



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Criminal Justice Committee

Anna Fowlie  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Thursday, 26 June 2025

Dear Ms Fowlie

### **Challenges facing businesses and vulnerable individuals in Scotland from the risks of cybercrime**

I am writing to you as part of scrutiny work the Criminal Justice Committee is undertaking on the challenges facing businesses and vulnerable individuals in Scotland from the risks of cybercrime.

At our Committee meeting of [Wednesday 14 May 2025](#) the Committee took evidence on the risks of cybercrime from representatives of Age Scotland, Arnold Clark, the Cyber and Fraud Centre Scotland, the CyberScotland Partnership, the National Crime Agency, NatWest Bank and Police Scotland.

The primary focus of the session was to gain an insight into the current impact of cybercrime in areas which, until recently, receive less debate in the public realm. For example, cybercrime's impact on the lives of individuals like the elderly, those in employment, and the wellbeing of the business community across Scotland.

Following the evidence session, the Committee received a [written submission](#) from the Association of British Insurers (ABI), highlighting their concerns around cybercrime and the level of preparedness and resilience across Scotland's business community.

#### **Risks to Third Sector Organisations in Scotland**

One key issue to emerge from our scrutiny is the vulnerability of third sector organisations in Scotland. Witnesses cited the risks faced by third sector organisations, their level of preparedness to respond to a cyber-attack on them and how such attacks could impact the wider Scottish economy and society, such as through risks to an organisation's survival, or loss of services to the public etc.

The Scottish Government published the first cyber resilient strategy for Scotland in November 2015.<sup>1</sup> In February 2021 the Government updated this strategy with the publication of the [Cyber Resilient Scotland: strategic framework](#). The 2021 strategy states that it looks to build on the original 2015 strategy by “expanding on its achievements and addressing ongoing and new challenges.”

In October 2023, the Scottish Government published the results of a review of the 2021 strategy, entitled [Taking Stock: report on progress towards a cyber resilient Scotland](#).

This set our future priorities through four action plans, one of which is a [Third Sector Action Plan](#).

### **Your views**

The Committee is seeking the views of the SCVO on the level of cyber preparedness and resilience amongst the charity/third sector community. Specifically-

- What is your view on the effectiveness of the Scottish Government cyber resilience policies and its most recent Third Sector Action Plan?
- What is your view of the level of cyber operational resilience amongst the third sector community across Scotland?
- What is your view on the levels of cybercrime across Scottish third sector organisations and what it may be costing the Scottish economy? Do you have a view on the findings of the ABI’s most recent report on cybercrime?
- Do you have a view on the levels of cybercrime being reported by third sector organisations to the police?
- What is your view on the access of third sector organisations to skilled IT/cyber staff? Do third sector organisations have timely access to specialist support to help them deal with, and recover from cyber-attacks?
- Do you feel Scottish third sector organisations have access to enough up-to-date information and intelligence on cyber risks facing them?
- What is your view on whether the criminal law and public policy in Scotland is keeping pace with the developing risks from cybercrime?
- What is your view on the human cost to third sector organisations and their employees who are the victims of cybercrime? Is there enough support to help third sector organisations deal with the ramifications of a cyber-attack on them?

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<sup>1</sup> Safe, secure and prosperous: a cyber resilience strategy for Scotland" (November 2015): [Safe, secure and prosperous: a cyber resilience strategy for Scotland - gov.scot](#)

- Any other views you may have on the impacts of cybercrime on third sector organisations in Scotland?

We have also written to the Scottish Government, the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses in Scotland seeking their views on some of the issues raised.

All of these letters are available on [our website](#).

A response by **Friday 19 September 2025** would be much appreciated.  
Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey N: csn". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Audrey Nicoll MSP**  
**Convener**