

96 percent of customers are not confident that UK businesses are doing enough to protect customer data

Study finds that only 52% of businesses have a policy in place to help protect people's identities

London, 19 October 2011 – This week is National Identity Fraud Prevention Week (NIDFPW), which over the last seven years has helped consumers and businesses alike to fight identity fraud. NIDFPW brings together partners from both the public and private sector to contribute their resources and experiences to help UK businesses and consumers protect themselves against identity fraud.

Research commissioned by Fellowes for the campaign has shown that consumer confidence is at an all time low, with 96% of people concerned that the organisations they deal with aren't treating their data responsibly.

There is some evidence that supports these concerns: the study finds that complacency is high across businesses, most of which do not have clear policies and are not doing enough to combat identity fraud:

- Only 52% of companies have a policy in place to help protect people's identities – a drop of 4% from 2010,
- With this lack of advice it is therefore not surprising that 79% of employees admit the identities of employees or customers could be at risk of being acquired by fraudsters,
- Half of employees (50%) believe that sensitive information could be obtained from company computers,
- While 42% of British workers believe employee or customer identities could be obtained from company bins,
- Worryingly, 57% of employees believe that personal information may not be safe in the hands of fellow employees and that they might abuse the information they hold,
- This lack of confidence from employees in their companies suggests that the 54% of the UK public worried about personal information being stolen from a company are justified. Significantly, this number is up almost 10%, from 43% in 2010.

But it's not only at the office that there are risks. The growth in remote working is making employees more vulnerable to identity theft outside the office – Fellowes found that 67% of employees work from a non-office location from time to time. Disturbingly, 39% of these don't shred at all, meaning that the office practices aren't extending to all work and documents and confidential company information is being discarded intact.

This level of complacency could have a direct commercial impact: 47% of consumers report that they would not use an organisation again if they found out they had suffered a breach; 45% would look elsewhere, 44% would make sure it did not hold any information about them and 23% would never trust it again. Only 9% of those surveyed would carry on as normal.

Companies need to be more alert to these dangers and to help organisations. Therefore NIDFPW partners are once again making a guide available with tips on how to prevent identity fraud. In addition to a dedicated online resource centre, the guide outlines the risks of identity

fraud and suggests simple ways to protect yourself and your company. The guide can be accessed, free of charge, at www.stop-idfraud.co.uk.

Fellowes quote:

‘Companies cannot afford to be complacent about identity fraud. Clearly, if almost half of people would avoid a company that has suffered an information breach, it is really in a business’ commercial interests to be vigilant about fraud. We found that employees agree, as 61% think their company should do more to ensure the security of sensitive information. However, employers and employees shouldn’t just think this vigilance stops once you leave the office. With so many people working from home nowadays it is essential to treat documents responsibly wherever you are, for example by shredding those of a sensitive nature. Document safety polices need to extend to all areas of work, wherever that work may take place.’ said Andrea Davis, president of Fellowes Europe.

This year’s campaign is supported by the Metropolitan Police, City of London Police, Fellowes, Norton, the National Fraud Authority, Action Fraud, IFCAG, Equifax, CIFAS - The UK’s Fraud Prevention Service, Scottish Business Crime Centre, e-Crime Scotland, the Home Office and the Royal Mail.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The research was commissioned by Fellowes and carried out by Dynamic Markets Limited. For this report, quantitative research was carried out with 2002 Great British adults aged 18+ as part of an online consumer omnibus survey. Fieldwork took place between 16th and 18th September 2011. During the omnibus research process, questions are posed to consumers and data is collected until various pre-defined sampling quotas are reached. The sample is then demographically weighted to make it representative of the GB population aged 18+ to overcome any sampling deficiencies and / or Internet bias.

For more information, or to request an interview, please contact the National Identity Fraud Prevention Week press office:

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High resolution images are available for the media to view and download free of charge from www.stop-idfraud.co.uk

Additional tips can be found in the “Mind Your Own Business” guide or by visiting www.stop-idfraud.co.uk