering. I'm confident we have a good mix of expertise to really roll up our sleeves and help grow the NEBRC.

From an ITPS perspective we are involved with the centre as we see the value for larger companies in securing their supply chains and also as part of our bid to help the communities we live and work in.

It's been a productive year for the centre with over 2500 members it now is on track to achieve significant growth. At a recent strategy away day with the CEO and other Board members we have altered the purpose of the Advisory Board and refocused our efforts into providing support and practical help to grow the business and attract funding which will sustain the centre longer term.

Board meetings will only be formal annually with 2 workshops and an end of year reception. The Police chaired company Board will handle all things legal and statutory related and I will meet with the chair biannually to discuss any cross overs.

I'm very pleased to be working with the newly appointed (but not new) CEO, Rebecca Chapman who has re-joined us following her 30-year service with South Yorkshire Police. She brings with her not only the dynamic leadership and management experience from her police career, a qualification from the Institute of Directors, equivalent to a level 9 but, more importantly, 4 years of running the award-winning centre as the pioneer centre for England which will provide stability and continuity for the centre as it grows.

I also like to welcome Costas Moraitis to the Board as Vice Chair. Costas has extensive experience as the IT Director for Gleesons and is invested locally to help secure the supply chains of larger companies.

I would also like to thank the Board for continuing to give up their time to provide expert guidance to the Centre on its work and strategy.

WELCOME

**From Chief Executive Officer
/ Director of the NEBRC,
Rebecca Chapman**



Welcome to the 4th annual report from the NEBRC!

As I reflect over the last 4 years its quite incredible how far we have come. We have gone from no members to almost over 2500 on the database, almost doubling from last year. This is due to the hard work of the commercial team- DI Steve Leach and our Operations and Relationships Manager, Lizzie Buckler. Chantelle Whitham, who joined us last year as business assistant has now maximised her potential and been promoted to Marketing and Communications Manager to utilise her MSc in Marketing and has organised all the events and expos attended by the team in the last year as well as taking over from MK Public Relations in respect of social media and PR. We have had a fabulous service from well as taking over from MK Public Relations in respect of social media and PR. We have had a fabulous service from Caroline Woffenden at MK but our need for more expert digital marketing has led us to Wildcat Digital based in the same office building as us and who have improved our website and footprint already in their short time with us.

We have delivered no less than 44 student services using 166 student days just this year, a staggering 105 services and 310 days since we started. This is incredible real life work experience for the students and 105 companies have benefitted already from the services with another 10 currently in scope.

We have then seen yet more students leave us when they graduate and attain great positions in private and public sector, which they all say they wouldn't have secured were it not for the experience they have gained through our programme. We have recruited new students to replace them, growing our alumni year on year with the expert help and guidance of Sheffield Hallam and Northumbria universities. We continue to recruit and run our own student services but will take extra training and senior technical supervision from CyberPath, the equivalent service provided by NCRCG.

One of our ex-students, Joe Cockcroft has been with us a year now and has been promoted to Service and Technology supervisor so that his additional skills are utilised. Joe now runs our website, produces graphics for our marketing and helps us with all things technical along with his day-to-day supervision of the students.

WELCOME

**From Chief Executive Officer
/ Director of the NEBRC,
Rebecca Chapman**

Martin Wilson continues to study for his PhD and has now been published. Martin has also received the inaugural Researcher in Residence role with the National CRC group, acknowledging his significant contributions from his SME PhD research, which benefit the broader CRC Network. In this role, Martin will continue sharing insights from his SME research, focusing on how User-Centred Design (UCD) can enhance SME cybersecurity engagement. Additionally, he will have oversight of CRC data-driven research to evaluate engagement impact and forge connections with academia to streamline future research requests.



I would like to thank our new Chair and Vice Chair for agreeing to step up into the roles vacated by Brian Dilley and Richard Holmes and am looking forward to another year of success.

I would like to welcome our newest Cyber Essentials Partners (previously known as Trusted Partners) to the fold, Simon Gurney of Punk Security, Bob Mckay from Aspire Technology, Gary Brown of Bondgate IT, Marc Walker from Commstec and Simon Newton from ITPS. The Cyber Experts continue to be our local information source and an important referral partner for our members.



