



# Financial Conduct Authority

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organisation for cyber  
security professionals.**

Antony Harden, FCA

## Key membership benefits enjoyed:

- Skills Framework
- CIIsec's Chartered status
- Accreditation
- Associate Development Programme
- Member community

## Measuring Team Capability

In 2020, Antony Harden, Manager, Strategy, Governance & Capability - Cyber & Information Resilience at the UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), faced a challenge.

Following the rapid growth of its cyber security business function a few years before, the regulator had joined the Chartered Institute of Information Security (CIIsec) as a Corporate Member to gain access to its Skills Framework. The FCA needed to be able to show career development to individuals and to professionalise its cyber security function.

Harden was particularly attracted to CIIsec membership by the body's focus on cyber and information security professionals, and its Chartered status, awarded in 2018. "We chose to become members because of its reputation," he says. "It rewards the investment by being able to accredit our people to a recognised standard."

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The FCA began using the Framework to assess the competency of colleagues and ensure its growth was matched by the capability and skills of its expanding team. "It would be extremely difficult to measure capability without the Framework," says Harden.

But as COVID-19 restrictions began in spring 2020, a new challenge arose – how could the regulator continue to upskill and train its cyber security staff, when they couldn't attend training courses or sit qualifications in person? This led Harden to turn to another CIIsec corporate member – the online cyber security skills platform Immersive Labs.

Immersive Labs had already mapped its 800 labs to CIIsec's Skills Framework. Harden and his team put colleagues through the Framework to assess skills gaps, before working to build tailored learning plans on the Immersive Labs platform. This approach enabled staff to do training aligned with the Framework, helping them to grow and develop during dispersed working.

"Nobody else has done this," says Harden. "We're the first organisation who's ever done this with Immersive Labs, and it's been really successful." The team use it in areas such as career progression, career pathways and succession planning.

**By working as CIIsec Corporate members, we raise the standard of the profession. Everything that we need is there to develop our team.**

Antony Harden, FCA

## Raising the standards of the profession.

As the FCA's cyber security team has taken advantage of its CIIsec membership, it has increased interest across the regulator. "We've got other areas of the organisation that work in cyber and info security and they're beginning to see the benefits now," Harden says, pointing to the body's IT function as an example. The team had originally planned to use another industry framework to build on colleagues' skills. "But that framework is not a security framework, whereas the CIIsec one is."

Harden notes that adapting the CIIsec Frameworks to the organisation has had a huge impact, as has accreditation. "Getting our people through the accreditation process is something we are consistently doing and we're making use of the fast-track system that is offered to Corporate Members," he says.

"In addition to this, CIIsec events have proved really valuable, particularly the Associate Development Programme, which has given junior professionals lots of information and learning opportunities."

Another benefit for Harden has been the industry community that CIIsec membership creates. Working for an industry regulator, Harden has sometimes found industry peers hesitant about talking to him. "But when you're speaking to them under the CIIsec corporate membership," he says, "they know they're not speaking to the regulator; they're speaking to a like-minded individual who's got the same problems that they're facing. So you can have that open and honest conversation."

Since joining CIIsec, Harden has consistently been impressed with the benefits of being part of such a recognised body. "We actively recommend Corporate membership to other organisations, as it is invaluable in benchmarking and making sure people and teams are the best of breed," he says. "CIIsec is the de facto organisation for cyber security professionals."



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