

# Virtual CISO

Information security leadership for SMEs

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# Security leadership is crucial ...

... for any organisation. Large organisations commonly employ a full-time Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) to manage their information security regime. SMEs are often unable to do the same, however – particularly in small countries and principalities such as the Channel Islands, where suitably skilled individuals are scarce and hence difficult to recruit and costly to employ.

## The Virtual CISO

An increasingly common approach is to engage a “virtual” CISO, or “vCISO”. The vCISO is an external resource who serves the organisation on a part-time basis.



## What does the vCISO do?

The vCISO's duties are the same as those of a full-time counterpart, including:

- Working with staff and management to define the information security strategy for the organisation.
- Collating data on security-related matters and reporting at all levels.
- Participating at all stages of recruitment for staff with security responsibilities.
- Being part of project teams to ensure that security requirements are part of the design from the very beginning, and are implemented as required.
- Providing expertise and experience as a trusted advisor to the organisation.
- Working with the HR and training teams to ensure all staff have an adequate level of information security knowledge.
- Engineering incident response and business continuity regimes so that the business is able to react in the event of an information security incident.



## Benefits of a vCISO

**Cost:** a vCISO is more cost-effective where a full-time role cannot be justified.

**Focus:** the vCISO's sole focus is on information security in the organisation; this would not be the case if, for example, a member of staff were asked to oversee security alongside their other obligations.

**Flexibility:** you can vary the involvement of the external resource as required – for example, to accommodate the short-term needs of a new project that has a particular requirement for security input.

**Knowledge:** the vCISO is both qualified and experienced, has generally worked with a variety of organisations in different market sectors, and keeps in touch with development in the industry.

**Independence:** as an external resource the vCISO is unbiased and impartial, and is able to report both positive and negative findings honestly and impartially.

## Grant Thornton's vCISO offering

For an agreed monthly fee, the vCISO will provide a regular on-site presence, on a mutually agreed schedule, plus an agreed number of flexible hours off-site to deal with ad-hoc queries and issues. Additional work (to cater for peaks in demand or new projects, for example) can be charged on a T&M basis or, for larger increments, quoted at an additional fixed fee.

## For more information please contact:



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