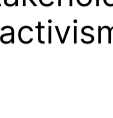


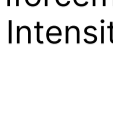
Compliance Risk Trends 2026-2031

Complexity, scrutiny and accountability set to grow.

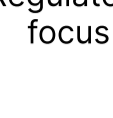
The trajectory of compliance risk is clear as we look to the next five years. The drivers behind the last decade's rise show no signs of slowing:



Stakeholder activism



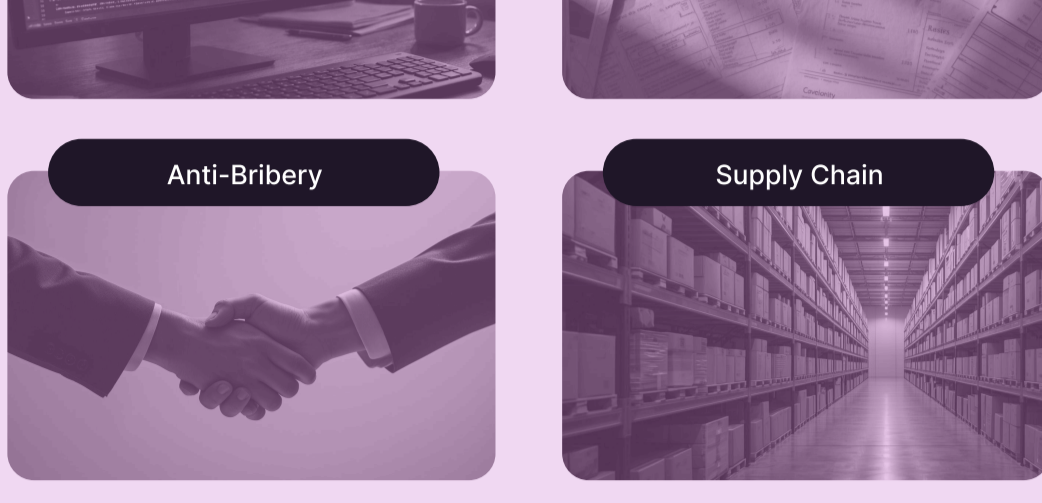
Enforcement intensity



Regulatory focus

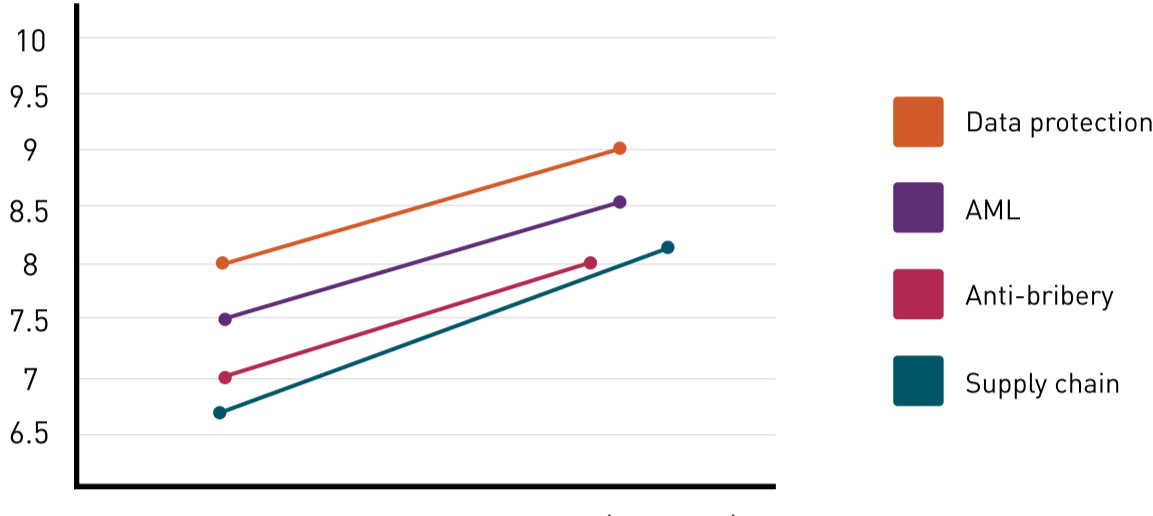
For GRC leaders and CEOs, this signals a critical moment to reassess how compliance risks are identified, monitored and managed across the organisation. Using Axiom GRC and VinciWorks' benchmarking methodology, we've projected composite risk into five key areas:

