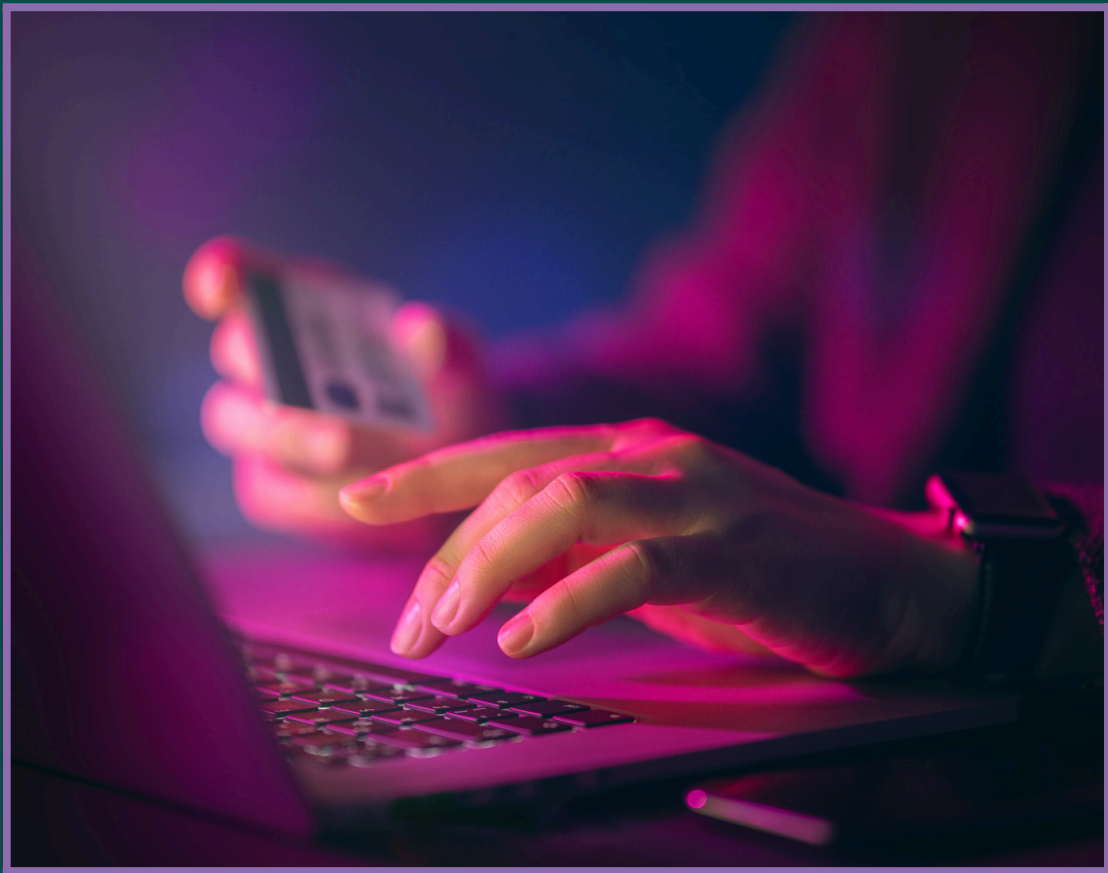


SPECIAL ATTACK BRIEF EDITION:

M&S, CO-OP AND HARRODS CYBER BREACH



A SIMPLE GUIDE BY



Company reg no: 07550944
VAT: GB 110 5614 54



WHAT HAPPENED

In late April and early May, several well-known UK retailers, including M&S, Co-op and Harrods, were targeted by sophisticated cyber attacks. These were not traditional system hacks. Instead, attackers used social engineering to impersonate employees and trick IT helpdesks into resetting passwords.

Once access was granted, attackers used SIM swap fraud, transferring mobile numbers to unauthorised SIMs, to intercept 2FA codes sent via text, giving them access to internal systems.



Company reg no: 07550944
VAT: GB 110 5614 54



WHO WAS AFFECTED AND WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

- Co-op faced major checkout disruptions, with stores unable to take payments.
- M&S confirmed a customer data breach, which resulted in reputational fallout and media attention.
- Harrods also suffered impacts, although full details are still being assessed.

The financial and operational costs of these attacks are significant. They serve as a reminder that any organisation can be targeted, not just high-profile ones.



Company reg no: 07550944
VAT: GB 110 5614 54

WHAT DIAL A GEEK IS DOING

We are taking proactive steps to ensure that you and your team are protected, not just from technical threats, but also from the kinds of process vulnerabilities these attacks exploited.

I Moving Away from SMS-Based 2FA

SMS is no longer considered a secure method for two-factor authentication.

- We will begin gradually **phasing out SMS-based 2FA** this year.
- Most of you are already using an **Authenticator App with number matching**, which is more secure.
- If SMS is still required in your case, we will review this **individually**.

II Strengthening Helpdesk Identity Checks

We are enhancing how we verify identity during sensitive requests like password resets.

- We will continue using **number verification**, which means checking the mobile number registered to your account.
- In addition, we will now confirm the request using a **second method**:
 - If you call, we will follow up by email.
 - If you email, we will confirm with a phone call.

This **two-channel verification** provides better protection against impersonation, voice spoofing and SIM-based fraud, especially for staff with admin-level access.



Password Managers for Applicable Clients

If your organisation is still using browser-based password storage, such as Edge or Chrome, we will be in touch.

- These tools are convenient but not very secure, as passwords can be exported in plain text.
- We are recommending professional password managers like Keeper, 1Password or Dashlane etc.
- These tools include dark web monitoring, alerting staff if credentials are leaked.

We will contact eligible clients who are not yet at this stage to support implementation.

QUICK TIPS FOR YOUR TEAM

Here are three easy ways your team can boost security awareness today:

1. Check for breached emails

Visit [Have I Been Pwned](#) to see if your email has appeared in any known data breach.

2. Use an Authenticator App

Wherever possible, switch from SMS to app-based 2FA for better protection.

3. Report suspicious activity

If anything feels off, such as unexpected password resets or login prompts, report it right away to help@dialageek.co.uk

CYBERSECURITY IS A PROCESS AND WE'RE ON IT

These attacks are a clear reminder that good security isn't just about tools, it is about people and processes too. Even well-defended systems can be compromised if procedures are not strong.

We are continually evolving how we work to stay ahead of these threats. If you have any concerns or want to discuss your current setup, get in touch. We are here to help.

help@dialageek.co.uk

0117 369 4335

www.dialageek.co.uk



Assured Service Provider



in association with
**National Cyber
Security Centre**

Cyber Advisor (Cyber Essentials)

DANIEL LEONARD
Carbometrics



Dial A Geek's dedication is evident in every interaction, making them not just a service provider but a partner in our technological growth.



Company reg no: 07550944
VAT: GB 110 5614 54