Irish SMEs are tired, scared and confused about Cybersecurity. What do we do?

Presented by Caoimhe Tiernan

Introduction

98.9%

Irish Enterprises

Percentage of Irish enterprises

classified as SMEs

(CSO,2024)

€9.6B

Economic Impact

Estimated cost of cybercrime to

the Irish economy in 2020

(Grant Thornton 2021)

10 min

Australian Signals
Directorate

Receive a cyber-crime report from

a small business

What is the state of Irish SMEs?

Lack of Formal Policies

50% of SMEs lack a business security policy document

Insufficient Training

63% provide no cybersecurity training for staff

Unaware Targets

47% businesses were unsure or believed they were unlikely targets

No Incident Response

67% do not have a plan for responding to cyber attacks

Awareness of Government Initiatives

Despite the Irish government's National Cyber Security Strategy and recent announcements of cybersecurity grants, awareness remains critically low among SMEs. Many businesses report feeling overwhelmed by regulations and struggle to keep policies updated.

Initiative	Awareness
GDPR	61.4%
Turn to for Help	50%
EU Cyberesiliency Act	9.1%
NIS2	9.1%
Cybersecurity Grants	13%
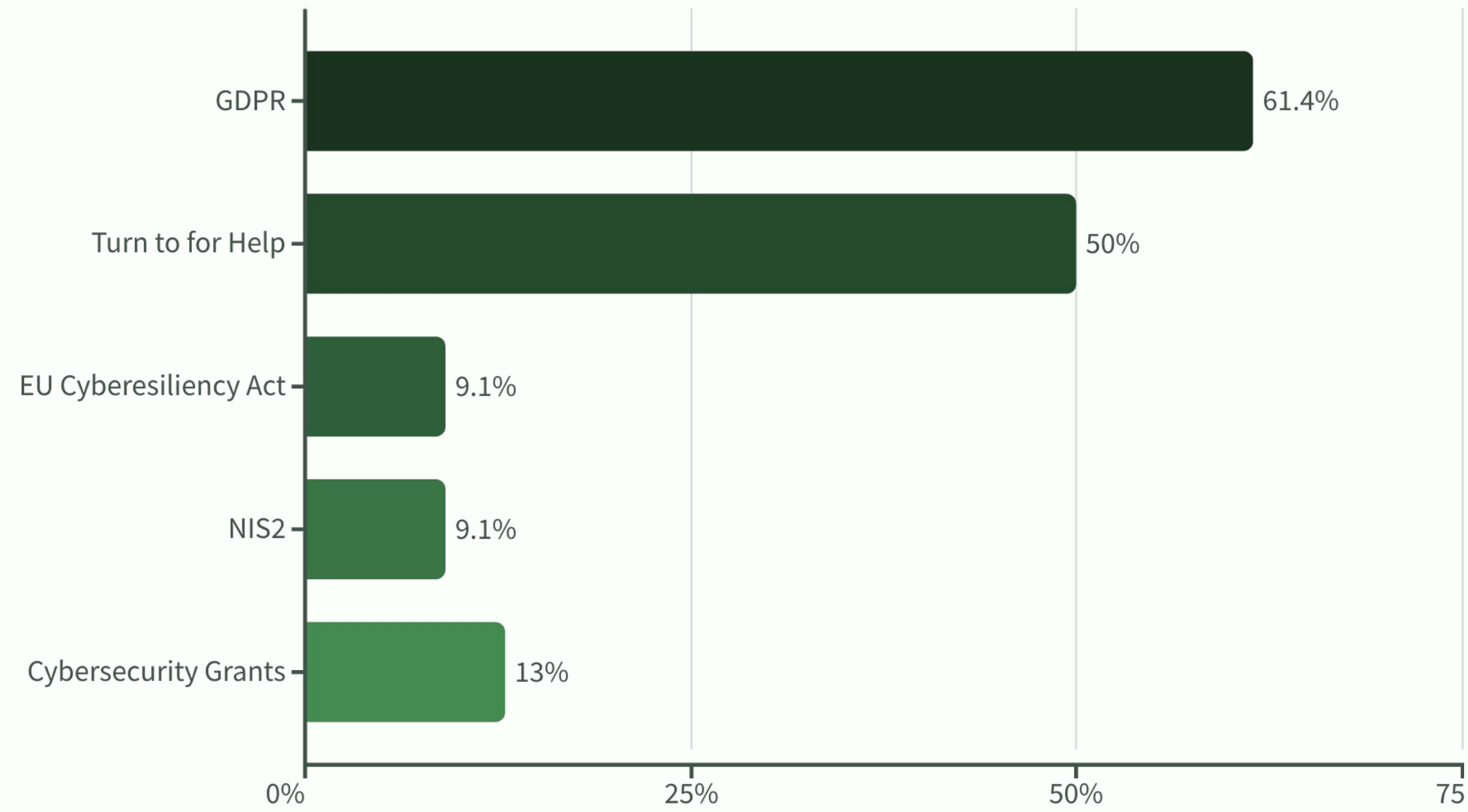
What are SMEs Saying?

"

Well I'm an SME and if I haven't heard about anything it's not great...I'm not aware of what's out there. How the Government help SMEs, and if they are doing that, I'd love if it was more publicized. Because I've never heard of anything, and I'm in the local Enterprise group as well...
That's never been a talk within the group

"

What are SMEs saying?

Awareness	" We had an excellent team of programmers, who were fortunately very, very good, but these guys were incredibly persistent. They got in, and they found a tiny loophole, and they locked out our servers. "
Protections Implemented	" We try to protect ourselves in terms of maintaining good backups, you know, having fast recovery procedures "
Challenges	" Up until now we've been able to guess which ones might be not quite right by the language ... I presume AI is taking over all of that"

What SMEs Want

What Can We Do?

Grants and Funding
Provide financial support for implementing managed security solutions rather than just training

Leverage Local Enterprise Offices
Utilize existing LEO networks to deliver training, raise awareness, and provide targeted support

Cybersecurity Accreditation
Create a "gold standard" certification to incentivize compliance and build customer trust

Centralized Information Hub
Develop a user-friendly website with clear, jargon-free guidance tailored to SMEs

Thank you

Questions?