WELCOME

**From Chief Executive Officer
/ Director of the NEBRC,
Rebecca Chapman**

We should also celebrate our successes... making the final for the Cyber OSPAs and National Cyber Awards once more was fantastic news. Cosmin, one of our students, has received 3 nominations and made it to the finals for the Dynamites Rising Star and the Cyber OSPA Outstanding Young Security Officer as well as being nominated for the National Cyber Award, Student of the Year.

As we head into 2024 we face a number of challenges- scaling up 2% to significantly grow the business and members, growing student services in the face of economic adversity for many and supporting our ever-busy Police colleagues as crime figures return post pandemic. This year has been a challenge as we are now past the post covid surge to events and expos, so footfall has fallen slightly but we are optimistic about our plan for engagement next year as we strive for the 12,000 member Home Office target set for 2026. Our team are poised for the challenge and bursting with new ideas to take us to the next level as a Police led, unique nexus between corporate business, academia and law enforcement which is now part of a network covering England and Wales.

Thanks for all your magnificent support in 2023 and here's to a very Happy and Prosperous New Year in 2024.

**Rebecca Chapman
CEO/Director
NEBRC**



THANKS TO..

My particular thanks goes to Simon Newton from ITPS who has started as a most effective Chair, providing experience and enthusiasm for this area of business, especially growth and business acumen. Our congratulations go to Phil Jackman from Dynamo who won Tech Champion 2023 at the recent awards and Paul Anderson who was promoted to Chief Constable of Humberside this year.

I'd also like to thank our other new Board members Joy Allen, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham; Senior Partner Recruitment Specialist, Ed Renwick. Finally, I'd like to thank the whole Board for their continued commitment and contribution, which has allowed us to trade and implement the vision set in 2021.

THE NEBRC ADVISORY BOARD



itps



gleeson.plc



LLOYDS BANK



CGI



HUMBERSIDE POLICE



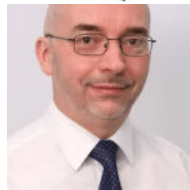
DURHAM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER



HUMBERSIDE POLICE



CENTRIC



THALES
Building a future we can all trust



Acronis



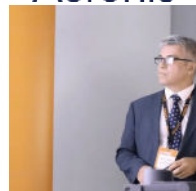
fsb
Bank of Scotland



CGI



CYBSAFE



CyberNorth

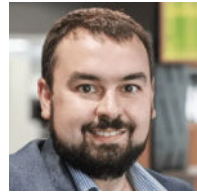
THANKS TO..

CYBER EXPERTS

I'd also like to extend my thanks to our Cyber Experts Panel and Cyber Essentials Partner Network (previously known as Trusted Partners), many of whom have been invaluable to the ongoing operational development of the centre.

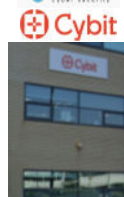
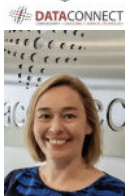
A special thanks goes to Chris Tait from Layer 7 who is funding OSCP sponsorship for two of our students, and who has got us through Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus again this year and latterly, IASME Cyber Assurance standard.

I must also mention Stewart Hogg thanking him for his continued support, namely hosting our events at Waterstons.



Our Cyber Experts & Cyber Essentials Partners

I would like to welcome our newest Cyber Experts and Cyber Essentials Partners to the fold Simon Gurney of Punk Security, Bob Mackay from Aspire Technology, Garry Brown of Bondgate IT, Marc Walker from Commstec and Simon Newton from ITPS. Our members have been instrumental in planning joint events with us, ideas for campaigns, as well as showing us how to engage with the market.



THANKS TO.. NORTHUMBRIA AND SHEFFIELD HALLAM

I would also like to thank the lecturers and course leaders for their continued commitment to developing our service offerings and supporting the recruitment process. To date, we have employed over 40 undergraduate and postgraduate students from Northumbria and Sheffield Hallam universities, and we will be ready to recruit more in 2024.

Biju Issac, Phil Anderson, Shahrzad Zargari, and Myles Dempsey, from Northumbria and Sheffield Hallam respectively, have been a great help and a special thanks goes out to them for their support in the centre. Northumbria University have also won the Times Higher Education (THE) University of the Year Award, which is a great achievement and testament to the team.



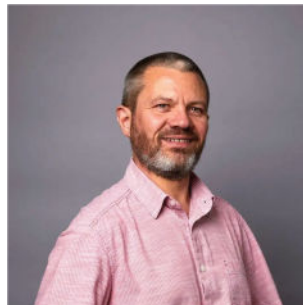
 Northumbria University
NEWCASTLE



 Northumbria University
NEWCASTLE



Sheffield Hallam University



Sheffield Hallam University

ALUMNI




We have also seen our students go on to get industry-recognised certifications whilst studying and working with us.


