

Success Story

Ipswich Borough Council

Delivering Consistent, Accredited PSN Compliance Testing Year After Year

Ipswich Borough Council is the local authority for the town of Ipswich in Suffolk, delivering a wide range of essential services to residents, businesses and communities across the borough. From housing and council tax to environmental services, planning and community support, the council's digital systems underpin the day-to-day services that thousands of people rely on.

Like all UK local authorities, Ipswich Borough Council depends on a secure connection to the Public Services Network (PSN) to share data safely and access central government services. Maintaining that connection is not optional. Each year, the council must demonstrate the security of its IT environment through a CHECK-accredited IT Health Check (ITHC), the mandated form of penetration testing for organisations connecting to PSN. CyberLab has supported Ipswich Borough Council with this essential, recurring compliance requirement, providing consistent, reliable testing that keeps the council's PSN accreditation on track year after year.



The Business Challenge

Meeting an Essential, Recurring Compliance Requirement Without Disruption

PSN accreditation is a mandatory requirement for local authorities, underpinning secure access to shared government networks and services. To retain that accreditation, councils must complete an ITHC annually, delivered by a supplier accredited under the NCSC's CHECK scheme and staffed by security-cleared consultants.

For a council the size of Ipswich, this presents a specific set of requirements:

- An annual CHECK-accredited IT Health Check to satisfy PSN Code of Connection requirements.
- A supplier with genuine public sector experience, able to work within the constraints of local authority systems and legacy environments.
- Consistent, dependable delivery of essentially the same critical test each year, with minimal disruption to council operations.
- Clear, audit-ready reporting that supports the council's accreditation submission and internal assurance processes.
- Fair, transparent and consistent pricing for a project that has to happen every year regardless of budget pressures elsewhere.

It is not the most complex or headline-grabbing project on a council's cyber security calendar, but it is one of the most essential. Without it, PSN access, and the services that depend on it, would be at risk.



The Solution

A CHECK and NCSC-Approved IT Health Check for PSN Accreditation

CyberLab has delivered Ipswich Borough Council's IT Health Check for PSN across multiple testing cycles, providing the structured, methodical assessment required to maintain accreditation. As a CHECK-accredited provider, CyberLab's ITHCs are delivered by CHECK Team Leaders and CHECK Team Members, all security-cleared and experienced in testing local authority environments.

Each engagement follows the NCSC scheme requirements and the PSN Code of Connection, and covers:

- Planning and scoping, agreeing rules of engagement and confirming which systems, assets and environments are in scope.
- External testing of internet-facing systems, including firewall rules, network segmentation and testing against OWASP Top 10 vulnerabilities.
- Internal testing of servers, databases and network infrastructure, including access controls and least privilege enforcement.
- Automated and manual vulnerability scanning, with findings classified by criticality and CVSS score in line with NCSC reporting requirements.

At the end of each engagement, the council receives a clear, audit-ready report detailing findings and remediation guidance, formatted to meet PSN submission requirements. CyberLab's approach is designed to make what is a mandatory, repeatable process as straightforward as possible, allowing the council to focus on its wider service priorities rather than the testing itself.



The Outcome

Ongoing PSN Accreditation, Delivered Reliably Year After Year

Through its continued partnership with CyberLab, Ipswich Borough Council has maintained its PSN accreditation with a testing process that is well understood, consistently delivered and free of unwelcome surprises.

- Continued PSN accreditation, supported by CHECK-accredited testing delivered to the required standard each year.
- A straightforward, low-disruption annual process, run by a team experienced in the specific demands of local authority environments.
- Clear, audit-ready reporting that supports the council's compliance submissions with confidence.
- Consistent, fair pricing for a project the council has to deliver regardless of wider budget pressures.
- A trusted testing partner that understands the council's environment, reducing the need to re-explain context each year.

For a compliance requirement that every council must satisfy, the value lies in dependability. CyberLab's ongoing delivery has allowed Ipswich Borough Council to treat its annual ITHC as a routine, well-managed part of its security calendar rather than a recurring source of risk.

“We’ve worked with CyberLab on our PSN IT Health Check for several years now, and it’s exactly the kind of reliable, consistent service you want for a test like this. It’s not the most exciting project on our calendar, but it’s essential, and CyberLab makes it easy.

Their team understands the specific requirements of local authority testing and PSN accreditation, and the reporting we receive gives us everything we need for our submission without any fuss.

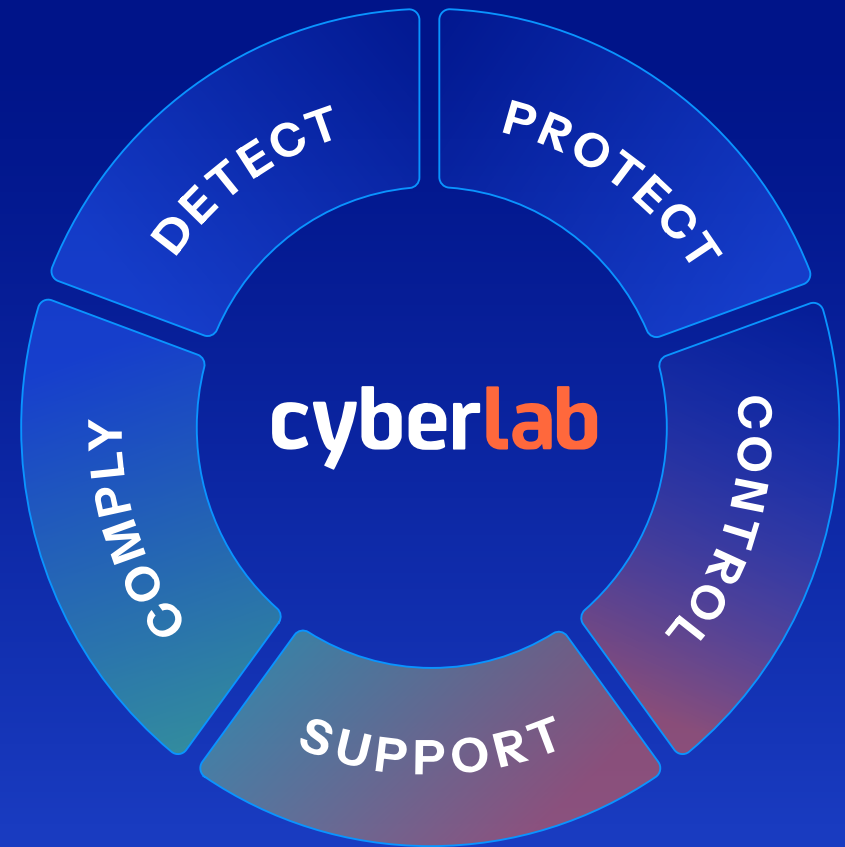
I’d happily recommend CyberLab to other councils looking for a straightforward, dependable partner for their ITHC.”

Stuart Graham
Cyber Security Manager
Ipswich Borough Council

Conclusion

Not every cyber security project needs to be complex to be critical. Ipswich Borough Council's PSN IT Health Check is a clear example of an essential, mandated requirement delivered simply and reliably, year after year. By combining CHECK accreditation with genuine public sector experience, CyberLab has helped the council keep a fundamental compliance obligation off its list of worries, so it can focus on the services that matter most to residents.

For local authorities facing the same annual requirement, Ipswich Borough Council's experience shows that PSN compliance testing does not have to be a burden. With the right partner, it can simply be one less thing to think about.



Speak With an Expert

hello@cyberlab.co.uk

0333 050 8120