

How to avoid groupthink in security decisions

A practical method for encouraging challenge, independent thinking and better security judgement.





What is groupthink?

Groupthink occurs when agreement becomes more important than examining the decision



For professional discussion and reflection • Illustrative, not exhaustive • Apply alongside appropriate organisational risk, evidence and decision-making processes



Recognise the decision pressure

Groupthink is more likely when teams feel pressure to agree quickly





Define the decision clearly

A clear decision question makes constructive challenge easier





Separate facts from assumptions

Groupthink often develops when assumptions are treated as established facts.





Invite independent views

Independent perspectives reduce the risk of a shared blind spot.



For professional discussion and reflection • Illustrative, not exhaustive • Apply alongside appropriate organisational risk, evidence and decision-making processes



Create a challenge role

Constructive challenge should be built into the decision process.





Manage leader influence

Senior views can unintentionally shape the group before alternatives are considered.





Avoid premature consensus

Agreement should follow analysis, not replace it.





Compare alternative options

A decision is stronger when realistic alternatives have been considered.





Test the decision before acting

Pre-mortems and red-team reviews expose weaknesses before implementation.





Recognise warning signs

Certain behaviours indicate that challenge and independent thinking may be declining.





Record the decision rationale

A transparent record makes the decision easier to review and challenge.





The anti-groupthink checklist

Good security decisions require the group to think critically together.