Cosmin Bianu has recently passed his OSCP - well done Cosmin. Joe Cockcroft who now works for the centre is completing his OSCP certification shortly, with Thomas McHattie also nearing completion. Mackenzie Bruso has left having been one of the original students and will be taking up a position as IT Analyst at VikingTSS, with Greg Cooper joining Pentest People as their Security Consultant. Sam Dale has joined one of our Cyber Essentials Partners HTG as a Cloud Support Engineer and Vytautas is taking up a position in the Lithuanian Government.

CYBER CAREERS LABS

As part of our approach to be inclusive to all students in our region we have held 2 Cyber Careers Labs in Sheffield and Newcastle where we bring industry experts in to talk to students about a career in cyber security. They have been incredibly successful, and we must thank our Board members and partners for speaking at these events.

 **North East Business Resilience Centre (NEBRC)**
2,218 followers
3w · 🌐

Amazing feedback from our Cyber Careers Lab in Sheffield last night 🙌 well done [Martin Wilson](#), [Lizzie Buckler](#) & [Joe Cockcroft](#) for making it happen!

 **Prasad Kadu** (He/Him) · 2nd
Cybersecurity MSc Student @University of York | EX - Information Techno...
3w · 🌐

Attending the "Cyber Careers Lab Event" hosted by the **North East Business Resilience Centre (NEBRC)** was an inspiring event that expanded my understanding of cybersecurity and its possibilities for career development.

First and foremost, the event showcased the collaborative effort of NEBRC in bringing together law enforcement agencies, universities, and private sector experts. This holistic approach emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation in tackling cybersecurity challenges.

I've learned that cybersecurity is a collective effort, involving various stakeholders, and collaboration is key to success in this ever-evolving landscape. Moreover, the event provided networking opportunities with peers from different universities. Engaging with fellow students and sharing experiences highlighted the diversity of approaches to cybersecurity. It's become evident that the field thrives on a multitude of perspectives and skill sets, which is enriching and inspires innovation.

The insights shared by industry experts shed light on the practical applications of cybersecurity in the real world. Their experiences and advice have been invaluable in understanding the dynamic nature of the industry. It's clear that continuous learning and staying updated with the latest developments are essential for success in this field.

The event also emphasized the significance of certifications and qualifications in cybersecurity. In addition, [Zeshan Sattar](#) motivated me to pursue relevant certifications and to invest in building a strong foundation of knowledge and skills, which will be crucial for career advancement.

These insights have not only deepened my understanding of the field but have also instilled a strong sense of purpose and determination to excel in the world of cybersecurity. I am truly grateful to NEBRC for this eye-opening experience and eagerly anticipate further growth and learning in this dynamic field. [#Cybersecurity](#) [#NEBRC](#) [#CareerGrowth](#) [#CareerImprovement](#) [#ContinuousLearning](#)



PROGRESS

Marketing

In the last year marketing has been managed by Chantelle and our new Digital Media partner Wildcat and I'm pleased to report that we have had further uplift in media, social media and newsletter reach, as well as the following.

We now have 2500+ members compared to 1300 this time last year and 678 the year before. Our webinars have reached audiences of over 1,500 people across specialist areas such as hacking, passwords, phishing, and internal fraud.

The team have had a huge reach and been invited to present and attend more and more events with 76 delivered with a reach of 7008 in total. On the right is a snapshot of Lizzie presenting to over 100 delegates at the Gleeson's 'Meet the Builder' event in October.



Our social media reach has developed considerably, particularly on LinkedIn where we are targeting businesses and individuals from across the region, in the last year we show page views on Linked in at 3564 – a 98% increase from the year prior. Followers have increased to an impressive 2194 and counting.

Even Twitter followers have now increased to over 1000 and impressions have increased by a huge 400%. We have also reached over 61,000 visits on Facebook.

