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Matt Western MP
Chair, Joint Committee on National Security Strategy
House of Commons
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BY EMAIL ONLY

13 January 2025

Dear Matt,

SENT UNDER EMBARGO: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON RANSOMWARE

I am writing to the Committee to inform you that the Home Office will launch a public consultation tomorrow on new legislative proposals to reduce ransomware and harden the UK as a target. I wanted to personally assure you that following the Committee's report, *A hostage to fortune: ransomware and UK national security*, the Home Office has reflected and taken on board the recommendations. These proposals show the new Government's commitment to tackle the ransomware threat that the Committee highlighted.

The National Crime Agency assess ransomware as the greatest serious and organised cyber crime threat, the largest cyber security threat, and a risk to the UK's national security. Ransomware incidents are continuing an upward trend. In 2023, incidents of ransomware attacks reported to the Information Commissioner's Office reached their highest level since 2019¹ and private sector reporting to the National Crime Agency indicates the number of UK victims appearing on ransomware data leak sites has doubled since 2022². This is reflected globally, with industry estimating that in 2023 ransomware criminals received over \$1bn³. We have recently seen firsthand the devastating impact ransomware can have, when Synnovis, a supplier to the NHS in London was attacked. Patient data was stolen, and vital services were unable to continue, with blood tests still being affected.

It is this significant risk of harm that warrants focused and specific intervention to reduce the impact of ransomware across the UK. The Home Office has undertaken significant work to develop three tailored legislative proposals for consultation designed to break the ransomware business model, change victim behaviour, and harden the UK against this threat.

This new approach, building on the Committee's findings and emerging best practice globally, reflect the seriousness of the threat and the need for transformative action.

The proposed measures are:

- A targeted ban on ransomware payments for CNI and the public sector.
- A ransomware payment prevention regime for all ransomware payments.

¹ [Data security incident trends | ICO](#)

² Link to NCA National Strategic Assessment 2024 once published [DRAFT - currently unpublished].

³ [Ransomware Hit \\$1 Billion in 2023 \(chainalysis.com\)](#)

- A ransomware incident reporting regime, that could operate via a threshold based mandatory reporting requirement for suspected victims of ransomware.

The proposed measures are world-leading for ransomware-specific interventions and are being developed to transform our approach against ransomware and undermine the business model.

The measures build on existing resilience and disruptive measures, including our continuing work with international partners on sanctions designations and other activities, such as our work with the Counter Ransomware Initiative, where the UK spearheaded led guidance published in 2024 to boost global ransomware resilience, which was supported by 41 CRI members and 8 global insurance bodies. The measures will be consistent and align with the proposals in the forthcoming Cyber Security and Resilience Bill.

This consultation aims to gather views and evidence from the public and business on our proposals. By limiting ransomware criminals' access to funds and enhancing HMG's understanding of the threat, we can mitigate the impact of ransomware incidents on UK organisations. The Government intends to produce additional advice and guidance for ransomware victims, incorporating evidence from this consultation.

The consultation will be open for 12 weeks and will seek views on various aspects, including victim behaviour during a cyber incident, information sharing with UK authorities, and the appropriateness of ransom payments under any circumstances.

During the consultation, my officials and I would be happy to provide a detailed briefing to discuss these measures if that is of interest to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Jarvis MBE MP
Security Minister