



Information Security  
Specialist Group

## **ISSG Chair's report 2025**

I am delighted to be able report on another active and successful year for the Information Security Specialist Group (ISSG).

ISSG continues to be the largest of all the BCS Specialist Groups with a membership of 2,815. Our aim is to continue to support the BCS and our members throughout 2026 and beyond.

### **Successes**

We delivered another very successful events programme this year, once again linked to key themes which were informed by a member consultation exercise in 2024. The themes are reviewed annually. ISSG have delivered, or participated-in more than 15 events during the last 12-months.

We continue to maintain our commitment to making our events accessible to all members by running them, wherever possible, in hybrid mode (i.e. in-person and via zoom).

We have continued our collaboration with other SGs where we have overlapping interests, delivering events jointly with them and working (occasionally) with commercial partners, which has the added benefit of attracting limited sponsorship.

Beyond our events programme, ISSG has assisted and represented BCS with several HMG consultations, parliamentary events and workgroups including:

- AI Management Essentials
- End-to-end encryption
- Cyber Skills and Workforce Development
- Ransomware
- Enterprise connected device security
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Cyber Innovation

A small number of ISSG committee members are regularly asked to contribute to press releases and speak about cyber-related issues and incidents on national radio and TV.

### **ISSG areas of interest**

I have detected an 'uptick' in the number of professionals within our sector who are reverting to the term 'Information Security' rather than 'Cyber Security'. Our committee remain of the opinion that, whilst there are huge areas of overlap between the two, there are also some differences between the two disciplines. Our decision last year to retain our existing group name ('ISSG') appears to have been well-founded. ISSG is recognised within BCS and beyond as a key specialist interest group whose domains include 'Information Security', 'Cyber Security' and 'Privacy'.

### **Plans for next year**

A sub-group of the committee meets bi-monthly to plan our events programme for the next period, with the aim of ensuring our events continue to be relevant and high-quality. Next year's event programme planning is already well under way a number of excellent events currently in the pipeline. Most of the event planning and management currently falls to the Chair and Secretary. I believe this is unsustainable for the future and so I will be recommending that the committee appoint a member who will take overall responsibility for event management on behalf of the group.

This year, we also trialled a new 'fireside chat' format of event which will focus on topical aspects of Information Security. We plan to deliver a quarterly event of this type which is designed to allow informal discussion to flow between the audience and panel members.

Our group has a membership profile which is predominantly people in the 41-60 age range (62% - down from 63% last year) and where gender is predominantly male (83% - no change on last year). ISSG will continue to engage with BCS HQ on formulating strategies to address this.

As some may know, I've recently moved to what I describe as 'fractional retirement'. I am very grateful for all the support and sponsorship that my former employer, Synectics Solutions Ltd., provided to me for my various BCS-related commitments.

Whilst I plan to scale-down my working days a little, I shall continue to provide information security and privacy consultancy services to a number of clients. And I shall be delighted to continue as ISSG Chair if the membership wishes to re-elect me.

### **My thanks**

I'd like to personally thank the secretary, vice-chairs, officers and committee members for their support and involvement throughout the year. ISSG simply couldn't function without them. Your committee members commit significant time and energy throughout the year, providing governance and direction for the group at committee meetings, event planning sessions and sub-groups. The committee are unpaid volunteers, many of whom have busy day-jobs, and who give of their time and energy to ensure the ISSG remains active and relevant for our members.

I would particularly like to thank Paul Skinner (ISSG Secretary), for all his work throughout 2025. I'm tremendously grateful that Paul has once again agreed to continue as Secretary for another year (if elected), however he has made it very clear that this will be his last. I shall be looking for one of the new committee members to shadow Paul this year, with the intention of taking over the position at the 2026 AGM.

Finally, the Member Groups team at BCS HQ perform a fantastic job supporting us with absolutely everything that we do. We would be unable to function as a group without assistance from our tremendous co-ordinator, Beccy Flanagan. Beccy's support, guidance (and above all, patience!) is hugely valued by me and I'd like to record my thanks.

Steve Sands

BCS ISSG Chairman