



PHP was visible on 638 of 1,599 UK websites across seven sectors

Forty-two of those 638 said which version they run. For the other 596 we cannot tell whether they are patched, because the version is hidden. Read between 22 and 25 October 2026.

1,599 websites reviewed seven tracked lists	638 showed PHP 40% of all reviewed	42 said which version 7% of those showing PHP	160 could not be read, so no conclusion
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The seven sectors, worst first on how much PHP is visible

Sector	Reviewed	Shown PHP	Share	Said which version	Could not be read
Charities	380	194	51%	10	33
Local government	379	155	41%	4	40
Hospitals	269	105	39%	10	29
Family offices	132	48	36%	7	17
Aviation	94	32	34%	3	9
Banks and building societies	152	47	31%	5	13
Wealth and investment	193	57	30%	3	19
Seven lists together	1,599	638	40%	42	160

The last row is a sum of seven tracked lists, not a population. A small number of websites appear on more than one list, a private hospital group that is also a registered charity being the clearest case, and each list counts them once, so the total counts them more than once. Every sector row stands on its own.

Please do not read "no PHP seen" as absent, or "fixed release shown" as patched

Both describe only what a website announces about itself from outside, and a backported fix can leave an older version label in place. **None of this is a verdict on any organisation, no organisation is named, and nothing here says any site has been attacked.**

The finding is not the 40%. It is the 7%. Of the 638 websites where PHP is visible at all, only 42 say which version they run, so the overwhelming majority cannot be matched against a fixed release from outside at all. That is not a failing on the part of those organisations, since hiding the version is good practice, but it does mean neither they nor anyone else can settle the question from the front page. It has to be asked of the supplier.

Variation between the four nations

Only one of the seven lists carries a regional split: local government, where each council sits in one of the four UK nations. The other six are UK-wide lists with no regional dimension, so the comparison below covers 379 council websites and not the other 1,220.

Nation	Councils reviewed	Front pages read	Showed PHP	Share of reviewed	Said which version	Could not be read
England	314	283	137	44%	2	31
Scotland	32	25	12	38%	2	7
Wales	22	20	4	18%	0	2
Northern Ireland	11	11	2	18%	0	0
All four nations	379	339	155	41%	4	40

Read the two smaller nations with great care

Wales has 22 councils and Northern Ireland has 11. At those sizes one website moves the Welsh share by about five points and the Northern Irish share by nine. The 18% in both is four websites and two websites respectively. **It is not evidence that Welsh and Northern Irish councils run less PHP than English ones**, and it should not be reported as a league table of the nations.

England carries 83% of the councils in this list, so the England figure and the all-nations figure are nearly the same number by construction.

What the nation split does show

Scotland has the highest unread rate anywhere in this study. Seven of 32 Scottish councils, 22%, could not be read, against 10% in England and 10% across all seven sectors. That is a difference in how those sites treat automated readers rather than a security finding, but it does mean the Scottish picture rests on 25 readable websites rather than 32, and the real PHP share there could be higher than the 38% shown.

Version disclosure is almost absent across all four nations. Four councils out of 379 said which version they run, all four showing a release that includes the fixes. Two are in England and two in Scotland. Wales and Northern Ireland published no version at all, so nothing in those two nations can be matched against a fixed release from outside.

Variation between sectors

The spread runs from 51% to 30%, and it tracks how the websites are built rather than how well they are run. Charities sit highest at 51%, and local government next at 41%, both populations with many smaller organisations on content-managed websites of the kind PHP commonly serves. The two financial sectors sit lowest, wealth and investment at 30% and banks and building societies at 31%, where more sites are built on platforms that do not use PHP at all. **A lower share is not a better security posture.** It describes a different technology mix.

Three websites in the whole study run a PHP branch below 8.2, where no fix exists at all. One each in banks and building societies, family offices and aviation. Those three are the only cases in 1,599 where the answer is a migration to a supported branch rather than an update, and they are the first thing to confirm privately.

Seven more announce a version older than the fixed release for their own branch, four in charities, two in hospitals and one in family offices. Every one of them was a single release behind.

What this is about, and what to do

- On 21 October 2026 the PHP project published fixes for two critical flaws, in releases 8.2.35, 8.3.36, 8.4.27 and 8.5.12 or a later stable release in the same branch. **A site on a branch below 8.2 has no fix to install** and needs moving to a supported branch.
- On 23 October PHP announced a separate, lower-risk issue (CVE-2026-115560) that those releases do not fix. It affects only unusual setups, and PHP recommends turning off session upload progress until its next bugfix release.
- Ask your hosting or IT provider which version each website runs and whether both critical fixes are applied. **The version label alone does not settle it.**
- **Where a site was unread, or no PHP was seen, do not treat it as clear.** Review every system that serves your websites, including those an outside reader cannot see.

How we checked

One request to each website's public front page, honouring each site's robots policy, reading only what the site announces about itself: response headers, cookie names and page markers. Aviation, hospitals and charities were read on 22 October 2026, local government on 23 October and the three financial lists on 25 October, so the figures describe different days and no trend should be inferred. The sites are MyDomainRisk's tracked lists for each sector; **none is a complete register of its sector and none has been independently validated.** Counts are websites, not organisations: a group may run one website for several bodies. Our scans use bounded, external, non-intrusive checks. They do not attempt exploitation, credential testing or intentional modification of target systems.

Step-by-step guide: mydomainrisk.com/guides/php-critical-vulnerability-2026 · NCSC alerts: ncsc.gov.uk/section/keep-up-to-date/alerts · PHP releases: php.net/supported-versions.php · PHP advisory, 23 October 2026: php.net/archive/2026.php
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