Key forecasts for the next five years



Compliance risk trends: 2026-2031

As we look ahead to the next five years, the trajectory of compliance risk is clear: complexity, scrutiny and accountability will continue to grow. The drivers behind the last decade's rise — regulatory maturity, enforcement intensity, and stakeholder activism — show no sign of slowing. Using VinciWorks' benchmarking methodology, we've projected composite risk scores across four key areas — Data Protection, AML, Anti-Bribery, and Supply Chain — through to 2031.



Data Protection: A legal and reputational battlefield

From what was once a technical afterthought is now a high-stakes risk. The public's growing mistrust of tech firms, coupled with enormous fines and high-profile scandals, has made data protection compliance a boardroom issue.

Insight: Even SMEs are now within scope — recent ICO fines target small businesses with poor cookie consent practices or insecure processing.

Key trend: Risk spiked after 2018 and continues to grow with new legislation like the UK's DUAA 2025. Enforcement has matured beyond big tech to target retail, health, and finance.

Practical implication: Compliance teams must go beyond training — regular DPIAs, demonstrable governance, and auditable data minimisation practices are now expected.



- Explanation of scoring:**
- Parliamentary activity jumps after GDPR legislation.
 - Fines escalate dramatically after 2018, into the billions in the EU.
 - Search interest peaks around GDPR introduction and remains elevated.
 - Regulatory visibility increases with high-profile fines and enforcement commentary.

AML compliance benchmarking

AML compliance is no longer just about knowing your customer — it's about understanding your exposure to global criminal networks, high-risk jurisdictions, and sanctioned entities.

Insight: Failure to align AML frameworks with financial crime typologies — especially fraud and sanctions evasion — is emerging as a major gap.

Key trend: While early enforcement was headline-grabbing (HSBC, BNP), today's risks are more systemic. Regulators expect a living AML framework: one that evolves with threats.

Practical implication: The EU's 2024 AML Authority and the UK's thematic reviews in 2025 point to a future of real-time supervision. AML policies can't be static.



- Explanation of scoring:**
- Fines are elevated early due to extraordinary one-off penalties (HSBC, BNP), so score high early in period.
 - Subsequent years remain high but more spread out across firms and regulators.
 - Hansard mention counts are qualitative; parliamentary debate increased after 2017 & 2022 regulations.