LinkedIn

Page Views

2023: 3,564
2022: 1,800

98%
Increase

Followers

2023: 2,194
2022: 1,593

37%
Increase

Total Comments

2023: 180
2022: 130

38%
Increase

Total Reactions

2023: 3,204
2022: 1,800

78%
Increase

Twitter

Total Impressions

2023: 33,756
2022: 5,700

400%
Increase

Follower Count

2023: 1024
2022: 859

19%
Increase

Facebook

Total Reach

2023: 61,440
2022: 56,000

9%
Increase

Follower Count

2023: 146
2022: 97

50%
Increase

ACHIEVEMENTS

Digital Marketing

Since the beginning of the year, we have worked hard on creating an improved website for our audience. Our priority was to make sure our homepage was fast, easy to navigate and focused on keywords to attract organic visits. We are pleased to say our SEO has improved considerably with these changes and we now appear further up the list and have achieved a google snippet. We have increased organic stats by an average of 400% since last year. Our newsletter since being taken back in house has achieved an open rate 5% better in the first 6 months of the year.

ORGANIC USERS

Users who have arrived on your site from a search engine

Last Month (vs previous)	Year to Date (vs YTD 2022)	Last 12 Months (vs previous)
Active users 572 ↑ 402.2%	Active users 2.97K ↑ 402.7%	Active users 3.65K ↑ 577.8%

ORGANIC SESSIONS

The amount of visits you've had from search engines

Last Month (vs previous)	Year to Date (vs YTD 2022)	Last 12 Months (vs previous)
Sessions 825 ↑ 87.7%	Sessions 4.87K ↑ 383.1%	Sessions 6.35K ↑ 538.4%

ORGANIC NEW USERS

The amount of users who haven't previously visited your site from search engines

Last Month (vs previous)	Year to Date (vs YTD 2022)	Last 12 Months (vs previous)
New users 515 ↑ 39.6%	New users 2.79K ↑ 397.3%	New users 3.43K ↑ 511.8%

ORGANIC PAGEVIEWS

The amount of page views you've had from search engines

Last Month (vs previous)	Year to Date (vs YTD 2022)	Last 12 Months (vs previous)
Views 3.25K ↑ 88.5%	Views 15.87K ↑ 334.8%	Views 18.72K ↑ 176.8%

ORGANIC CONVERSIONS

The number of users who have clicked on transactional buttons (all new, add to cart, add to wishlist)

Last Month (vs previous)	Year to Date (vs YTD 2022)	Last 12 Months (vs previous)
Conversions 20 ↑ 300.0%	Conversions 200 ↑ 70%	Conversions 200 ↑ 70%

ORGANIC ENGAGEMENT RATE

A measure of how engaged the users of your site are

Last Month (vs previous)	Year to Date (vs YTD 2022)	Last 12 Months (vs previous)
89% ↑ 0.7%	80% ↑ 23.4%	74% ↑ 34.5%

HISTORIC ORGANIC TRAFFIC TABLE

Organic traffic figures, month by month over time

Year	Month	New users	Active users	Sessions	Conversions
Sept 2023		585	671	805	20
Aug 2023		369	460	546	2
Jul 2023		310	425	534	5
Jun 2023		271	406	520	6
May 2023		280	429	569	28
Apr 2023		260	356	474	139
Mar 2023		309	478	580	0
Feb 2023		254	333	440	0
Jan 2023		377	283	368	0
Dec 2022		169	241	323	0
Nov 2022		249	360	333	0
Oct 2022		233	385	406	0
Sept 2022		216	282	375	0
Aug 2022		136	207	301	0
Jul 2022		91	208	259	0
Jun 2022		48	51	60	0

Our SEO strategy is now gaining pace as you can see compared to last year, we have more than double the amount of new and active users on our site, with website sessions also on the increase. We will be focusing on the number of conversions over the next quarter.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Case Study

The NEBRC was referred to Framwellgate School, an 11 to 18 education provider in Durham City, due to intelligence suggesting a potential cyber incident and data breach. The school collaborated with NEBRC's student ethical hackers for a network vulnerability assessment. Critical vulnerabilities were swiftly identified and resolved. However, shortly after, the school faced a live attack with an extortion-type email demanding cryptocurrency for sensitive data resulting in the school going offline in order to secure the network. The student team promptly collaborated with technical seniors, engaging Waterstons for incident response. Waterstons secured the network, with an NEBRC alumni student working on their incident response team, enabling the school to reopen the next day.

Durhams Police Crime Commissioner Joy Allen has agreed to subsidise the NEBRCs assessment for Framwellgate School Durham, helping them in their time of crisis.

The school's open communication about the incident, along with assistance from NEBRC, Waterstons, and law enforcement, ensured that the ICO assessed the incident as having no case to answer. This case illustrates the collaborative effort in our region to assist schools and businesses to become more secure.