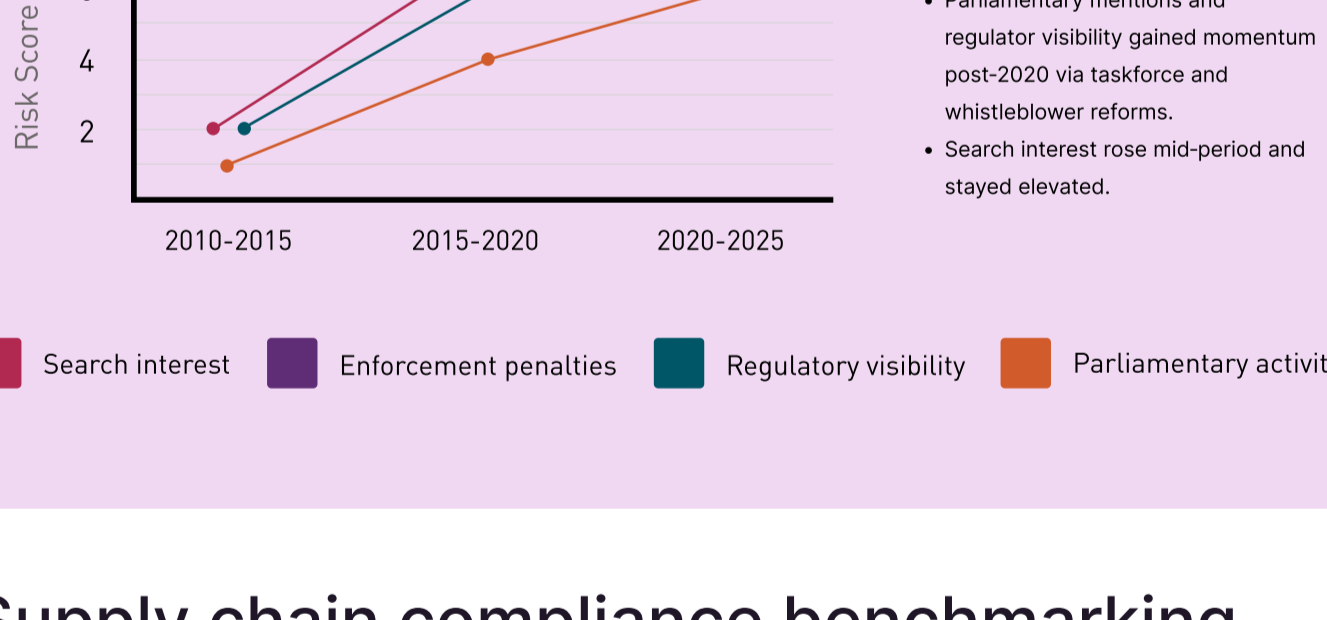
Anti-bribery compliance benchmarking

The UK Bribery Act 2010 set the gold standard globally, but enforcement has often lagged behind expectations. However, the past five years have shown renewed vigour, with the SFO pursuing high-value corporate schemes and new taskforces pushing for whistleblower reform.

Insight: The SFO's 2025 guidance emphasises self-reporting and whistleblowing — not just as mitigation, but as baseline compliance expectations.

Key trend: Enforcement remains active, but scrutiny is shifting to internal controls and culture. Are procedures truly "adequate", or just paperwork?

Practical implication: The Failure to Prevent Fraud offence will revive scrutiny of ABC programmes. Boards need to test their systems now, not later.



- Explanation of scoring:**
- Enforcement penalties were front-loaded in 2010-15 (BAE etc.) but enforcement persisted strongly later.
 - Parliamentary mentions and regulator visibility gained momentum post-2020 via taskforce and whistleblower reforms.
 - Search interest rose mid-period and stayed elevated.

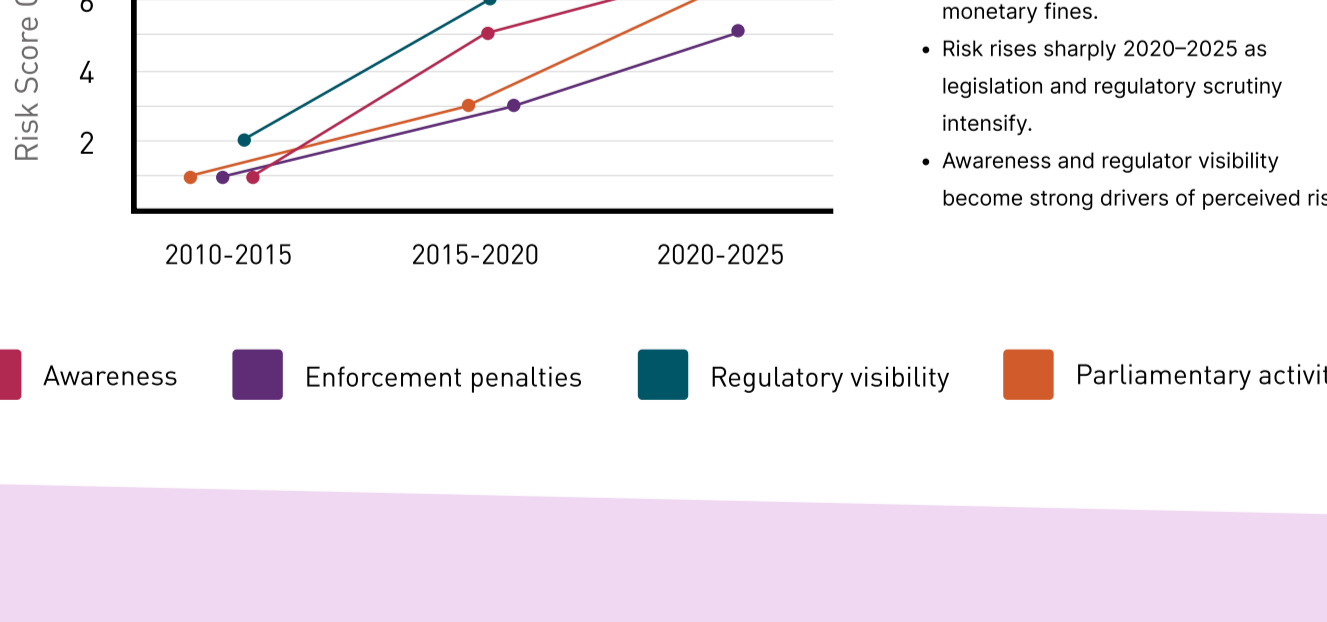
Supply chain compliance benchmarking

Once a fringe CSR concern, supply chain risk is now a compliance liability. From forced labour to ESG disclosures, firms are under pressure to know not just who their suppliers are, but how they behave.

Insight: Due diligence tools are evolving fast. Platforms offering supplier mapping, ESG scores, and live alerts are becoming essential for risk management.

Key trend: Legislation has moved from transparency (e.g. UK MSA) to accountability (e.g. CSDDD), and penalties are catching up.

Practical implication: TISC statements are no longer enough. Companies must assess, benchmark, and verify supplier practices, and be able to show their work.



- Explanation of scoring:**
- Enforcement/financial scores remain limited due to weak statutory sanctions — most impact reputational rather than monetary fines.
 - Risk rises sharply 2020-2025 as legislation and regulatory scrutiny intensify.
 - Awareness and regulator visibility become strong drivers of perceived risk.

Tracking compliance risk over time

The data shows a clear upward trend in all risk areas, with the most significant increase in **Data Protection**, driven by escalating fines, sustained public concern, and growing regulatory oversight post-GDPR. **AML and Anti-Bribery risks** have remained consistently high, reflecting ongoing enforcement and geopolitical developments. Supplier Risk, while historically under-regulated, has surged in relevance due to modern slavery legislation, ESG reporting pressures, and recent parliamentary focus.

About Axiom GRC

Axiom GRC is an international business resilience platform offering the most comprehensive Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) solution on the market. Axiom GRC integrates ten established brands, offering over 50 compliance products, serving 30,000 clients and 2 million users globally. Powered by more than 1,500 specialist data privacy, ISO certification, eLearning, regulatory intelligence, assurance and more, enabling businesses of all sizes to manage GRC responsibly and sustainably. Axiom GRC delivers holistic compliance and resilience through one unified gateway, empowering organisations to focus on growth while confidently navigating complex regulatory environments.

About VinciWorks

VinciWorks empowers businesses through innovative compliance solutions. With over 20 years of experience, our creative team redefines compliance training, offering 800+ courses and award-winning software. With our finger constantly on the pulse, we seamlessly adapt to regulations, providing tailored resources to meet unique business needs. Experience exceptional with VinciWorks.

VinciWorks is proudly part of Axiom GRC. The global GRC platform you need to protect your workforce and workplace, responsibly.