New Marketplace Vendor Scheme

In 2023, we have launched our brand new Marketplace Vendor scheme, which are new partners of ours who have a product or service that is suitable to the SME's that we support, we welcome APIMS, Cymplify and Hicomply to the scheme.



Awards

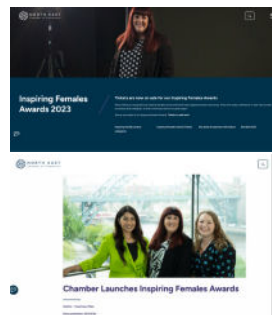
This year we were nominated as finalists for three National Cyber Awards:

[Steve Leach - Cyber Policing Individual of the Year](#)

[NEBRC - Not for Profit of the Year](#)

[Cosmin Bianu - Student of the Year](#)

Last year Rebecca won the North East Chamber's Inspiring Female Awards Business Leader of the Year and has this year been the poster girl for the 2023 awards as well as being asked to be a judge at the prestigious TECAS awards.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Testimonials

This year saw the delivery across the suite of student services for the 4th year running. This meant working in partnership with Cyber PATH. The result has been some very happy clients and thrilled students.

Clients ranged from education trusts, charities and engineering firms. Some of our testimonials for our work are included below.

"Game was great, well planned, colourful, motivating to think deeper and cooperate. I loved the lego exercise, really useful for everyone in the group and for all tech levels. In the nearly six years I have been in business, this is the most valuable workshop I have been on. Thank you to all of the presenters and organisers."



Delegates from 'Cyber Security for the Non-Techie'

"We all often talk about the importance of security at our business but we neglect to talk about why it's important and highlighting the type of threats to be aware of. We're incredibly grateful to NEBRC for coming to our office and providing training to everyone in the business on Cyber threats. The presentation was really great and easy to digest, and left us all questioning our current security habits to ensure it stands the test of the current times."



*Nadea van der Merwe
Head of Operations, Wildcat Digital*

"I wanted to write to you to express my thanks for helping us out with a speaker for our Leeds Resilience Roadshow at Headingley on Wed 19th April at such short notice.

Martin Wilson demonstrated exceptional flexibility and was able to support us around his other commitments. His presentation was spot on and went down very well with our audience, from a range of businesses (mostly SME) from across Healthcare, Finance, Manufacturing and Public Sector. We received some lovely feedback from one delegate, the Ops Director of a local hospice, who wrote:

"It was really insightful and thought provoking with lots of key takeaways and learnings. There's certainly lots for us to do to improve our position and approach to resilience but excited to implement some of the things discussed yesterday."



*Tom Holloway
Lead Principal Consultant*

Framwellgate School Durham deeply appreciated NEBRC's rapid response and supportive approach and received the following testimonial from the school's Business Director, which underscores the collaborative effort to enhance security and resilience for schools and businesses in crisis.

Martin worked closely with other support stakeholders including the police, Waterstons, the IT support team and external IT support company to coordinate work and share critical information.

The support and advice given by Martin and the exceptional work of the ethical hackers was something I never expected to have to experience, but with their support the school was scaffolded quickly and is in a much better place due to their expertise, compassion and guidance through a very difficult time.

If I could wind the clock back, I would have insisted on doing annual vulnerability checks and this is something I would urge schools to do, given the relative low cost and the high risk of failure in the current climate.

*Wendy Pattison
Academy Business Director
Framwellgate School Durham*

ACHIEVEMENTS

Team

Chantelle has passed the EC Council Essentials Course which includes modules around Ethical Hacking, Network Defense and Digital Forensics and the ISC2 course. She is now focussing on her level 5 CMI in Operational Management and Leadership.



Joe is undertaking the OSCP.

Lizzie is reaching the end of her level 5 CMI in Operational Management and Leadership and will shortly be taking her End Point Assessment to complete the apprenticeship.

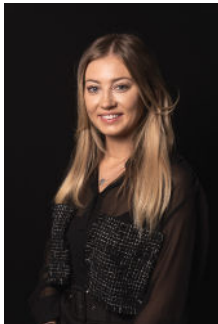


Martin has co-authored a chapter with Dr. Sharon McDonald, available through Routledge, in a book featuring cybersecurity insights from global researchers. Their chapter delves into SME Cybersecurity Misconceptions, focusing on influencing decision-makers. Martin remains committed to his ongoing PhD studies and anticipates publishing more research soon. He has also recently been appointed the National Cyber Resilience Centre Group's Researcher in Residence.



Becky and Steve have just began a new 'Help to Grow' Management course at Sheffield Hallam University and will be undertaking CISM in 2024.

We have also taken on a new Business Assistant Lydia Stone who is currently studying Criminology at Sheffield Hallam University.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Work Experience and Placements

The NEBRC offered 3 students work experience and placements this year, with Alisha coming from Sheffield Hallam University on her placement, Emily and Laurence joined us from sixth form to gain some valuable experience in the cyber security industry, to help inform decisions on their chosen career paths.



2023

The Future

We will continue to follow the strategic Business Plan for the centre devised in 2023 with some minor alterations based on funding and Advisory Board operations. The Police Board has now developed and includes Andrea Mennell, Head of Finances and Business Services for Humberside Police and an ex CEO and qualified accountant with DCC David Marshall of Humberside Police, DI Steve Leach and CEO Rebecca Chapman. Together they will make all company decisions and liaise with the Advisory Board for business advice. This of course means that we say farewell but not goodbye to now Chief Constable Paul Anderson who has been the cyber lead in our region for the last 2 years. David now takes over this role as well as the role on the Board but we will still see Paul at events and Advisory Board when he can join us as one of our biggest supporters. Huge congratulations to Paul as he heads up Humberside Police.



2023-26 BUSINESS PLAN

MISSION

“By 2025 our mission is to have helped 12,000 small, medium and third sector businesses in the North East of England become more resilient from cyber and online crime”

“Growing the membership of the NEBRC to a measured percentage of all SMEs in the NE”

We will strive to achieve a percentage of SMEs registered for our free and affordable support. By taking our current annual costs and, giving consideration to the annual cost of a cyber-attack to an SME, we will seek to have provided 11,360 SMEs and third sector organisations with guidance to make themselves more resilient to a cyberattack. In doing this we will also be providing valuable work experience to students in the NE. It is our intention to introduce a growth programme where we aim to support 2% of all SMEs in The NE (11,360) over the following three years. Therefore, the estimated crime reduction value in financial losses on the economy would be in excess of £38.5 million pounds for the North East (based on DCMS stating 65% attacked and average loss is £1740).

“Developing revenue streams to achieve self-sustainability by 2026”

Our current operating yearly budget to run the business is met by grant funding, 70% donations and operating profit, 30%. We plan to achieve £560k annual turnover by 2026. We will continue to work with consultants, partners, and the wider network to put in place best practice to achieve this objective. This aim is important to help alleviate demand on public sector funding and to provide high value of public and private sector partnership working.

“Improving connection with existing members through measured customer experience and engagement performance”

Developing engagement is key to improving the adoption of cyber resilience practices and provides worthwhile support to SMEs.

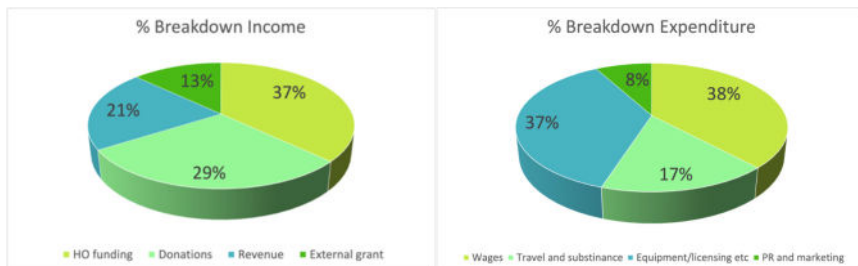
2023-26 BUSINESS PLAN

“Growing student services by links to Sheffield Hallam and Northumbria University and other regional universities”

Promoting student services and the talent pipeline by engaging with partners and provider universities and the NCDSV programme in all 7 forces.

“Budgetary Breakdown”

Understanding and maximising the various funding streams and commercial services to realise self-sufficiency by 2026. The NEBRC budget has a variety of streams- Home Office support via the National Cyber Crime Programme, donations from private sector and external grant funding. Alongside this the NEBRC offers Student Services commercial cyber security service delivered by students and supervised by an industry specialist.



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



nebrcentre.co.uk



North East Business
Resilience Centre



@nebrcentre



THE
**BUSINESS
RESILIENCE
CENTRE**

FOR THE NORTH EAST
YORKSHIRE
THE HUMBER